

Martin Landau and Barbara Bain

Eleven Years Later I'm Invited On A Honeymoon

It made Barbara feel like a blushing bride again with such a handsome groom

Martin Landau and Barbara Bain were standing outside their elegant, English-styled country house in Westwood, California. Barbara was playfully teasing Martin about their honeymoon trip – not the one that couples married as long as the Landaus have been (11 years) affectionately term a “second honeymoon.” Barbara was talking to Martin about their first honeymoon – the honeymoon trip they had never taken. And it seemed to them both that the time was ripe for it. At the peak of their careers, the stars of “Mission: Impossible” had traveled the long road that so many Hollywood celebrities had made before them. Now, they deserved a vacation; they deserved to be alone together. The time was long overdue for Martin to take his lovely bride on that honeymoon trip. Yet, the demands of their jobs and the general bustle of their lives made a vacation almost impossible. At least, they concluded, they could enjoy the days they had away from the studio as if they were precious honeymoon days.

They remembered New York in January 1957. Martin had just married the lovely Barbara. Outside City Hall the air was crisp after a shower and invited thoughts of joyous days together, days that had begun when they exchanged “I dos.” At least, that is what might have been going on in the minds of the newlyweds. In reality, Barbara and Martin kissed and parted – the bridegroom to a rehearsal at the actor’s Studio, the bride to her first class with Lee Strasberg. They didn’t have time to toast their marriage – they didn’t even share the same taxi. That is how it is when two people who are in love are also very

ambitious and determined to be successful as actors. Later, Martin and Barbara had a temple wedding, but they still did not have time for their honeymoon.

Martin met Barbara one evening when she paid a visit to an acting class he was teaching for Curt Conway. It was not love at first sight, although Martin was impressed by her elegant manner, her wide-set green eyes, and her ash blonde hair. He admits that: “I thought she was just an empty-headed model who had a lot of nerve walking into an acting class where, you know, people just crawl on the ground ... start at the bottom.” Barbara was a high-fashion New York model at the time, but she was tired of it. “It was good money,” she admits. “But I didn’t consider a four-hour discussion of lipstick shades important.” She drifted into Conway’s acting group on her way home from a modeling job. “It was in a dirty loft on 54th Street.” She watched Martin and concluded that “He was a crude, shallow, arrogant man.”

Obviously, they couldn’t have been more mistaken about each other. Far from an empty-headed model, Barbara Bain was a young woman who had spent a good deal of time in the effort to find her proper place in society. After she graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in sociology, Barbara had every intention of teaching school. When a modeling career opened up to her she accepted it, with no desire to make it a permanent profession. It took her a while to finally admit to herself that she wanted to be an actress. She had known it all through college but she

wouldn't admit it. "Often we don't know too much about ourselves," she says.

Landau was native New Yorker, born and raised in Brooklyn. He studied art at Pratt Institute there and worked for five years as an artist for the New York Daily News. Yet, he too had always wanted to act. He had caught the acting bug when he accepted a role in an off-Broadway play and later followed it up with a lead in summer stock. In 1956, he quit his job at the News never to return to his art career.

Martin and Barbara eventually realized the errors in judgment they had made about each other. When they met a second time at a party their polite conversation turned into lively discussion and deep interest. Still, the precaution they had exercised in choosing their profession was operative in their romantic life as well. They courted for 15 long months. When they finally married in January 1957 they were sure of a love that was permanent.

- The New York years were lean ones for both of them. Jobs in New York are never easy to come by and when both partners are actors the menu can shrink quickly to sugared coffee and toast. Eventually, Martin's career began to pick up. He appeared in the films Cleopatra, Hallelujah Trail and Nevada Smith. By this time they had moved to the Coast and were the parents of a little girl, Susan. Barbara was content to be a part-time actress. In 1965, she gave birth to a second girl, Juliet. Soon, though, acting offers began to come her way. In 1966, she attracted a great deal of attention for her appearances in a few episodes of the TV show Get Smart. Bruce Geller, the creator of Mission: Impossible, suggested that she audition for the Cinnamon Carter role. "I had her in mind when I wrote the show," says Geller. "I wanted a sexy blonde who was still very much a lady. Barbara was perfect for that character."

The public obviously agreed with Geller's assessment. They welcomed the sober-faced Cinnamon Carter in the person of Barbara Bain. They delighted in the way

she icily dealt the villain his fatal blow. She never seemed to let her fantastic adventures so much as ruffle her hair or crease her brow. It was apparent that, as a child, the cool Miss Carter never nibbled her nails, or bit her lips. As for perspiring, shuddering, stuttering, or freezing – mah deah, she was above it.

Meanwhile, Landau who was booked as a guest star on the show, scored such a hit that he was signed up as a regular star. Though movie contracts continued to come his way he turned them down. Since Mission: Impossible was one of the better shows on television, Landau felt that it was worth the commitment. "I looked over the movie scripts that were offered, and they were awful. I figured: Why not do good television instead of bad movies?" Of course, figuring in his decision was the fact that he would be working with Barbara. "It's the nicest thing that could have happened," he said. After years of struggle they were both successful, and they were successful as a team.

- Would the fact that they were working together interfere with their individual careers? Not a bit. For one thing they keep the basic separate, different agents, and so forth. For another, their marriage means entirely too much to them. Says Barbara: "If our careers threaten to take up apart then one of us is always willing to give up whatever is going on to be with the other." When Barbara received an Emmy Award last year, and Martin did not, she said: "I am seriously thinking about having my Emmy engraved 'Mr. And Mrs. Martin Landau' because I credit him for much of my talent as an actress."

Martin returned the compliment. "I enjoy working with talent," he said. "I'm not trying to be gallant. Barbara has talent. She is very professional and can help me a lot by just making a suggestion now and then." He summed up: "She's a fine actress." And Barbara added: "He's a fine actor."

With all this mutual love and respect one might well imagine the Landaus

following up their Mission: Impossible series with a husband-wife show entitled Martin loves Barbara or Marty and His Mrs. Actually, life around their home in Westwood, California, is very much that way. There is enormous material for a love story here. Just following Martin and Barbara around the place on a leisurely Saturday afternoon will prove it.

The house itself is comfortable and reflects the fine taste of its owners. Books, paintings, and antiques form the décor. Barbara likes to cook and entertain at small supper parties. A regular housekeeper concocts meals for the family during the week, but Barbara feels that weekends are the times when she and Martin can enjoy the life of the average American couple, a group with whom they readily identify. On weekends too, they can devote themselves to their children. "Many actresses leave their kids on Sunday and don't see them again until the following Saturday," Barbara says. "Not me. I see the children at one end of the day and the other." Weekends are the special part of the Landaus' lives.

It is no wonder then that Barbara and Martin do not have to transport themselves to a distant island to find in each other's company the ingredients for a honeymoon. On a quiet Saturday evening, with the children tucked in bed, they can find all the overtones of romance in their own home.

Near the date of their eleventh wedding anniversary Martin gave Barbara a black-and-white striped mink. A mink, of course, is the sort of present that every woman craves, but Martin's choice of a black-and-white one paid tribute to the special quality

of his woman. Barbara has been told that she resembles Liz Scott and Lauren Bacall. She describes herself, however, as "a sexy Grace Kelly." The mink was a tribute both to the royal grace of his wife and the feminine charm.

When Barbara first began filming Mission: Impossible, Martin admitted to a touch of jealousy when he watched her kiss and embrace many men in her Mata-Hari type role. Martin confesses: "It bothered me quite a bit at first. It took a long while to get accustomed to the sight of another man kissing my wife with great passion." Barbara, secretly delighted with the fact that she can still make her husband jealous, says with a smile, "He understands that it is all a part of the business." Martin recovers. "Of course, it works in reverse, too. I get to kiss many of Hollywood's most beautiful women, knowing that Barbara is watching – and smiling."

Yet, there is really no doubt that these two people have eyes only for each other. They still can recall their wedding day vividly. Barbara has only one complaint to make. "The Justice of the Peace bellowed the service at us. He was terribly hammy." As for the honeymoon that never took place, well ...

Recently Barbara Bain awoke to find a note on her night table left there by her hubby who had rushed to an early rehearsal. It read: "Barbara, please tell Susie that her smallest goldfish died during the night. See you at work. Love, Martin." After reflecting on that note for a while Barbara decided that even work could be like a honeymoon everyday.