

SÜZY

By Aileen Mehle

The year 1895 was a banner one for the Vanderbilts. **Cornelius** finished his baronial oceanfront estate, The Breakers, in Newport. Brother **George** completed construction of his awe-inspiring Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina, and on and on and on. A century later, Biltmore House rang out with the most fabulous bash North Carolina has seen since dear George entertained **Edith Wharton** and **John Singer Sargent** at his opening party 100 years ago.

The mansion, surrounded by gardens designed by **Frederick Law Olmstead**, was the setting for the great party for which 550 of **Deena Cecil Pickering's** guests flew in from all over the world. The Asheville Symphony gave a special dinner concert, the lucky ones dined at a 90-foot table and **Bob Hardwick's** orchestra played until dawn. With Vanderbilt family member **Wendy Lehman** and **Carter Brown**, who might as well be a Vanderbilt, leading the pack. La!