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Espresso love for 'Kozy

By JENNIFER FERMINO

Carla Bruni isn't the only thing Nicolas Sarkozy likes hot and Italian -- the French president demanded a special espresso machine when he visited Columbia University yesterday.

Organizers of his appearance revealed that the finicky French leader had insisted his choice of espresso machine be provided. In addition to ensuring that he was properly caffeinated, Sarkozy also flew in a plush rug and distinctive podium for his talk on world affairs.

Dogged by rumors that his marriage is on the rocks, Sarkozy -- as pictured here -- strolled around the Ivy League campus hand in hand with his model wife, Carla Bruni, as if he didn't have a care in the world. The embattled prez -- whose approval ratings back home have plummeted to a paltry 32 percent -- seemed to relish the warm welcome he received at Columbia, where he spoke to a packed house. Rather than entering the library rotunda from behind the curtain, as most speakers do, Sarkozy made a grand entrance by climbing up the majestic staircase.

As he addressed the crowd, a demure Bruni nodded to her husband on from the front row. "The world needs an open America, a generous America, an America that shows the way, an America that listens," Sarkozy said.

In the speech, which was warmly received by the college crowd, Sarkozy praised President Obama's efforts to reform health care -- and took a dig at the United States for the furor that ensued.

"When we look at the American debate on reforming health care, it's difficult to believe," he said, noting that France has long had socialized health care.

After his speech at Columbia, Sarkozy headed to the United Nations.

His wife, an art buff, hit NYU for a tour of the Barney Building, which houses the Department of Art and Art Professions.

Recently, Bruni was alleged to have been stepping out with a European pop star, while Sarkozy, who divorced his second wife, Cécilia -- a stunning former model -- shortly after becoming president, was linked to a government official.

Both have both strongly denied reports of extramarital affairs.

The power pair is heading today to Washington, DC, for a private dinner with the world stage's other favorite couple -- President and Michelle Obama.

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