

# All The buzz

First with all the news, all the details

## BILLY JOEL ON SUICIDE WATCH

— says source

■ *He's rehabbing at Betty Ford clinic*

**T**HE ENQUIRER has learned exclusive new details about Billy Joel's rehab stay — he's been receiving treatment at the famed Betty Ford Center, and when he arrived, a source says, the "Piano Man" was so severely depressed he was put on a suicide watch!

Last week, The ENQUIRER reported that the 55-year-old pop superstar went into rehab for a second time after his young bride Kate issued a sobering ultimatum: Get a grip on your boozing or our five-month marriage is doomed!

Billy's 23-year-old spouse was furious after discovering her husband was sneaking off to the wine cellar in their home to drink after she went to bed, said a source.

### 'DEPRESSED'

Billy's spokeswoman Claire Mercuri revealed on March 15 that the musician had checked himself into an undisclosed facility "for treatment of alcohol abuse." But The ENQUIRER has learned that the facility is Betty Ford near Palm Springs, Calif. — and that the performer showed up in sorry shape.

"Billy was incredibly depressed when he arrived," an insider told The ENQUIRER.

"He was a complete wreck.

"The Betty Ford Center is known for concentrating on relapse prevention — and that's why Billy

chose to try it this time around."

The entertainer was headed straight for a serious relapse — but then those closest to him stepped in, confided the insider.

"Billy's new wife and a few others got together and staged an intervention. They saw that he was slipping back into heavy-duty drinking."

Last fall, Joel married his third wife, TV correspondent Kate Lee — he was also married to supermodel Christie Brinkley, with whom he has a daughter, 19-year-old Alexa.

The entertainer previously did a stint in rehab in June 2002 — days after crashing his Mercedes on Long Island and suffering

minor injuries. It was the first of three accidents in the past three years.

Billy, who has a very heavy work schedule, initially resisted the attempt to return him to rehab, said the insider.

A spokesperson for the singer denies he was put on a suicide watch, but the insider claims:

"When he first went, he was so severely depressed that he was put on a suicide watch. His family and doctors were seriously concerned that he would take his own life.

"Little by little, though, Billy cheered up. He told me he even started playing music in the center, and singing along with other patients."

— ROBIN MIZRAHI



'A complete wreck'

BILLY'S ALCOHOL DEMONS are straining relations with his new wife Kate.