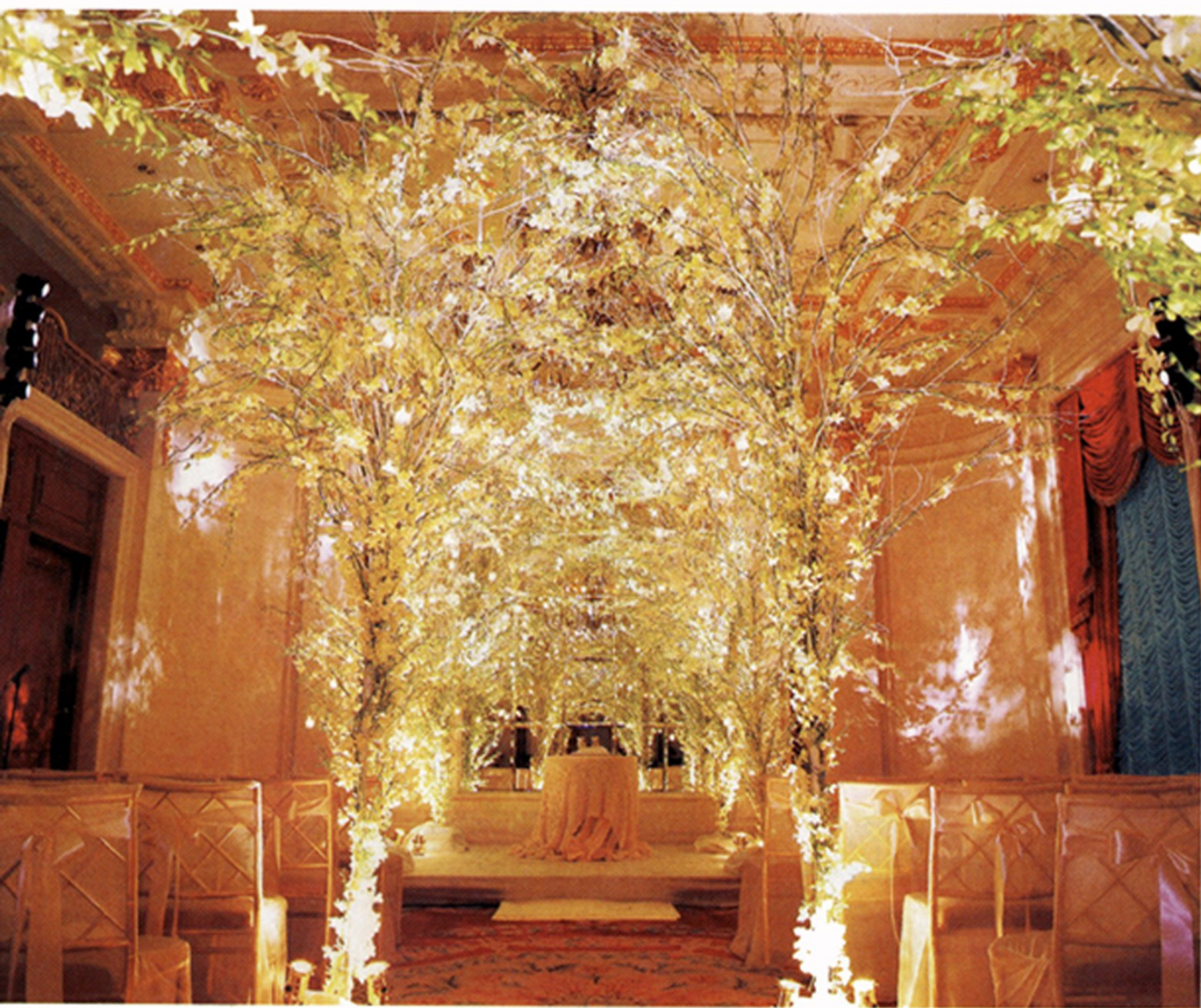


DIVINE LIGHTING

Top tips to ensure that everything is illuminated on your big day *By Cristi L. Hansen*



PERFECT LIGHTING can quite easily transform a good space into a grand venue. It can enhance every element—decor, architecture, even the mood of your affair. Here, we offer you expert insight on how to light your wedding reception with style and elegance.

CHOOSE YOUR MOOD

"We use our artistic design to translate the emotions each couple comes to us with," says New York City-based lighting expert Bentley Meeker, who was responsible for shedding light on the weddings of celeb couples like Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas, and has also lent his expertise to White House events. Whether you're planning a romantic evening or a sultry affair, it's important that you communicate to your planner or lighting team the exact look and vibe you want. To change the energy in the room during the night, Meeker employs a system called intelligent lighting: He

creates customized assortments of light, or light palettes, that alternate throughout the night. Options include an "excitement" palette of reds and oranges, to energize your guests, or a calming "in-between-courses" palette of blues and purples, which can soothe guests and facilitate conversation.

USE FLATTERING HUES

Golden and amber tones allow you and your guests to look their best, according to Meeker. Josh Brooks, of New York City-based wedding-planning company Fête, agrees: "Warm colors, such as gold, flatter everyone and highlight decor beautifully." Shades of pink are also complimentary. Meeker often uses these shades to color an entire space and invoke a sense of warmth and comfort.

LIGHT TO ENHANCE

To highlight centerpieces and food displays, Meeker employs a technique called pinspotting, in which a tightly focused light makes decorative touches shine. Gobo lights—a special projector with an etched metal template (the gobo)—can be used to wash the walls with the lines of your favorite poem or to shine a pretty pattern on the dance floor.

Gorgeous light isn't relegated to reception space only. Hallways and courtyards can, and should, be embellished. If your party is a subdued one, Meeker may choose to illuminate these areas to complement your reception lighting and decor. If you opt for a funkier vibe, however, Meeker can change the colors and moods of each area. One rule he always follows: "The powder room should be enhanced with pink lights," says Meeker. "Every woman—especially the bride—should feel her best."

SEE THE LIGHT

Glow pro Bentley Meeker's golden lighting creates ethereal elegance.

A wonderfully lit space is sure to create a desirable ambience and enhance your reception decor. "When your guests walk into a room that is lit properly," says Meeker, "they will not only look good, but feel great, too." ♦