

Inside the Minnelli-Gest Wedding Reception

Saturday's **Liza Minnelli-David Gest** nuptials has no doubt been the most talked-about New York event of the month. So even though we don't normally do weddings, we had to check it out. We don't have photographs--the British magazine *OK!* purchased the exclusive rights to cover the event--but we managed to get a sneak peak inside the **Regent Wall Street** before the reception began. Here's what we found:

Preston Bailey and his **Preston Bailey Design** crew were busy festooning white flowers and ivy from just about every available place in the enormous ballroom--wrapping foliage around the room's grand columns, hanging it from the balconies and draping it on the large stage, where a roster of entertainers including **Patti LaBelle, Ashford and Simpson, the Doobie Brothers, Gloria Gaynor, Ben Vereen** and **B. J. Thomas** were slated to perform. A large arched trellis covered with leafy ivy and red and fuschia roses was placed just inside the door (and beyond security measures including metal detectors, white tenting, red carpet and red velvet ropes).

Round tables were covered with deep red (almost burgundy) tablecloths with a finish that made them look a little like raw silk, and large all-red centerpieces of roses mixed with other flowers. (Remember, red is hot again.) The tables were also decorated with black napkins and glasses of breadsticks sticking up (like the ones at the *Harper's Bazaar* relaunch). The last touch: Large red, heart-shaped boxes of candy from **See's Candies**.

Meanwhile, **Bentley Meeker** was putting the finishing touches on an elaborate lighting set-up, which included specially made gobos that use a pattern taken from a book of rococo mouldings. Throughout the evening, Meeker was planning to create a tapestry of changing colors of light, moving from cooler indigos and maroons to warmer ambers and honeys. Meeker also uplit the large columns, and used bright lights to outline the periphery of the ceiling. (He also lit this room for the *Gotham* anniversary party.)

The look combined elements of a lush, overgrown garden and a bold-hued Valentine's Day party for a dramatic setting well-suited to the pageant of pomp and celebrity set to start in a few hours.

--Chad Kaydo