



Kleinfeld Bridal says yes to the lights



Hornet HD Downlight

Amerlux puts wedding dresses in the best light

A true New York City icon, the venerable Kleinfeld Bridal has been selling some of the finest wedding dresses for more than 75 years. Made famous as the home of TLC's reality show, "Say Yes to the Dress," Kleinfeld is a bridal retail legend.

Kleinfeld had one little problem though: When brides-to-be came in for their fittings, they complained the dresses they ordered didn't look right. The colors were off. With dresses costing between \$2,000 and \$40,000 each, anything less than perfection is not an option.

"When a bride comes for a fitting, she's trying on a dress she already bought. It's not a sample," says Jacques Vigneault, vice president and creative director at Kleinfeld Bridal. "It's very important that the colors look accurate. We don't want to have to take their dress outside to prove the dress is the right color in the sunlight. We want it as accurate to reality as it can be."

To that end, Kleinfeld had invested heavily in creating a space to showcase the dresses' perfection, even going so far as to use only lead-free mirrors to avoid seeing a green hue on the dresses. The answer to Kleinfeld's dilemma was to relight the fitting rooms.



Measuring 8 by 12 feet, the fitting rooms are large, and the ceilings were cluttered with nine round downlights each, including standard downlights and “eyeball” style lights. The legacy fixtures were not designed for LEDs, although they had been retrofitted with LEDs. The result was a space with a lot of shadows and poor color rendering.

“I’ve loved Hornet downlights for their look and price point ever since Amerlux first demonstrated the product for me.”

—**Clifford Starr**, lighting designer at GoodMart

When Kleinfeld management opted to revitalize the fitting rooms, Clifford Starr, a lighting designer at GoodMart in New York City, had the ideal solution ready: Amerlux’s Hornet HP Downlights with full gamut LED chips.

Full gamut LED chips render color at a level far beyond what standard LEDs can deliver—to the point where the light quality is like bringing the sun inside the store.

“I demonstrated the Hornet lights for them with one of their dresses,” says Starr. “I didn’t realize the dress was anything besides white, but under the Amerlux light, the pink in it came out. In retail, color quality is so important.”

Vigneault mirrored Starr, saying, “We wanted lights that would show the true color of the dresses—that’s so important because we are in bridal, where there are so many colors of white. The sample dress we used appeared to be a light coffee color, but under the Amerlux lights it looked like the blush pink it is. When a customer tries on the dress in a fitting room, it’s her dress and she’s paid for it—which is why it’s critical to have the right color here. Otherwise, we end up with an argument with the customer.”

Starr’s solution for Kleinfeld included entirely reworking the lighting plan to create a cleaner looking space. Reducing the fixture count from nine, Starr was able to deliver better quality light, more evenly than the old luminaires could. The lensed square Hornet model was chosen to coordinate with the existing square lighting in the nearby cashier area and stairwells.





"I wanted to elevate the fitting rooms to the same caliber of the dresses," he says. "They had a lot of recessed lighting and it was overkill. I cut down on the lighting to seven recessed downlights—one over the center of the mirror and then three on each side. That eliminated most of the shadows."

For the final touch, Starr put dimmers on all the fitting room lights.

"Each room is customizable to the different personalities of the salespeople and customers. With the dimmers, brides can see their dress under the same lighting conditions as their wedding day," he says.

To keep the fitting room construction on track, Amerlux delivered the Hornet downlights within the two weeks promised.

"Our wedding dresses often have sparkles or gemstones, and the new lights make the dresses pop!"

—**Jacques Vigneault**, vice president and creative director at Kleinfeld Bridal

At Kleinfeld Bridal, everyone is thrilled with the new lighting. "Because we are in bridal, our needs are very specific. Color accuracy and sharpness are very important. Many of our wedding dresses have sparkles or gemstones, so the new lights make the dresses pop," says Vigneault.

"The light itself is beautiful. All the staff is very happy with it. We put lighter-colored tiles on the floor and with the new lights, the rooms feel bigger," he continues. "Some people think we raised the ceiling, but we didn't. The lighting seems so natural now that we are used to it and we're wondering, 'why didn't we do this sooner?'"



Clifford Starr, Lighting Designer



PROJECT SUMMARY

End User

Kleinfeld Bridal, New York City

Project Scope

Upgrading the lighting in Kleinfeld Bridal's 19 fitting rooms, surrounding hallways and sitting area with Amerlux's square Hornet HP Downlights. Equipped with Class A LED chips for exquisite color rendering and lensed optics, 185 downlights have been installed in the store.

Lighting Designer

Clifford Starr, GoodMart, (New York City)

Benefits

- When it comes to bridal whites, white is never just white, and the Class A LED chips bring out the true colors of the dresses in ways that the old lighting could not.
- Before the lighting upgrade, sales staff sometimes had to take brides outside to see their dresses in natural light.
- With the new lighting, the space looks much better and feels bigger.
- Controls were installed with all the lights, so sales staff can present the wedding dress in a variety of lighting scenarios, to match whatever the bride will have on her wedding day.
- Luminaires were delivered within two weeks, as promised, to keep the construction on schedule.

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