

How to truly sparkle this party season

Okay, let's just get this over with; Christmas is coming. My postponing its mention in this column hasn't slowed down its progress one single, jingle bit. The fact that I have steadfastly refused to buy anything remotely party-appropriate hasn't halted its speed. In fact, my refusal to diligently pick up little gifts as I saw them for my loved has, if anything, only served to speed up the season's impending arrival.

There is, of course, nothing new in any of this. A state of blissful denial is the single most important coping mechanism when it comes to this time of year. But there is always something that pounds down the wall of non-acceptance and projects us head first into the cheery season. Mine came earlier today in the form of the work party invite. I officially need to find something that will see me through every single party I get invited to (that's a total of two, if Mum throws one). In the past, I have made the grave error of purchasing a kicky little dress that, according to every magazine I have ever read, will work for ten different functions by simply changing a belt or something. This doesn't work. The fact is, even if we do have ten different parties we simply have to attend (I'm including drinks in the local with friends, dinner with boyfriend, and turning up uninvited at my sister's house and



getting drunk in the list of soirées I simply have to attend) you won't want to wear the same dress. Not just because you don't have that many accessories and the people who saw you at the last gathering will start issuing you pitying looks, but because it is not all that hygienically sound.

So instead, I am arming myself in sequins, and with good reason. Sequins are festive cheer incarnate, they work with everything from the most glamorous dress to the most saggy-arsed jeans, they are wipe-clean. Top of my shopping list is sequined leggings (I'm sorry, but I love them), sequined cardigan, sequined skirt and sequined tee. That way I can wear last year's dress, last week's shift, yesterday's vest and the jeans I permanently live in (hence the sagging bottom) without feeling like I haven't made the effort.

And don't be fooled into thinking sequins are a bit passé. By going for something with aged grey or dulled black sequins, you won't look like Sienna Miller circa when she mattered. Balmain, Gucci and Ashish all showed a little sparkle – although I think I'll opt for Mango, Zara, A|Wear and those cheap independent shops to get my fix.

Well, it's either that or waste my stash of money for gifts for loved ones. Pah.

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WEATHERING THE STORM

The effort involved in getting to grips with the big chill can be a depressing side of winter, so I'm thrilled to see some rather glamorous coats and jackets hitting the catwalks. Yes, the reliable old pea coat and parka are both chic and cosy, but a more luxurious alternative is great for special evenings. M&S has some of the best, with a selection of coats and jackets standing out as winners in the style stakes. My favourite is the grey faux-fur jacket, which adds instant glam to any jeans and boots combo. They also carry a velvet jacket that is bang on-trend and would look very Balmain paired with anything leather. Ohh, they're warming me up already.



Velvet blazer, €88, Autograph Occasions. Faux fur jacket, €88, Per Una Speciale, both Marks & Spencer, tel: 01 299 1300



CHIC CLICK

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