



 Marla Tomazin

Marla's Style File

Holiday Head-Turning: How to Look Like a Million Bucks This Season, Even If You're on a Budget

It's a perennially tricky question: What should I wear to this year's holiday parties? Here's some advice that will help you make a statement without breaking the bank.

By Marla Tomazin

Unless you're living under a rock, chances are you've been invited to some holiday parties, whether they're sponsored by the office, a friend or family member, or even your place of worship or book club! After all, 'tis the season. By now, you've RSVP'd, figured out what hors d'oeuvres you want to bring, and it's finally down to the moment of truth: What will you wear? Don't tear out your hair in frustration or run out to buy a whole new outfit just yet.

It's only natural that you want to look fabulous at all of the holiday parties you're attending in the next few weeks. After all, we know that when you look good, you feel good! The problem is, around this time of year many women open their closets and think, *So many clothes, and nothing to wear!*

If that's you, I'm willing to bet that you've got more to work with than you think you do. And let's face it—many of us don't have as much extra money this year as we would like. However, by putting a fresh spin on some of your old standbys—or by supplementing them with a few new additions—you'll be turning heads in no time, and your wallet won't be hurting.

Ready to hit the party scene in style? Then read on for some advice.

Stay classy and classic in basic black. They say that black never goes out of style, and in this case, "they" are right! Don't let black's sometimes-somber reputation scare you away. When worn correctly, it can be just as festive as red and green!

If you have one great piece, add onto that. I'm guessing you already own a dressy white blouse as one of your wardrobe staples. Wear it with a skinny black pant, or find a fun and festive black skirt on sale—simple or embellished. Then add a beautiful black sandal or pump from your closet, put on some sparkly crystal earrings, and voilà! You're set.

It's your time to shine! Once again, start with a basic black pant or skirt—but this time, add some sparkles! Find a sequined sweater in black or in a bright color that you love to wear—so many are on sale right now! Glitter and glitz are quite fashionable this year for all age groups, so take advantage of the trend while you can...and try to keep track of all the attention you'll receive!

Keep in mind that you'll need to go easy on the jewelry if your top sparkles. Simple earrings and bangle bracelets work well with this look. Then, finish it off with black pumps, peep-toe shoes, or sandals. And don't forget the little black bag!

The dress is the thing. Even if you don't wear dresses regularly, a holiday party might be a worthy occasion to slip one on. There are so many options in terms of style and color—and if you don't own a dress you love, you'll definitely be able to find one on sale this time of year.

All of us feel more feminine and flirty when we're wearing a flattering dress. If you're not sure what looks good on you, ask a stylish friend for her opinion! And remember the "icing on the cake." If you're wearing simple black or red, punch up your dress with crystal or pearl accessories. Big chokers and cuff bracelets are also very trendy accessories this season.

Take your cues from Mother Nature. Let's face it: The no-white-after-Labor-Day rule just doesn't cut it these days. Winter and white go wonderfully together—and if you're skeptical, just think about the beauty of a snow-covered landscape. And then imitate it.

Wear winter white—it makes a *great* statement, and it will help you stand out in all the right ways. Choose a totally white outfit to make a dreamy and sophisticated entry. A white wool pant and dressy blouse or sweater in the same color, accented with pearls or crystal jewelry and a metallic shoe and bag, will be wonderfully unique.

Buck the color trend. Black, red, and green are usually the go-to holiday colors. And while they're all fantastic choices, don't let them limit your palette. If you look put-together and confident in an outfit that flatters you (regardless of its color!), you'll be one of the most festive partygoers around.

Many women look better in browns and bronzes than in black, for example. If that's you, choose a pair of brown pants or a leather skirt, and find a sweater, beaded top, or lace top that blends well. Wear copper or bronze shoes and a matching bag, and finish the look with complimentary bronze dangling earrings or a big chunky necklace (but not both!). You are ready to dazzle. After all, if it works for precious metals, it can work for you too!

If you've got it...flaunt it. Sure, it's nice to have a new or updated outfit...but don't make the mistake of focusing so much on what you're wearing that you forget about *yourself!* Use your natural assets. Everyone has an "inner glow," and it should always shine through, no matter what you're wearing.

If you have great legs, *they* may be the accessory you play up to go with a flattering dress. Wear a nude stocking with a black or red dress for a more modern look. And if that doesn't look right to your eye, you can wear a sheer black if you are wearing a black

shoe. I also tell my clients that if they don't have to spend money on any new clothing items, they can indulge in a fabulous new lipstick, or a manicure and pedicure.

It's your business! Often, business or office parties are the toughest events to dress for. You want to break out of the hum-drum daily fashion mold, but at the same time it's not a good idea to let your sartorial sense shock your coworkers! It's best to keep your outfit understated and chic.

Choose a simple suit or dress from your closet, and accessorize with beautiful shoes, earrings, and a bracelet before you go to the party. This is not the best time to show a lot of skin! Another look that works (for all parties, not just the office type) is a "column," such as a black top and bottom. You can dress these pieces up with a bright scarf, jacket, and/or a new lipstick. Winter white is always a great look over a black column.

Above all, make sure that you *feel* fantastic in your party outfit! If you're uncomfortable, it will show. But if your look is just an extension of your inner glow, you'll be the life of the party. And if you were able to "shop" for it in your own closet, your smile will be twice as wide.

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About Marla Tomazin:

Marla Tomazin, Certified Image Consultant, established her image consulting business in 1990 with the goal of helping clients identify an authentic image and develop its effective expression.

From a successful career in the fashion industry, Marla gained expertise in retail buying, merchandising, sales, and marketing. She began with May Company in Denver after earning a B.S. in Marketing from the University of Denver. Marla moved to New York where she worked with several well-known Seventh Avenue design firms. As she developed her business skills, Marla made a serendipitous discovery—an innate sense of style and facility for working with fabrics and colors to maximum advantage.

The progression to Certified Image Consultant was a natural transition. Marla utilizes her abilities in evaluating body shape, movement, and coloring as well as synthesizing optimal cuts, lines, colors, and textures. This results in balance and proportion that accentuate attributes and conceal flaws. Her clients include women, men, and corporations seeking external revitalization that mirrors their internal development.

She has lectured at The Learning Annex on "How to Become an Image Consultant" and at The American Women's Economic Development Corporation on "What Does Your Image Say About You?"

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