

In Fashion: Party picks for that once-yearly shindig

by Sharon Mosley

Can't wait to get out of the house and party with your friends to celebrate the new year? Then it's time to dress up and toast a shining new you.

Party pick: Metallics

"New Year's Eve is a great time to dress up," says Laura McDowell, spokeswoman for TJMaxx. "Dresses are back in a big way this season, so if you're heading to a fancy party to ring in the new year, wear something metallic or maybe even embellished with sequins."

JEAN SPLICING - Dress up a simple pair of jeans for a holiday party with a festive tunic top and high-heel sandals. CNS Photo courtesy of TJ Maxx. Short sequined sheath dresses are perfect for a youthful look, but if you want to tone it down, try a sequined tank top under a satin trench jacket. Or for another small dose of shine, wrap a dressy top with a metal-studded belt.

Party pick: Dressed-up denim

What's another top party pick on the fashion holiday circuit this season? It's got to be a pair of great-fitting dark jeans. Denim travels everywhere for the holidays - from casual get-togethers to dressier cocktail soirees. They should be a big priority item on your party pick list. Then dress them up with a party-perfect blouse or popular tunic top.

"Try a pretty blouse with kimono sleeves, or even a fun, real or faux fur jacket," McDowell says. "Adding one great piece can really dress up your outfit without breaking the bank."

Party pick: Sexy shoes

OK, so you can wear the velvet loafers, but promise me you'll at least try to find a pair of special shoes that will sparkle when you walk in the room. Check out the budget shoe stores - you'll be surprised to find some great-looking shoes that you won't mind buying even if you end up wearing them only a few times. Payless has some of the best satin ankle-tie sandals and beaded slip-on mules.

Party pick: Velvet

It's always a rich look in black; but in a royal plum or Persian blue, the results can be stunning. Velvet has become synonymous with luxury - and you can't go wrong with it - whether it's a black velvet blazer for a debonair guy or a teal crushed velvet walking coat for her. Add velvet accessories such as a burn-out scarf, a velvet clutch or a pair of peep-toe platforms and you've got even more holiday style.

Party pick: Fluff

Faux or real, fur is the fluff on top of a holiday party. So are feathers. So is anything frothy, frilly or frizzy. Don't overdo it, but have fun. If it makes you feel good, wear it. One of the best bets: an oversized cashmere shawl trimmed with fur. You can wear it outside and inside.

Party pick: Jewels

How could we talk about celebrating New Year's and not talk about puttin' on the ritz - ritzy jewels, that is. No matter if it's your grandmother's strand of pearls, an antique rhinestone brooch or a pair of new diamond drops, show the bling off. If not on New Year's Eve, then when?

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