



Party time!

'Tis the season to dress up—way up—and toast the holidays with your favourite people. Here's what to wear—and how to host

Photography by Jenna Marie Wakani

Brenna Flaherty, Calley Skalnick, Selene Guerrero-Trujillo and Koto Ishihara—all dancers with the National Ballet of Canada—shot on location at Evangeline, the Ace Hotel, Toronto.



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ALL AGLOW

What's more fun than dialling up the sparkle and heading out on the town? Julianne Costigan breaks down what to wear on the holiday party circuit

Festive invitations are rolling in, and the search for great holiday outfits has spiked. Rich fabrics, brilliant shimmer and dramatic silhouettes are filling the stores—and this stylist's cup. I love the joyfulness and opulence of the holidays, but I know there's some pressure to putting together looks for the multitude of events and outings. Often, the most difficult part is gauging the dress code—and then finding pieces that aren't a last-minute, one-time-wear purchase.

The goal is to make your wardrobe work as hard as your calendar, with looks that effortlessly flow from intimate dinners to fizzy parties, while still feeling special and unique to you. This season's trends—a fresh take on shimmer, cozy yet elevated knits and textures with depth and dimension—will get you there. It's about striking the balance between festive and functional, with items that don't just shine once but become part of your story for seasons to come.



STAUD DRESS, \$556, NETAPORTER.COM

MELANIE LYNE TOP, \$128, MELANIELYNE.COM

SANDRO JEANS, \$475, FARFETCH.COM

VERONICA BEARD DRESS, \$995, VERONICABEARD.CA

SWAROVSKI EARRINGS, \$ 149, SWAROVSKI.COM

COS BAG, \$170, COS.COM

BLACK SUEDE STUDIO SHOES, \$425, BLACKSUEDESTUDIO.COM

MODERN SPARKLE

Re-imagine shine by looking for sequins in unexpected colour palettes and relaxed silhouettes. This is a statement that works well beyond the dance floor, but styling is key to maximizing the potential of these pieces. A shimmering dress transforms with a monochrome sweater and tall boots for daytime polish, while a sparkling button-up can be worn tucked into a satin skirt or velvet trousers—or dressed down with jeans and flats. Pair embellished jeans with a satin blouse or a simple tee for an effortlessly cool look. And add accessories like a sequin clutch in a bold hue to bring some dazzle to any outfit.

HEARTHIDE KNITS

Not all holiday events require high glamour. Tree shopping, holiday markets and cozy family gatherings are special moments filled with photo opportunities and call for comfort with just the right amount of elegance. Knitwear delivers every time.

Start with a versatile cardigan. Wear it buttoned up as a top, undone over a camisole or reversed for a chic twist with the buttons at the back. A knit dress or skirt will be cozy yet polished—opt for a chic maxi length and pair with kitten heels or sleek boots. For a festive touch that feels relaxed, choose knits with special details, like a gem-embellished sweater with a knotted back.



CHARLES JEFFREY LOVERBOY SCARF, \$438, SSENSE.COM

SMYTHE CARDIGAN, \$895, SHOPSMYTHE.COM

EVERNEW DRESS, \$7K, EVERNEW.CA

BAASH SWEATER, \$515, BA-SH.COM

ZIMMERMANN SKIRT, \$685, HOLTRENFREW.COM

DOLCE VITA BOOTS, \$170, DOLCEVITA.CA

BOTTEGA VENETA BAG, \$3,540, SSENSE.COM

MAJESTIC FILATURES PANTS, \$258, HOLTRENFREW.COM



JENNIFER BEHR BOBBY PIN SET, \$167, SHOPBOP.COM

MAJE TOP, \$320, MAJE.COM

BANANA REPUBLIC BLAZER, \$350, BANANAREPUBLIC.CA

REFORMATION SHOES, \$299, THEREFORMATION.COM

SILK LAUNDRY DRESS, \$585, SILKLAUNDRY.CA

FRAME SKIRT, \$685, FRAME-STORE.COM

H&M BAG, \$ 60, HM.COM

TEXTURED TIDINGS

Materials that feel both luxurious and wearable bring softness and depth to holiday dressing. Velvet, satin and flowing silk take centre stage and can be versatile: Pair sumptuous pieces like a velvet jacket with wardrobe basics like a simple button-up to create looks that are elegant now and easy to wear later.

Lace surged in popularity this year and is continuing to trend, bringing a soft, romantic touch to holiday style. A lace skirt, top or dress layered under an oversized blazer feels festive without over-committing to occasion wear. Add glossy patent or plush calf-hair accessories, like gleaming slingbacks that transform a look from simple to special.

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Season of magic

The perfect holiday party is a feast for the senses, with special details, delicious treats and warm hearts. Here, the ultimate guide to hosting and dressing for a stylish festive fête, featuring a quartet of dancers from the National Ballet of Canada

By Briony Smith
Photography by Jenna Marie Wakani

There are lights on the houses, trees in the windows and magic is in the air. It's the most delightful time of year to gather your favourite people together, slip into something slinky and toast the season with a flute of bubbly and a twinkle in your eye. In the name of inspiration, we invited National Ballet dancers starring in the festive classic *The Nutcracker* to model the season's best party fashion at a very fizzy—and exclusive—holiday party for four in the cozy, eclectic environs of Evangeline restaurant at Toronto Ace Hotel. Let it be your sign to pile on the jewels, slip on a satin suit, pour a signature cocktail and host your own fête for the ages. Let the celebrations begin!

Koto Ishihara, PRINCIPAL DANCER Ishihara experienced some snow growing up in Japan, but during her many years dancing in Florida and San Francisco, she missed the festive flurries—until she moved to Toronto. “Having snow during the holidays makes it extra special,” she says. “I really enjoy dancing in the ballet headquarters and seeing the nice snow pile up outside. It feels like a real Christmas.” This year, she'll be playing the Sugar Plum Fairy again. It may be the lead role, but her favourite part is performing for the little ones in the audience, particularly the budding ballerinas. “I'm really on stage for them,” she says. “I want the kids to have a good time—I want to give them a dream.” She also loves playing a character onstage. “I like to feel not like myself almost. It makes it more fun for me to be somebody else sometimes,” she says. “Some roles come naturally, some don't, but that's part of the journey.” Most of all, she is drawn to dance because of how it can touch people. “I like to connect with the audience when I'm on stage,” she says. “I love that, when I can make people feel something when they leave the theatre.”

HER HOLIDAY PARTY STYLE: “Simple but classy, and cozy as well.”

Calley Skalnik, FIRST SOLOIST Seeing her face grace *The Nutcracker* posters last season was a special moment for Skalnik, who has danced the Sugar Plum Fairy several years in a row. “My parents' first date was at *The Nutcracker!*” she says. “It's nice to perform it for my family.” In fact, she has performed in the production since she was a child, so it's become a treasured tradition. Dance has always been a big deal in the Skalnik clan; she and her younger sister spent their childhood dancing around the house and making up numbers together. “The second I could get into a dance class, I was in love.” Today, she loves the discipline ballet brings to her life. “I like working at one thing over and over and perfecting that.” Despite the rigours of the art form, dance still

brings her so much joy. “I like sharing my heart, and the joy it brings me, with others,” she says. “There's nothing else I'd rather be doing.” Other priorities at this time of year include making her signature Christmas-morning cinnamon rolls, and sharing a big batch of mulled wine with her oldest friends. “Without that, it doesn't feel like the holidays!”

HER HOLIDAY PARTY STYLE: “Something comfortable that I can sit cross-legged in, something that I feel cute in when I show my tattoos, and a nice boot that makes me feel dressed up.”

Selene Guerrero-Trujillo, SECOND SOLOIST This year, Guerrero-Trujillo will be playing multiple roles in *The Nutcracker*, from Baba to a snowflake to a bee; the diversity helps her stay motivated. “I love a challenge!” she says. “We're very lucky that we have a very challenging and beautiful *Nutcracker*, so I'm happy to revisit it each year. The fact that you reach so many people, it feels so wonderful.” The production is a constant in a dancer's career. “It's a tradition, and it's also the bread and butter of the National Ballet of Canada, so it's our duty,” she says. “It may be a marathon, but I still really enjoy it, dancing with all my colleagues and friends.” Still, after a long season, she's excited for her upcoming holiday break; she plans to hit the beach and spend some quality time with family and pals. “*The Nutcracker* is very hard on your body,” she explains. “And everyone else is going to parties and having fun, and I can't as I'm doing *Nutcracker!*”

HER HOLIDAY PARTY STYLE: “I love to express myself and make a statement, so, depending on the mood or theme of the party, I'll definitely make sure I rise to the occasion and make people turn their heads.”

Brenna Flaherty, SECOND SOLOIST Flaherty's appreciation for ballet has changed over the years. At first, she just danced for fun with her friends, but now? “I've come to love the challenge and the way it empowers me to take control of my own body and my own life and overcome some of the fears that come with performing and putting yourself out there,” she says. “I love the person ballet has shaped me into.” While she's become the go-to comedy queen of the company (“I've been able to do roles that resonate with my own personality; it feels like I'm being myself on stage!” she says, laughing), this year she'll make her debut as the Sugar Plum Fairy in *The Nutcracker*. “It's a special holiday tradition because we return to it each year and we measure our own growth through how well we do,” she says. “I've grown from the smallest role into the biggest role, and I never in my wildest dreams thought that would happen for me when I was an apprentice.” She is married to fellow dancer Kota Sato, and the holidays are a special time for the couple: Sato asked Flaherty out for the first time at the company Christmas party. Each year, they add a new holiday dish to their repertoire, with an emphasis on Japanese traditions to honour Sato's background, like basting the turkey with a miso glaze.

HER HOLIDAY PARTY STYLE: “I like to have an element of texture, like a sparkle or a pair of furry loafers. I'm not one to show too much skin, so I love a slip dress but with a turtleneck underneath. Sexy plus cozy!”

The National Ballet of Canada will perform James Kudelka's *The Nutcracker* until Dec. 31 at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto.



Calley is wearing NICKLAS SKOVGAARD DRESS, \$1,355, ABSOLUTELYFABRICS.COM; MADEMOISELLE JULES EARRINGS, \$155, NECKLACE (WORN AS BRACELET), \$245, MADEMOISELLEJULES.COM; ALDO BOOTS, \$250, ALDO SHOES.COM; MARARAMIRO VESSEL, \$425, MARARAMIRO.COM.



Selene is wearing SILK LAUNDRY BLAZER, \$620, PANTS, \$550, SILK LAUNDRY.CA; CAROLE TANENBAUM VINTAGE COLLECTION EARRINGS, PRICE UPON REQUEST, CAROLETANENBAUM.COM; JENNY BIRD RINGS, \$158 EACH, JENNY-BIRD.CA.



Koto is wearing REFORMATION DRESS, \$428, THEREFORMATION.COM; JENNY BIRD EARRINGS, \$168, EAR CUFF, \$110, JENNY-BIRD.CA; CAROLE TANENBAUM VINTAGE COLLECTION CUFF, PRICE UPON REQUEST, CAROLETANENBAUM.COM; MAGUIRE SHOES, \$230, MAGUIRESHOES.COM.

CRATE&BARREL FLOOR CANDLEHOLDER, \$329, CANDLE-HOLDERS, \$75 & \$55, CRATE&BARREL.CA



Brenna is wearing HERMÈS DRESS, PRICE UPON REQUEST, HERMÈS.COM; CAROLE TANENBAUM VINTAGE COLLECTION EARRINGS, PRICE UPON REQUEST, CAROLETANENBAUM.COM; SIMONS TIGHTS, \$14, SIMONS.CA; REFORMATION SHOES, \$398, THEREFORMATION.COM.

All in the details

Stylist Georgia Groom breaks down the elements of exceptional holiday party style



A menswear-inspired white shirt and black tie gets some extra holiday wrapping with a brocade duster. Double up on the earrings and you've just added even more shine; any excuse to pile on the sparkles.

CAROLE TANENBAUM VINTAGE COLLECTION EARRINGS, PRICE UPON REQUEST, CAROLETANENBAUM.COM



Anklets aren't just for the summer. Try wearing a stack over lace tights with a glam loafer for your next party.

JENNY BIRD ANKLETS, FROM \$98, JENNY-BIRD.COM; H&M TIGHTS, \$25, H&M.COM; GUCCI SHOES, \$230, MAGUIRESHOES.COM



Keep all of your jewellery monochromatic for a seriously chic holiday look. All silver feels glam and modern.

JENNY BIRD EARRINGS, \$168, EAR CUFF, \$110, JENNY-BIRD.CA; MADEMOISELLE JULES HAIR TIES, PRICE UPON REQUEST, MADEMOISELLEJULES.COM



A Mini Hermès Kelly bag adorned with a rocking horse screams balletomane who adores *The Nutcracker*. It manages to be both chic and whimsical, which is no easy task.

HERMÈS BAG, PRICE UPON REQUEST, HERMÈS.COM

Be our guest Make holiday entertaining easy-breezy with these expert tips



MARARAMIRO LAMP \$2,750, VESSEL (LARGE), \$1,088, VESSEL, \$620, CANDLEHOLDER, \$175, MARARAMIRO.COM

Throwing the perfect holiday party can be a challenge, but Ace Hotel bar manager Aaron Hatchell knows how to envision—and pull off—a smashing soirée. “Holiday parties are especially fun because you can create something that doesn't exist in reality and live in that world for the evening,” he says. “Great decor, opulent lighting and amazing sounds and tipples enhance the vibe of your party.” Here are his expert tips on how to make it happen.

PREP AHEAD AS MUCH AS YOU CAN “No one wants a host who's tied up making things during the time that they are supposed to be enjoying the guests that they've invited. Do as much as you can beforehand and life will be easier when all of your friends arrive. Pre-batched cocktails are a game changer! I love a pre-batched 2:1 martini that's been diluted with 15 per cent water and stuck in the freezer overnight. All you have to do is pour.”

OFFER A SIMPLE SIGNATURE COCKTAIL “A few nice and easy cocktails that are simple and crowd-pleasing for any gath-

ering are a properly made martini, some form of bubbles, and a great simple sipper like an old-fashioned.”

GO ALL OUT ON GLASSWARE “The right glassware can really help set the tone of your event. Whether you're having a swanky cocktail party that's all glitter and gold with gorgeous coupes and flutes or a stein-filled Octoberfest extravaganza, glassware can help tell your story.”

USE WHAT YOU HAVE ON HAND “Repurpose glassware and use it as a vase or to serve your

cranberry sauce. Decorate with leftover greenery from your floral arrangements or forage outside for some branches and adorn them with candles to set the mood.”

STOCK NON-ALCOHOLIC OPTIONS “Don't forget about your friends who don't drink! Just because someone doesn't drink alcohol doesn't mean they should only have soda or a syrupy mocktail. There are so many great options out there as far as non-alcoholic spirits go, so do some research and talk to your local bartender and see what they're using.”



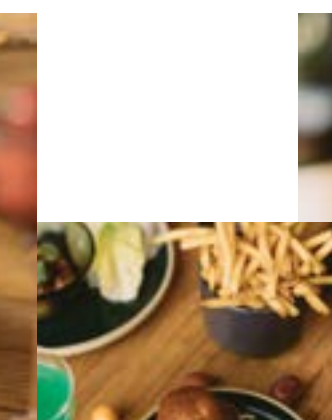
APPS AT THE ACE Charcuterie board with chef's selection of cheeses, cured meats and grissini.



A Cicada Days cocktail, with gin, cedar syrup, grapefruit, lemon and cypress bitters.



Marinated olives with rosemary.



Smashed sliders with smoked cheddar, pickles and bomba aioli.



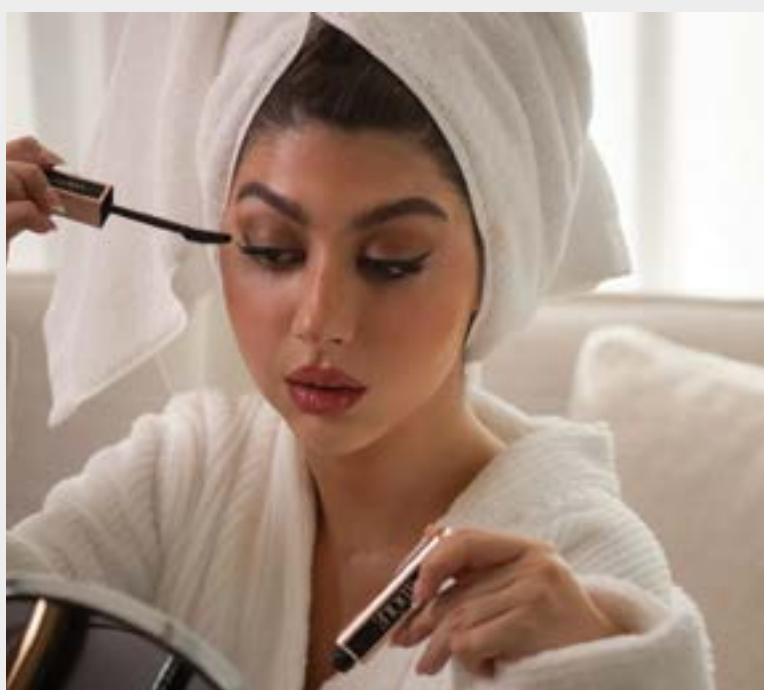
The Ace Martini, with London dry gin, vermouth blend and Ace tincture.

GET READY WITH TARA SIGARI FOR THE L'ORÉAL GROUPE'S 115th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

"I'm thinking Old Hollywood with a touch of Parisian because—to me—that is very L'Oréal"

Celebrating a 115th anniversary is cause for a major celebration — and a major look. In honour of the L'Oréal Groupe's 115th anniversary event, content creator Tara Sigari took us behind the scenes as she got ready for the festivities. Held at a private event venue in downtown Toronto, the soirée was hosted by An Verhulst-Santos, L'Oréal Canada's President and CEO who

made it the perfect evening to commemorate such a milestone. L'Oréal Groupe has been the world leader in beauty for the past 115 years, focusing on the science and innovation behind the creation of the products from its 40 brands. It's a wide-ranging repertoire that has been a part of Tara's life since she started wearing makeup.



"L'Oréal Paris Telescopic Mascara was my first mascara ever," she says. "I still use it to this day." Over the years, she's discovered even more favourites like YSL Beauty ("You can't go wrong with any of their perfumes or their lipsticks.") and Lancôme Absolue Cream. "I bought it for my mother initially and I ended up using it as well," Tara says.

To Tara, this high-profile event was more than just a birthday party—it was a celebration of L'Oréal Groupe's legacy of innovation, passion and purpose. "L'Oréal Groupe has been a champion in this." For this special evening, she wanted to channel a timeless, classic look. "I'm thinking Old Hollywood with a touch of Parisian because—to me—that is very L'Oréal," she says.

To style her hair in loose, voluminous curls while caring for its health, Tara turned two new innovations from L'Oréal Professionnel: the L'Oréal Professionnel AirLight Pro hairdryer and the L'Oréal Professionnel SteamPod 4, both of which boast innovative features that Tara points out are true to L'Oréal Groupe's heritage. "The SteamPod 4 has a patented steam technology, allows more shine and 95 percent less damage. The AirLight Pro has infrared light technology that is less damaging, faster drying and consumes less energy," she says. "It's interesting to me how far ahead in the game L'Oréal Groupe is when it comes to technology."

To prep her skin—a key first step in any makeup look—Tara used a mix of skincare from Lancôme's Rénergie collection to lift, firm and reenergize her complexion. Her flawless base was courtesy of some of L'Oréal Groupe's most renowned products including Yves Saint Laurent All Hours Foundation in LW9 and Touche Éclat

Awakening Concealer Click Pen, IT Cosmetics Bye Bye Dark Spots concealer in Fair Neutral 11 and Giorgio Armani Beauty Fluid Sheer Glow Enhancer shade 8. Accentuating and bringing depth and colour to her natural contours was the NYX Professional Makeup Buttermelt Bronzer in Butta Off and Giorgio Armani Beauty Luminous Silk Cheek Tint Liquid Blush shade 53 before everything was set with a spritz of L'Oréal Paris Infallible 3-Second Setting Mist.

The limited-edition revival of the Urban Decay The Original Naked Palette brought the va-va-voom to her smokey cat eye, complemented by Yves Saint Laurent Couture Mini Clutch, the Valentino Twin Gel and Liquid Eyeliner, and a swipe of Lancôme's Lash Idôle Lash Lifting and Volumizing Mascara. On her lips, Tara customized an original mix of L'Oréal Paris Infallible Matte Resistance Liquid Lipstick in 210, Valentino Liquiroso 2 in 1 Soft Matte Liquid Lipstick and Blush in Undressed Velvet and NYX Professional Makeup's Fat Oil Lip Drip.

Tara was also delighted to test drive the upcoming HAPTA, a motion-stabilizing device that assists those who have difficulty raising their arms or who have limited grip strength or wrist mobility to apply lipstick. As someone who suffers from arthritis, Tara can't wait for this highly inclusive innovation to land on shelves in Canada next year.

As a member of the extended L'Oréal family, Tara cherishes the meaning behind L'Oréal Groupe and being a part of its mission to support and empower women to feel confident, authentic and celebrated. "Here's to many more years of redefining beauty and breaking boundaries together," she says.