

Special-Occasion Dogs

Every pampered pooch deserves a new outfit for the season's festivities.

Sandy Robins

Courtesy of I See Spot This holiday season, Santa's famous reindeer — Dasher, Dancer, Prancer and the gang — are going to think they're hallucinating that the Big Guy from the North Pole has been miniaturized and multiplied all over the country.

Well, it's no mind trick — there are going to be literally millions of Santas on the streets, out shopping, partying and lying by the fireside in homes across America. Pets of all shapes and sizes will don their Santa suit to celebrate the festive season.

Santa suits: A big hit

Santa outfits are going to be really big this year, with little black boots and fur-trimmed hat accessories.

The Santa outfit from Theo Ehf in Reykjavik, Iceland, is a replica of the traditional suit complete with the little black belt. "It was a major hit last holiday season, and we were completely sold out. We're expecting a repeat performance this year," says company spokesperson Thora Bjork Ottesen.

The Los Angeles-based I See Spot label is gender-bending their traditional suit and producing a Mrs. Claus dress in red stretch velvet trimmed with fur that laces up at the back. The Mr. Claus companion outfit has a matching white fur trim. Both are sleeveless. "People are very traditional when it comes to their pets," says Sandy Maroney, the fashion force behind the label. "While they may shop for a variety of outfits for the holidays, pet lovers are setting a trend by buying a Santa outfit every year. We've used stretch velvet to emphasize the comfort factor."

Other Outfit Options

Kim Walker, owner of the upscale Mod Dog Boutique in Aventura, Fla., sees other holiday attire for dogs. "This season, apart from super-fancy Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus outfits, clothing with lots of detailed embellishments and winter coats with hook-attachments that double as harnesses with leashes to match are going to make a strong streetwear statement," she says.

There is already a fashion flurry from retailers everywhere to stock up on padded windbreakers and faux fur-lined coats in a variety of colors. "Our windbreakers have a special mesh lining that prevents fur from tangling and matting," explains Bjork Ottesen. "We have also produced a coat with two belts to give the appearance of two totally different outfits. Our padded snow overall has a reflective strip to add visibility for nighttime strolls."

Despite strong traditional tones to the season, some designers are tweaking it a bit.

"We've teamed cherry red with lime green and added jeweled bones and ribbons for a festive touch," says Fred Pannek, vice president of Product Development at Mud Pie in Atlanta. "Simple T-shirts are always top sellers, and we've added appropriate slogans like 'Santa, we need to talk ...' and 'Santa Paws, I've been dog-gone good!' They also work well with Santa hats with pom-poms and decorations."

Many outfits and occasions

Courtesy of I See Spot "T-shirts with standard holiday slogans that celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah and the New Year will be popular. We pack them in gift sets. They make great stocking stuffers."

Stephanie Bell, owner of Fancy Furs in Lexington, Ky., says the well-dressed pups need a variety of outfits for the many occasions the holidays bring. "They need fun outfits for shopping sprees, lunching with friends, black-tie parties and other holiday festivities. In fact, the posh pet's closet should mirror its owner's closet. You never know when a last-minute invitation arrives in the mail."

Embellished accessories

Watch for pups in tuxedos to strut their stuff and accompany pooch pals in frothy combinations of netting and lace, silk and chiffon in hot pink and basic black, ruched and ruffled and belted — with diamanté buckles of course.

There are nothing like rhinestones and Swarovski crystals to add glamour and glitz. “Embellish” is definitely the buzzword among designers this season as collars go heavily encrusted, T-shirts are appliquéd and hair accessories twinkle and sparkle.

Other must-have party accessories include Jezebelle collars featuring a frothy collection of chiffon ribbons, lace, organza, sequins and satin in traditional red and green, as well as gold and lots and lots of pink. They look good on any creature with four paws and a tail.

And pet fashionistas will agree — what's a party season without party hats!

“They are a hot item for the holidays,” confirms Sherri Stankewitz of Golddiggers in Lomita, Calif. “They are lightweight and come in all sizes festooned with flowers and glitter and netting. Angel wings that strap on will be another festive touch for the partying pup.”

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