

Art of the tacky sweater

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For Amusement

Run date: 3 Dec. 2009

After hundreds of years of collegiate education, college students still host one singular holiday-themed party: The Tacky Sweater Party. We wait all year for this—ticking days off the calendar as we are weighed down by boring, normal sweaters with traditional prints like argyle and other kinds of argyle. But, alas, the wait is over! It's December: the stress of finals is bearing down, roommates are driving us over the edge, dirty laundry is spilling over not one but two hampers... And it all goes away as soon as we slip into that horribly unattractive Goodwill bargain-of-a-purchase, the tacky sweater.

Tacky sweaters come in many shapes and sizes, covering a wide range of humiliation, and everyone has his or her own tacky taste.

Some prefer the oversized knitted tacky sweater sporting an indiscernible holiday caricature on the chest. Is it a reindeer? A snowman? Moses Cleveland? Who knows? But better yet, who cares! It's a hideous shade of green and goes past the wearer's knees, so it's golden!

The grandma tacky sweater is extremely common, as it is the easiest to attain. This crew-neck, cotton-blend sweater is easy to spot, because it is usually the only sweater you can hear. That's right: jingle bells are jovially attached to the Christmas tree or sleigh on the grandma tacky sweater, announcing the wearer's presence and his or her attention to detail.

The mom tacky sweater is similar to the grandma tacky sweater sans the bells. The mom tacky sweater will have some sort of silly holiday saying across the chest, like, "Santa's watching you!" or "Hannukah's a holiday, too!" These are the types of sweaters seen at PTA meetings across the country, so they're sure to be a hit at any college house.

The matching tacky sweaters are great if you only have one friend and plan on staying with that friend the entire night. These sweaters don't require bells or sayings—they can just be a green and red pattern that looks wintery—because they match, and that is as tacky as tacky gets. One rule about matching tacky sweaters: Do not, DO NOT, ever have matching tacky sweaters with your boyfriend/girlfriend. That is obnoxious and everyone will hate you.

The I-actually-wore-this-when-I-was-little tacky sweater (also referred to as the slut tacky sweater) is always too tight, too small, and too I'm-dying-for-attention-y. While it may still sort of fit, anything that you wore in the third grade is going to give you the arm fat of Starr Jones and the Muffin Top of any guest on Jerry Springer. For the love of god, do not wear the I-actually-wore-this-when-I-was-little tacky sweater because NO ONE wants to look at that all night.

The tacky sweater vests are always a win, especially when paired with a tacky turtleneck. Nothing says "I prefer cross-stitching to having friends!" better than a bauble-drenched sweater vest and reindeer-covered turtleneck. The sex appeal of this look is astounding, so if you're looking for a tacky sweater companion, I definitely suggest the tacky sweater vest. (Yeah, that rhymed.)

The "meh" tacky sweater is anything that looks like it belongs in Land's End winter specials

holidays—not even the fake holidays, like Solstice. They’re just sweaters, and they look kind of tacky, so people wear them. Seeing a “meh” tacky sweater makes me want to vomit—we only get to have tacky sweater parties once a year, so don’t make it all crappy, make it tacky!

(Another rhyme!)

Tacky sweaters are not limited to these options. Explore all the tacky possibilities, and have fun! But not, like, illegal amounts of fun because tacky sweaters don’t go over so well with the prison crowd...believe me, I know.



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