



Ho Ho Ho: the changing face of Christmas is no laughing matter

usual oversung rubbish"? What do you want, a Christmas medal for being a carol hipster? *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* may be the Mr Brightside of the genre, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Merry – not Happy – Christmas

You've no right to imply I'm happy. Merry maybe, but that's only because of the port. The scourge of Happy Christmas is imported from America, I feel sure of it.

Dogs in Christmas outfits

We hear a lot about how XL Bully dogs should be destroyed and their owners prosecuted, but not nearly enough about how whippets in Christmas onesies should be rehomed and their owners hurled into the sea, along with the rest of the dog's winter wardrobe.

Saying 'Saint Nicholas was from Turkey'

This doesn't seem wholly relevant to the Christmas party discussion about the Middle East conflict, Nile.

'Luxury' crackers

Paper hat that breaks the moment you clench your jaw; miniature set of screwdrivers; party popper; and a joke no funnier than, "Why did Santa install seatbelts on his sleigh? Because of elf and safety." Any more decadent than that is a waste of time. Most of it lands in the cranberry sauce anyway. What if you took grandad's remaining eye out with a flying caviar tin, then how would you feel?

Matching festive pyjama sets

"Hello, is that social services? Yes, sorry to call on Christmas morning but I'd like to report a cult."

Christmas adverts

Let us be honest: the only two good Christmas adverts are the original Holidays Are Coming from Coca-Cola, and the 2007 Tesco ad featuring the Spice Girls hiding from one another. Oh and the entire Aldi Kevin the Carrot saga.

Round-up letters

If we wanted to know what you've done this year, we'd have kept in touch during the year. Desist.

Cynical articles that need to lighten up

What, like the LED Bambi figurines on your lawn? Fair enough. Merry Christmas.



entirely unable to help, as I'm ushered gently towards meeting Father Christmas in a grotto set up where the compost's usually sold? There isn't even any bird feed on sale; it's just Christmas stuff. How has this happened?

Fake German winter markets in Britain

The effort is nice. The thought, from beleaguered local councils, is appreciated. But there's just something about drinking Glühwein in a rainy commuter-belt car park while Gemma Collins and Darren Day's version of *Baby It's Cold Outside* blares from a food van encased in the livery of an Alpine hut while your children do their best not to get abducted, that just doesn't scream "authentic charm."

Panettone

Are you a cake or a bread, pal? While you make your mind up, I'll be over here buying another chocolate yule log instead.

Showing off with obscure carols

Oh we're doing "Hodie Christus natus est", Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck's rarely-heard 1619 Gregorian chant, instead of "all the

Perfect red lips and other party make-up tips for over-50s

Want to freshen up your look for the season? *Lucia Ferrari* gets an expert steer

I've been doing no make-up for so long that a glamorous party look throws me off kilter. My default evening make-up is usually exactly the same as my day make-up with a bit more eyeliner and an extra layer of mascara. But I'm not sure if that's flattering on my 50-plus skin.

Given that most of us have less than 10 minutes to put our face on, I wanted a lesson in how to do easy evening make-up, which will make me look more glam than usual.

I called upon the skills of British make-up artist Wendy Rowe who has made everyone from Helen Mirren to Priyanka Chopra and Victoria Beckham look fabulous for a magazine cover or red carpet.

"Two easy party looks will suit most faces," Rowe says. "The first is a red lip with lots of lash; the second is a relaxed, smokey eye: but you have to get the skin right."

FLAWLESS SKIN

"A quick de-puffing massage while you cleanse or apply moisturiser (focus on the jawline) can make a difference," says Rowe. "Follow with a sheet mask, such as the Ill Skin Cryo De-Puffing Facial Masks (£95 for 5; selfridges.com).

Rowe's other trick is to apply contour and blusher on moisturised skin before applying foundation, for a "prettier, more luminous finish to the skin".

"When it comes to blusher, apply it higher than you normally would, almost on the cheekbone." Rowe recommends Charlotte Tilbury Pillow Talk Matte Beauty Blush Wand (£30; cultbeauty.co.uk).

"Then blend the contour stick (applied in the apple of the cheek and under the jawline) and blusher into the skin with a large brush before applying your foundation and concealer to areas you need." One of Rowe's favourite foundations is Mac Studio Face and Body Foundation (£38; maccosmetics.co.uk) as it won't accentuate lines or wrinkles.

"Finish with a matt bronzer and a dab of highlighter but don't be tempted to use anything with shimmer, as it will settle in lines and make you look older," says Rowe. She loves Chanel Les Beiges Healthy Glow Bronzing Cream (£46; johnlewis.com) and Westman Atelier Lit Up Highlight Stick (£44; cultbeauty.co.uk), which dabbled on to cheekbones gives skin a real glass like clarity.

PERFECT RED LIPSTICK

"Finding your perfect shade of red is a bit of trial and error. Matte red looks a bit more chic than a glossy red and is less high maintenance as you won't have to keep doing touch-ups," says Rowe. She created a red lipstick to suit "nearly everyone" for refillable lipstick brand La Bouche Rouge (£36; cultbeauty.co.uk). Makeup by Mario (£30; sephora.co.uk) and Armani Beauty (£33;



Simply red: Lucia Ferrari gets into the party mood with a make-up makeover

AGELESS PARTY MAKE-UP HEROES



Les Beiges eyeshadow palettes, £53, Chanel chanel.com



Max Factor 2000 Calorie Waterproof Mascara, £9.99, Superdrug superdrug.com



Giorgio Armani Lip Power in 400, £35, Boots boots.com

and if you're a bit messy with the application, it doesn't matter as you're putting shadow over. As you get older, use a lighter mascara to keep the eye looking as wide as possible: Max Factor 2000 Calorie Waterproof Mascara (£9.99; superdrug.com) is great.

"After a certain age, use a cream textured eyeshadow as it won't settle in the lines. Victoria Beckham has some good taupe ones. Simply apply it all over the eye socket and eyelid. Then finish with a powder eyeshadow in a deeper chocolate colour just on the outer corners to give the impression of a bigger eye. Chanel Les Beiges eyeshadow palettes (£53; chanel.com) are my favourite. As you get older, be careful with eyeliner as it can be too hard. You want to keep everything looking soft with no hard lines.

"Don't be tempted to wear any glitter – it will fall into creases and will add on a few years."

TIPS FOR PARTY HAIR

Hair stylist Neil Moodie, who works a lot with Rowe, says if your hair is long enough, a high ponytail with a bit of volume towards the back of the crown is a quick and easy style to accompany a red lip.

"Apply hairspray directly on to your hairbrush as you brush the hair into the ponytail," he says. "And follow the line of your cheekbones to where you make the ponytail sit at the back of your head. It can create a bit of a lift to the face too."

Having the hair a bit "undone" can be more youthful than looking too polished. "French women are good at this laid-back style, and it can work well with a smokey eye, as you don't want everything looking too perfect."

If you don't have time for a blow-dry, spritz a blow-dry spray on to the roots; try Sundaze Sea Salt Spray (£26) for a tousled, relaxed look or Save the Do (£26) for a more polished finish, both by Hair by Sam McKnight (sephora.co.uk) and blow-dry with a round brush or fingers for a quick volume boost for thinning hair.

For further make-up tips from Wendy Rowe, see wendyrowe.com