



Victoria's Secret Hosts Party at Penn Station: Discover Why!

Description

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Fashion enthusiasts gathered on a chilly Seventh Avenue.

Photo: Chantal Fernandez

What embodies "sexy" more than Penn Station? One Tuesday evening, I found myself outside the busiest train station in the United States, surrounded by hundreds of individuals, smartphones poised above their heads, watching two large screens across Seventh Avenue broadcasting the 2024 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. With the Empire State Building in the background, lit up in pink for the event.

The crowd was a unique blend of corporate commuters, sightseers with rolling suitcases, teenagers with and without their parents, international university students, Knicks fans, and savvy New Yorkers adept at snagging freebies, no matter the wait. There were queues for photo ops on a pink carpet adorned with wings, on a pink chairlift against a snowy mountain backdrop, for goodie bags containing a modest body spray, for entry into an indoor lounge with complimentary food for Victoria's Secret rewards members, and the longest line of all, extending along Seventh Avenue, for a Pink-branded truck dispensing hot chocolate. When asked which line led to the goodie bags, responses varied.

A fashion industry acquaintance messaged me from Brooklyn, where the runway show was about to commence. "Wish you were here!" I reciprocated the sentiment. However, my request to attend had been politely declined. The rationale was evident: I recently authored a [book](#) delving into the history of Victoria's Secret, a brand with a captivating yet sometimes scandalous past, struggling since 2018, when it last presented its renowned fashion show. In recent weeks, I encountered several journalists also denied entry. We had all covered the brand's major controversies, from allegations of model harassment to a troubling association with Jeffrey Epstein. No access to the Cher performance for us.

Clockwise from left: The fashion show streamed on a big billboard, roughly at the intersection of Old Navy and McDonald's. Photo: Chantal Fernandez
Lauren Marie, a lifelong Victoria's Secret fan, dressed in pink for the occasion. Photo: Chantal Fernandez
Other attendees warmed up with free Pink-branded hot cocoa. Photo: Chantal Fernandez

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Nevertheless, an alternate opportunity presented itself through an Instagram ad. Victoria's Secret was hosting a complimentary watch party at the "Penn District," no RSVP required. When I arrived at 6 p.m. for the 7 p.m. show, lively music filled the air, and the pavilion was already bustling with attendees eager to discover the event's offerings. Jacob's Pickles had a stand, as did Pastrami Queen. Several walls were adorned in pink featuring the brand's logos and wings. While inspecting the chairlift photo opportunity, I encountered a mother and her adolescent daughter from New Jersey who were preparing to depart. Her daughter, a fan of Lisa, the Korean pop star performing at the show, decided to leave upon realizing Lisa wouldn't be physically present at Penn Station. "I can watch this from anywhere," she expressed in Spanish.



Understandable.

I strolled around and met another teenager, Nicole, accompanied by her mother and friend, Isabella, perched on the pavilion's edge with an ideal view of the large screens, eagerly awaiting the commencement of the show. Isabella made her first Victoria's Secret body spray purchase around the age of 10 and grew up watching the show. Nicole shared similar sentiments. "It was inspiring because I adored the outfits and colors," she remarked, recalling the year when Gisele Bündchen emerged from a colossal Christmas gift on stage. Both were particularly keen on seeing Adriana Lima and were impressed by her youthful appearance in backstage photos circulating on social media. "She looks so young!" Isabella exclaimed unironically. "I had hoped they would bring back Bella Hadid," added Nicole. When informed that Bella was expected to make an appearance, their excitement soared. Their mother remained silent but filmed our interaction as I interviewed them. Isabella labeled the show as "iconic." I bid them farewell and continued mingling, encountering another mother and daughter from Germany, Portuguese university students, and a pair of charming Dutch women in their early twenties who professed to be "obsessed" with Victoria's Secret.

As showtime arrived, the music intensified, capturing the attention of nearly all attendees fixated on the screens for the 40-minute spectacle. Initially, I mistook the applause surrounding me for the live audience responding to each model's runway appearance. Yet, the applause was pre-recorded in synchronization with the soundtrack. Noteworthy cheers erupted for the performers (Lisa, Tyla, and particularly Cher) and the illustrious models: Adriana Lima, Gigi and Bella Hadid, Behati Prinsloo, Tyra Banks, and Kate Moss, whose surprise appearance had not been announced beforehand. Carla Bruni or Eva Herzigova's presence didn't elicit the same reaction. (Perhaps the wrong audience.) While some individuals engaged in conversations, particularly a group of young finance professionals who seamlessly integrated with a cluster of corporate women and conversed throughout the show, the majority remained captivated by the screens, occasionally whipping out their phones upon spotting a famous model.

The revamped Victoria's Secret show struck me as more refined than its flamboyant, bronzed, and toned 2010s predecessor — featuring less ostentatious costumes, reduced cleavage, and a decline in voluminous teased extensions. More casual, less contrived. (At least in essence. Consider the exorbitant cost of reuniting all these Angels!) Nevertheless, the overall presentation felt somewhat distant to me — failing to evoke the nostalgic excitement of bygone shows that remain larger than life for individuals like Nicole and Isabella. Personally, witnessing Ashley Graham grace the runway didn't feel as significant, despite acknowledging her past rejection due to her size.



Following the conclusion of the show, I encountered three women in their early twenties: Orla, Abby, and Danae, co-workers who had recently relocated to New York from Scotland, the U.K., and Ireland to pursue careers in finance. Their fervor for Victoria's Secret was palpable, evident by their early arrival three hours prior to showtime and an hour-long wait to access the members' lounge. "The moment Kate Moss stepped out, the crowd erupted in cheers," recalled Orla. "I'm elated that it's back; halting it made no sense," voiced Danae, the most unabashed fan of the trio. "They motivate me to stay healthy, exercise, maintain physical fitness and appear attractive. You want to look pretty when you see them," she affirmed. While Orla welcomed the newfound inclusion of diverse ages and body types among the models, she appreciated that it wasn't overly emphasized. "It felt authentic, devoid of excessive virtue signaling," she remarked. "This was a tad more genuine, still Victoria's Secret, but in a 2024 context." Abby, however, refrained from showering the brand with excessive praise. "I believe they are merely meeting the minimum requirements with diversity, body shapes, no offense," she opined. "Nevertheless, I enjoyed seeing all the veteran models; it evoked a strong sense of nostalgia."

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Vocabulary List:

1. **Controversies** /'kɒn.trə.vɜː.sɪ.z/ (noun): Disputes or disagreements that arise in public opinion.
2. **Fervor** /'fɜː.vər/ (noun): Intense and passionate feeling.
3. **Ostentatious** /,ɒs.ten'teɪ.ʃəs/ (adjective): Characterized by vulgar or pretentious display; designed to impress or attract notice.
4. **Authentic** /ɔː'θen.tɪk/ (adjective): Of undisputed origin; genuine.
5. **Captivated** /'kæp.tɪ.veɪ.tɪd/ (verb): Attracted and held the interest and attention of someone.
6. **Elicited** /ɪ'lɪs.ɪ.tɪd/ (verb): Drew out or brought forth a response or reaction.

Comprehension Questions



Multiple Choice

1. Where did the fashion enthusiasts gather to watch the 2024 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show?
Option: Penn Station
Option: Empire State Building
Option: Seventh Avenue
Option: Brooklyn
2. What was the rationale for the author being denied entry to the Victoria's Secret fashion show?
Option: Affiliation with a competitor brand
Option: Recent criminal activity
Option: History of journalism controversies
Option: Lack of invitation
3. What was the primary reason behind the revamped Victoria's Secret show being described as more refined?
Option: Greater number of models
Option: Inclusion of diverse body types
Option: Reduced quality of costumes
Option: Decrease in popularity
4. What was the response of Abby towards the brand Victoria's Secret?
Option: Excessive praise
Option: Minimal requirements met
Option: Strong sense of nostalgia
Option: Complete rejection
5. Who served as a motivation for Danae to maintain physical fitness and appear attractive?
Option: Supermodels
Option: Friends
Option: Family
Option: Co-workers
6. What made the overall presentation of the Victoria's Secret show feel somewhat distant to the author?
Option: Pre-recorded applause
Option: Sudden rainstorm
Option: Technical difficulties
Option: Guest lineup



True-False

7. The Victoria's Secret show featured a live audience responding to the models on the runway.
8. The revamped Victoria's Secret show was described as more flamboyant and toned compared to its predecessor.
9. Isabella made her first Victoria's Secret body spray purchase at the age of 15.
10. The author witnessed a strong reaction to Carla Bruni and Eva Herzigova at the show.
11. The showtime lasted for around 30 minutes.
12. Abby considered the revamped show to be more genuine in a 2024 context.

Gap-Fill

14. The Victoria's Secret show struggled since the year _____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Seventh Avenue 2. Covered the brand's major controversies 3. Reduced cleavage
4. Minimal requirements met 5. Supermodels 6. Pre-recorded applause

True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. True

Gap-Fill: 14. 2018

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. Which emotion is commonly associated with deep sorrow or sadness?

Option: Joy

Option: Anger

Option: Grief

Option: Excitement

2. Which word is synonymous with "having great power or influence"?



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- Option: Trendy
Option: Romantic
Option: Authentic
Option: Authoritative
3. What term describes the ability to recover quickly from difficulties or toughness?
Option: Ostentatious
Option: Resilience
Option: Insufficiency
Option: Exciting
4. Which word best describes intense and passionate feeling or enthusiasm?
Option: Fervor
Option: Anticipated
Option: Manifest
Option: Victory
5. What term means clear or obvious to the eye or mind?
Option: Coveted
Option: Winning
Option: Authentic
Option: Manifest
6. Which word refers to an idealized view of reality or a love story?
Option: Controversial
Option: Impressive
Option: Romantic
Option: Groundbreaking
7. What term refers to situations where things become more complex or problematic?
Option: Complications
Option: Tribute
Option: Lamenting
Option: Exciting
8. Which term describes something innovative or pioneering?
Option: Groundbreaking
Option: Elicited
Option: Rigorous
Option: Coveted
9. What word represents the overcoming of an opponent or success in a battle or competition?
Option: Impressive



- Option: Victory
- Option: Support
- Option: Demise

10. Which term describes something currently popular or fashionable?

- Option: Trendy
- Option: Vibrant
- Option: Accompanied
- Option: Acclaimed

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

- 11. _____ is a profound feeling of sadness especially in response to a loss.
- 12. We offered our heartfelt _____ to the family of the deceased.
- 13. The entire nation _____ the death of the beloved leader.
- 14. She wore an _____ dress to the gala attracting everyone's attention.
- 15. The news of her promotion was _____ for the whole team.
- 16. The sudden _____ of the company's founder shocked the business world.
- 17. There was an _____ of evidence to support the claims made by the prosecution.
- 18. The mournful song had everyone _____ the loss of a dear friend.
- 19. The long-_____ sequel to the bestselling novel finally hit the shelves.
- 20. Her ability to speak multiple languages fluently is truly _____.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. The community came together to pay a heartfelt tribute to the local hero.
22. The mesmerizing performance captivated the audience from start to finish.
23. The politician's career was marred by scandals and controversies.
24. The antique shop prided itself on selling only authentic vintage items.



25. Her speech elicited strong emotions and reactions from the audience.
26. The prestigious award was one of the most coveted honors in the industry.
27. The debut novel was widely acclaimed for its originality and powerful prose.
28. The surgery was successful but complications arose during the recovery period.
29. The fans cheered with fervor as their team scored the winning goal.
30. She relied on the unwavering support of her friends during difficult times.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Grief 2. Authoritative 3. Resilience 4. Fervor 5. Manifest 6. Romantic 7. Complications 8. Groundbreaking 9. Victory 10. Trendy

Gap-Fill: 11. Grief 12. Condolences 13. Mourned 14. Ostentatious 15. Exciting 16. Demise 17. Insufficiency 18. Lamenting 19. Anticipated 20. Impressive

Matching sentence: 1. Tribute 2. Captivated 3. Controversies 4. Authentic 5. Elicited 6. Coveted 7. Acclaimed 8. Complications 9. Fervor 10. Support

CATEGORY

1. Entertainment - LEVEL4

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