PopSugar’s Sugar Chalet Is a Curated Winter Wellness Retreat

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The only precipitation in New York City this weekend is likely to be rain, but PopSugar is forecasting a blizzard at its ski-themed “winter wonderland” in Bryant Park.

Sugar Chalet is a one-day retreat inside the glass-enclosed Overlook space decked out in lots of faux snow, featuring curated brand activations, holiday shopping, mini-makeovers, cooking workshops, wellness sessions and an appearance by Olympic skier Lindsey Vonn. Brand partners include Athleta, e.l.f. Cosmetics, Nature’s Way supplements, CBD brand Seventh Sense and online fashion retailer 6pm.com.

The event is free to attend, with about 1,000 people expected on Saturday, Nov. 23. It’s a different kind of PopSugar dive into IRL activities that began with the two-day summer wellness summit called Play/Ground in 2018, which grew to more than 10,000 participants this year.

And though the retreat will be purpose-built for social sharing, PopSugar aims to create something deeper than an Instagram moment.

“We wanted to do something special for the winter season, taking the [lessons] from Play/Ground and applying them to another tentpole franchise,” said chief revenue officer Geoff Schiller. “This isn’t just walking around in a mall looking at clothing. It’s a way for consumers to interact with the brands and get a sense of their purpose.”

Those companies, which also include Yasso frozen Greek yogurt and financial services company Klarna, have driven “seven figures in brand activation sponsorship dollars,” according to Schiller, who also hinted that Sugar Chalet could return next year.

PopSugar, now owned by Group Nine and sibling to The Dodo and Thrillist, has a sizable audience among millennial and Gen Z women who want immersive and communal experiences mixed with shopping.

According to trend spotters like business management software firm Mindbody, spa retreats and fitness popups are only growing in popularity, especially those that combine educational workshops, sensory immersion and multiple

dimensions of wellness under one roof.

Sugar Chalet “strikes a balance between playful and mindful,” Schiller says, calling it “accessible and modern.” The pop-up will host on-trend activities like vinyasa flow yoga with Athleta (including a free mat); palm readings and hand massages from Seventh Sense with appearances by celebrity-favorite astrologists Aliza Kelly and Maia Orion; an e.l.f. sweet treat and makeover area; and winter wellness tips and product samples like elderberry drinks and fatigue-fighting supplements from Nature’s Way.

New York’s MNDFL studio will lead meditation sessions, and FoodByMaria will host cooking and spice-blending tutorials.

“We want to bridge the gap between inspiration and action,” Schiller said, “and communicate with, rather than speak at, the audience.”

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