

Party

WITH PURPOSE

Julia Restoin Roitfeld's new collection for Hervé Léger is party perfect – but with a sustainable twist, says *Amy Wakeham*

It's not even ten in the morning, and I've put on a full smokey eye, artfully tousled my just-got-out-of-bed (quite literally) hair and donned a suitably Rive Gauche black roll-neck jumper. It's lockdown three, and this is the first time I've put on make-up and jewellery since New Year's Eve. The reason? I'm about to Zoom with Julia Restoin Roitfeld, poster girl for French chic, and – *bien sûr* – I want to look the part.

As the daughter of Carine Roitfeld, erstwhile editor of *Vogue Paris*, and Christian Restoin, founder of elegant shirt brand Equipment, style quite literally runs in Julia's blood. She grew up immersed in the creativity of fashion shoots for *Vogue*; she got an internship at *The Face*, aged just 14, and she gained a degree in design from Parsons New York.

Today we're talking about her new collection for Hervé Léger, the French maison beloved for its feminine bandaged cocktail dresses, which has been helmed by designer Christian Juul Nielsen since 2018.

'I've always loved the heritage of the brand – it has so many iconic pictures and dresses,' explains Julia, from her new home in north London, where she relocated from New York last summer with her daughter, Romy Nicole, and her boyfriend, Ash frontman Tim Wheeler. 'I wanted to recreate that recognisable style but add a twist,' she continues, 'so I suggested we make it from recycled fabrics.

Hervé Léger was on board straight away.'

In tune with Julia's ongoing passion for the environment (she has a blog, *Less Is More*, in which she advocates living a more conscious, minimalist lifestyle), the 20-piece collection for Resort 2021 is made using sustainable yarns and recycled packaging in accordance with the Global Recycled Standard.

She is aware, however, of the clash between advocating for sustainability and bringing out a new fashion range. 'It's sad not to create new clothes – fashion is what allows you to dream and new things are what inspire you,' she explains. 'But I think we should try to do it with a little bit of consciousness and with sustainability at its heart.'

Above all, she wants to show there's another way to do fashion that's not just about rabid consumption. 'I think you can be sustainable not just by buying eco-conscious clothes but by being very aware of the amount of things you buy. Less is more: buy less, buy better. It's not about being really strict, but every little change helps.'

Julia sees herself as a bit of a role model, pointing out a new path to tread for fashion fans and the industry as a whole. 'I think people are inspired to know that you can work in fashion, but you don't need to chase trends,' she points out. 'And you can still have a good outfit without having to buy too much. I think it's good to lead by example...