



NEVER KNOWN A
GIRL
Like You

DESPITE DEEP TIES TO THE FLIGHTY FASHION WHIRL, JULIA RESTOIN ROITFELD HAS HER FEET ON THE GROUND

by Kelly Laffey

photographed by Damon Baker

Black Desiree dress by Brock Collection.
Elsa Peretti® earrings in 18k gold by Tiffany & Co. Available at tiffany.com, 800.843.3269.

styled by Emily Barnes
hair by Cash Lawless at Jed Root using IGK
makeup by Gianpaolo Ceciliato at Jed Root
using Giorgio Armani Beauty
manicure by Sheril Bailey at Jed Root
fashion assistance by Edwin Exaus
photographed at The Carlyle Hotel



Opposite page: V-Neck Tee in White by 7 For All Mankind. Available at 7 For All Mankind retail stores nationwide and 7forallmankind.com. Black and gold ankle-strap sandal by Giuseppe Zanotti. Available at Giuseppe Zanotti New York, 806 Madison Avenue, 212.650.0455. Reloaded Tusk Cuff by Gabriela Artigas. Available at gabrielaartigas.com. Lunar Choker by Gabriela Artigas x Des Kohan. Available at deskohan.com.



Black Desiree dress by Brock Collection. Out of Retirement™ rectangle ring in 18k gold, Tiffany T wire ring in 18k gold with diamonds and Elsa Peretti® earrings in 18k gold, all by Tiffany & Co. Available at Tiffany.com, 800.843.3269.

TOM FORD ONCE DESCRIBED JULIA RESTOIN ROITFELD AS “EXACTLY WHAT BEAUTY IS.”

The compliment came in 2011, five years after Roitfeld became the face of his first fragrance, Black Orchid. She was 25 years old when she got the call. She had just graduated from Parsons, where she studied branding. The role was her first modeling campaign.

“Hearing him say that was huge,” she says, “but it’s a lot to live up to.”

Roitfeld’s definition of beauty has been crafted over three decades. She grew up in Paris as fashion royalty. Her mom is Carine Roitfeld, who headed French *Vogue* for 10 years in the early 2000s. Her father is Christian Restoin, the creator of the clothing line Equipment.

To Roitfeld, beauty is “the way you carry yourself. It’s the way you smile at people. It’s something that should be contagious, but beyond appearances.”

She hopes that her daughter, 4-year-old Romy Nicole, develops a similar mentality. “I always try to boost her confidence,” says Roitfeld. “Once you’re confident, you feel beautiful.” Roitfeld doesn’t need to worry. Romy receives so many birthday party invites, it’s “almost too much of a social calendar for a little girl,” she says.

As a kid, Roitfeld didn’t run in the popular crowds. She grew up traveling to photo shoots and going to shows with her mom on weekends, but “the fashion world was so different than it is today,” she says. “It was more casual. We

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went to support a designer, and not to show yourself.” She modeled as a child, including a Benetton campaign for French *Elle*, but her career was informal. “It was very organic,” she says. She participated when her mom needed children on set. “And then I stopped,” she says. “I had a normal childhood.”

With no internet or social media, Roitfeld didn’t grasp her mom’s clout until college. “[Her power] never affected me, aside from the fact that she was dressed cooler than the other moms,” she says. “When I was at Parsons, my professor asked if she could come and talk to the fashion students. That was the first time I realized [her influence].”



Opposite page: Black Clueless bike chain strap tunic dress by Ellery. Available at ellery.com. Silver and black strappy sandal by Giuseppe Zanotti. Available at Giuseppe Zanotti New York, 806 Madison Avenue, 212.650.0455.

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Roitfeld started school at the Paris affiliate of Parsons, but she soon transferred to the Manhattan campus. She has inherited her parents' work ethic. She didn't model during school so that it wouldn't interfere with her studies. In 2006, at the end of her senior year, she was selected as one of *Paper Magazine's* Beautiful People, an honor she considers her big break.

Paper co-founder and co-editor Kim Hastreiter recalls first meeting Roitfeld when she hosted a fashion family lunch. Carine, who had been profiled in *Paper*, attended with Julia and her younger brother Vladimir. Julia was just getting out of school. "She was so cute. I loved her," says Hastreiter. "There was something about her I can't put my finger on. To me, the definition of beauty is pretty, real and natural. Julia had all that." Hastreiter also recalls the family as being down to earth and blind to elitism. "We're not 'it' people," she says of herself. "We're scruffy publishers. We're DIY, and they were all so nice."

Ten years later, Roitfeld is still grateful to Hastreiter. "What I've learned the most is to never forget the people who gave you your first chance," she says, citing advice from Carine. "The *Paper Magazine* article was my kickstarter. I owe them a lot." She then scored the Tom Ford campaign. She has been a *New Yorker* ever since.

"The city is a constant challenge," she says. "New York is a kick in the butt every morning to get things done."

Roitfeld lives on the Upper East Side, close to the F train. She appreciates its convenience. On most days, she wakes up at 6:45 a.m. "I set my alarm for 6:30, but sometimes I snooze," she says. She gets ready for the day, and then takes Romy to school. Her personal style is inspired by vintage '60s and '70s themes. "I don't consider myself trendy," she says.



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"I like to be classic and timeless. Feminine, and a little bit sex kitten."

Roitfeld spends most days at the office of Carine Roitfeld's eponymous magazine, *CR Fashion Book*. Carine started it in 2012, after she left *French Vogue*. Julia doesn't write for the magazine, but she likes being surrounded by creative people as she works. She is a freelance art director and model, and the founder and editor of lifestyle website *Romy & the Bunnies*. The site launched in 2013, soon after Romy's birth. Roitfeld wants it to evolve into a brand, and not just a platform for editorial content.

"I love branding. I enjoy developing a story around a brand and giving it an identity," Roitfeld says. The website is for the modern mom, but "it has a sense of fashion, a sense of health, a sense of travel. It's really for everyday life." *Romy & the Bunnies* incorporates fashion and beauty tips, with a focus on natural

Black jacket and dress with pearl embellishments by Riccardo Tisci for Givenchy. Available at givenchy.com. Elsa Peretti® Snake earrings in 18k gold by Tiffany & Co. Available at tiffany.com, 800.843.3269.



Maroon combo slip dress by Wendelborn. Available at SSENSE, ssense.com. Elsa Peretti® Claw necklace in 18k gold with green jade and Out of Retirement® loop ring in 18k gold, both by Tiffany & Co. Available at tiffany.com, 800.843.3269. Brass large orb ring by Jennifer Fisher. Available at jenniferfisherjewelry.com, 888.255.0640.



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beauty and DIY tutorials. “I began Romy & the Bunnies to inspire moms, but what’s funny is that there are a lot of people who aren’t moms who follow it.”

Roitfeld doesn’t lunch. “French people love a long lunch break. I hate it,” she says. At 2:30 p.m., she is back on the Upper East Side to pick up Romy from school. Being there is always her priority.

“Once I’m at the office, I’m really focused. I work five or six hours straight and get as much done as possible,” she says of her routine. Balancing work and family time is “a constant dilemma,” she admits. She has a part-time nanny, but prefers to be hands-on with Romy. “Soon she’ll be at school full-time, so I won’t get to see her as much as I do now.”

Roitfeld achieves balance by limiting distractions. She doesn’t have her work email synced with her phone. It only lives on her desktop computer at *CR Fashion Book’s* Tribeca office. It helps her to live in the moment. “Otherwise, I feel like your brain is all over the place. You do everything in a rush,” she says.

Earlier this year, Roitfeld deleted Instagram from her phone as an experiment. “It’s terrible how addicted you are to social media,” she says. “But my days became much longer, and you don’t have this fear of missing out.”

This year, Roitfeld missed the latter part of New York Fashion Week Fall 2017, as she went to Harbour Island in the Bahamas to spend time with her daughter. “She’s the best person to travel with. I’m very lucky.” Roitfeld enjoys supporting her friends at Fashion Week, but “it’s too much of a scene,” she says. “I would never take my daughter,” a decision that highlights the difference between Fashion Week today and Fashion Week in the 1980s, rather than between her and her mother.

Roitfeld shares custody of Romy with her former partner, Swedish-born Croatian model Robert Konjic. He lives in Brooklyn. Like her parents, who have been together for 30 years, the pair never married. But Roitfeld and Konjic broke up in late 2013. They’re still on good terms, she says.

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Roitfeld is a self-described homebody. “I love to stay in and watch television,” she says. She just finished *The Crown*. Up next is *The Affair*. On weekends when Romy is with her dad, she tries to embrace spontaneity. Her therapy is going to a club and dancing with friends. “You want to go out more when you’re a single mom, because you’re not going to meet someone staying home.”

Family is a priority for Roitfeld. A difference between New York and Paris is the amount of time New Yorkers spend outside their homes. “I remember growing up and going to my grandmother’s house for lunch on Sundays,” she says. “I miss that.” New Yorkers are rushed from place to place. Her brother Vladimir lives in New York, too. They see each other often. Eventually, she hopes that Romy will be able to experience having a close relationship with a sibling.

Romy is almost 5 years old. Her birthday is May 15. She’s a Taurus, but born on the cusp of Gemini. Roitfeld is a Scorpio. “We’re similar. She’s very honest, and stubborn as well. [Scorpios are] very faithful, but very vindictive.” Carine is a Virgo, “very diplomatic with everyone,” Roitfeld says.

Roitfeld hopes that she and Romy have inherited Carine’s grace. “To my mom, there’s no level of importance among people. She’s going to be as nice to the doorman as to the photographers and the assistants.” Roitfeld is teaching her daughter to be polite. She says she gets her greatest sense of achievement when people comment on Romy’s good manners.

At the photo shoot for this story at The Carlyle Hotel, Roitfeld chats with everyone on set. A conversation about the negative impact technology has on childcare takes shape. Most have noticed that a lot of parents have their ear buds in while pushing their children in strollers. Kids grow up feeling ignored. Roitfeld won’t let that happen to Romy.

The shoot takes place in a suite on the 30th floor. “A Girl Like You” by Edwyn Collins comes on the speaker, the first line being “I’ve never known a girl like you before.” It feels perfectly appropriate. ♦