

Inside Virgin Rogue: A Dress, a Bride, and a Brand in Motion

By Mia Serrano-Salow

Wedding planning has a funny way of turning everything into a finish line. Find the dress. Book the venue. Send the invitations. Every decision becomes another box to check off before the big day arrives. But after speaking with Sara Leeds about her experience working with Virgin Rogue founder Paloma, what stood out wasn't the dress itself—it was the process of creating it.

Sara Leeds, social media personality best known for her series on TikTok, *Doorman Stories*, found Virgin Rogue early on in her wedding planning journey. She had already found a dress for her ceremony and was on the hunt for a second or third look. She describes her encounter with Paloma as if something out of a rom-com movie:

“I found Paloma while she was working at a friend's vintage studio. I saw her, like an angel, sitting in the corner of this studio sewing a dress. And I was like, who is this girl? What is the deal?”

As the two talked, Paloma explained her work redesigning vintage bridal pieces and creating custom garments. The conversation quickly moved beyond wedding dresses and into design, family, ambition, and the vision she had for the brand she was building. Sara was especially fascinated with her background in design, as Paloma's mother was once the assistant to Paloma Picasso, French jewelry designer and daughter of the iconic artist, Pablo Picasso. Sara left intrigued enough to schedule a consultation, but it wasn't just Paloma's portfolio that convinced her to move forward—it was her willingness to disagree.

When Sara brought in a design reference she loved, Paloma immediately pointed out that it wasn't the right silhouette for her body type. Rather than feeling discouraged, Sara found herself trusting her more.



"I loved the feedback," she says. "I wanted someone who could tell me what was actually going to look good on my body."

That honesty became the foundation for the entire collaboration. What began as inspiration pulled from a dress Sara had admired on Pinterest eventually evolved into something entirely its own. Together, Sara and Paloma refined the concept through sketches, fabric sourcing, fittings, and adjustments, slowly building a piece that felt less like a recreation and more like a conversation between designer and client.

For Sara, the appointments with Paloma became one of the most memorable parts of her engagement. Having a long engagement allowed her to enjoy the process instead of rushing through it, and each fitting became another opportunity to see the dress take shape.

"The process was even more meaningful than the end result in some ways," she says. "It was really meaningful to me to have something custom-made for my wedding and know that the person who designed it is somebody that I feel very connected to and actually love spending time with."

That sentiment feels especially fitting given the fact that the dress never actually made it to Miami for the wedding weekend. Yet when Sara talks about the piece today, there is no sense of disappointment attached to it. If anything, the experience reinforced what made the dress special in the first place. The value wasn't solely in wearing it for a single event—it was in watching an idea become reality alongside someone whose work and vision she genuinely admired.



Part of that meaning also came from timing. Sara was one of Virgin Rogue's earliest clients, meeting Paloma when fittings were taking place out of a small WeWork space. Over the course of creating the dress, she watched the business grow alongside the garment itself.

"It was cool to kind of go on the journey together," she says.

The result was a piece that felt bigger than the occasion it was originally created for. While many wedding dresses are preserved and rarely revisited, Virgin Rogue dresses are made to be worn again. Sara sees her custom afterparty dress as a piece in her wardrobe that still has a future.

“I think this dress still has a lot of lives,” Sara says. She talks about styling it differently, potentially reworking it, or even passing it along to someone else.

On the question of custom design, Sara’s answer is less about romanticizing the idea and more about recalibrating expectations.

“It depends on your budget,” she says simply. “You can find something incredible at any price point, or you can do custom at that same point. It’s really just how you want to spend it.”

But for her, the value of custom work was never just about the final garment. It was about being inside the process and shaping something alongside a designer rather than simply receiving it at the end. In many ways, that’s what makes custom clothing so meaningful. The finished piece becomes a record of a moment in time—not just of an event, but of the people, conversations, and creative decisions that shaped it along the way.

“My favorite part of the whole thing wasn’t the dress itself,” she says again. “It was the process and how much fun we had and how creative the experience was. If you love being part of the process and working closely with a designer, then it’s absolutely worth it,” she says.

