**Breakfast with Amour Vert: A Candid Conversation about Sustainability in Fashion**

There’s only one company that could be behind a fashion-industry breakfast briefing with granola on the menu and surplus fabrics in a new line of designs—*Amour Vert*.

Linda Balti and Christoph Frehsee of *Amour Vert* invited a handful of [eco enthusiasts](http://www.fashionmegreen.com/about-2/) to breakfast at [Friend of a Farmer](http://friendofafarmerny.com/) in Manhattan to explain their approach to designing with the planet in mind. “Having a story makes the brand special,” says Balti. Having an unconventional story is even better. Before *Amour Vert*, Balti was an engineer, working on fighter jet systems for a defense company. Frehsee started a company that was contracted to safely remove land mines. Through their work, the two found themselves at a trade show in Abu Dhabi where they met. They have been inseparable since.

In 2009, they traveled to Peru and it was there that the idea for the eco fashion brand blossomed. After learning about the fashion industry’s negative impact on the environment, Balti and Frehsee felt compelled to adapt a sustainable lifestyle. “I needed to change the way I consume fashion,” Balti explained. We had a candid conversation about clothes and what it takes to operate a sustainable apparel line. They spoke of *Amour Vert* and their eco conscious movement with such conviction…I clung to every word.

At *Amour Vert*, environmental sustainability is the fabric of the brand and social responsibility is the thread that ties the organization together. As CEO, Frehsee considers every aspect of the business from design to production; he believes that the whole supply chain counts. Frehsee emphasizes that “Made in the U.S.A.” does not guarantee ethical practices or fair treatment of employees. Because their factories are in San Francisco, the couple visit often and are hands-on with all areas of production.

During breakfast, Balti beamed with excitement as she announced the launch of their capsule collection. The collection will feature limited edition pieces that will be sold on their [web store](http://www.amourvert.com/) just in time for the Thanksgiving holiday. There will be 25 units of each ready-to-wear women’s style, all made from surplus fabrics. This collection is a true testament to *Amour Vert’s* zero-waste design philosophy.

Maintaining a sustainable brand has its challenges but the benefits are immeasurable. Balti explained that there are limitations as a sustainable fashion designer because some fabrics and colors do not meet green guidelines. Exploring a variety of textiles and experimenting with low- impact dyes are a necessary part of her design process.

It is impossible to build a successful eco fashion line overnight. It takes research, commitment and continuous improvement without compromising one’s values. Most importantly, sustainability is more than a growing trend; it should be our way of life. The fashion industry is infamous for its harmful effects on workers and the environment. However, the innovators behind *Amour Vert* appear determined to change the fate of our planet -- one sustainable design at a time.

Five eco-friendly facts about *Amour Vert*

* *Amour Vert* pledges to plant a tree in an American Forest for every T-shirt purchased through their “One Tee, One Tree” Program.
* Recycled polyester, organic cotton and modal (a fiber derived from Beech trees) as well as low impact dyes are used in all *Amour Vert* designs.
* All merchandise is packaged in biodegradable bags.
* *Amour Vert* has a zero- waste philosophy.
* Made in America





