

The Total Sportswear Look by Vera

By BERNADINE MORRIS

TO much of the clothes-buying public, designers' names like Balenciaga or Cardin mean about as much as the name Paul Poiret, a leader of the Paris couture before World War I.

The neckline of a dress a woman buys may have originated in a Paris workroom, but the identity of the designer has been lost in the translation. This woman is probably aware, however, of the name Vera, which appears on sportswear that sells for \$12 to \$35 and scarves that are \$2 to \$10. Women are aware of Vera Neumann because she signs her work with her first name—and a doodle of a ladybug.

The ladybug has become her trademark—she considers it lucky—and she often gives friends and acquaintances a stickpin in the form of a ladybug.

Beginning of Story

Her fashion story began almost 20 years ago when Vera, a painter, began designing table linens in her studio and almost immediately went into scarves. The scarves are now sold by more than 10,000 stores from San Antonio, Tex., to Winnipeg, Canada.

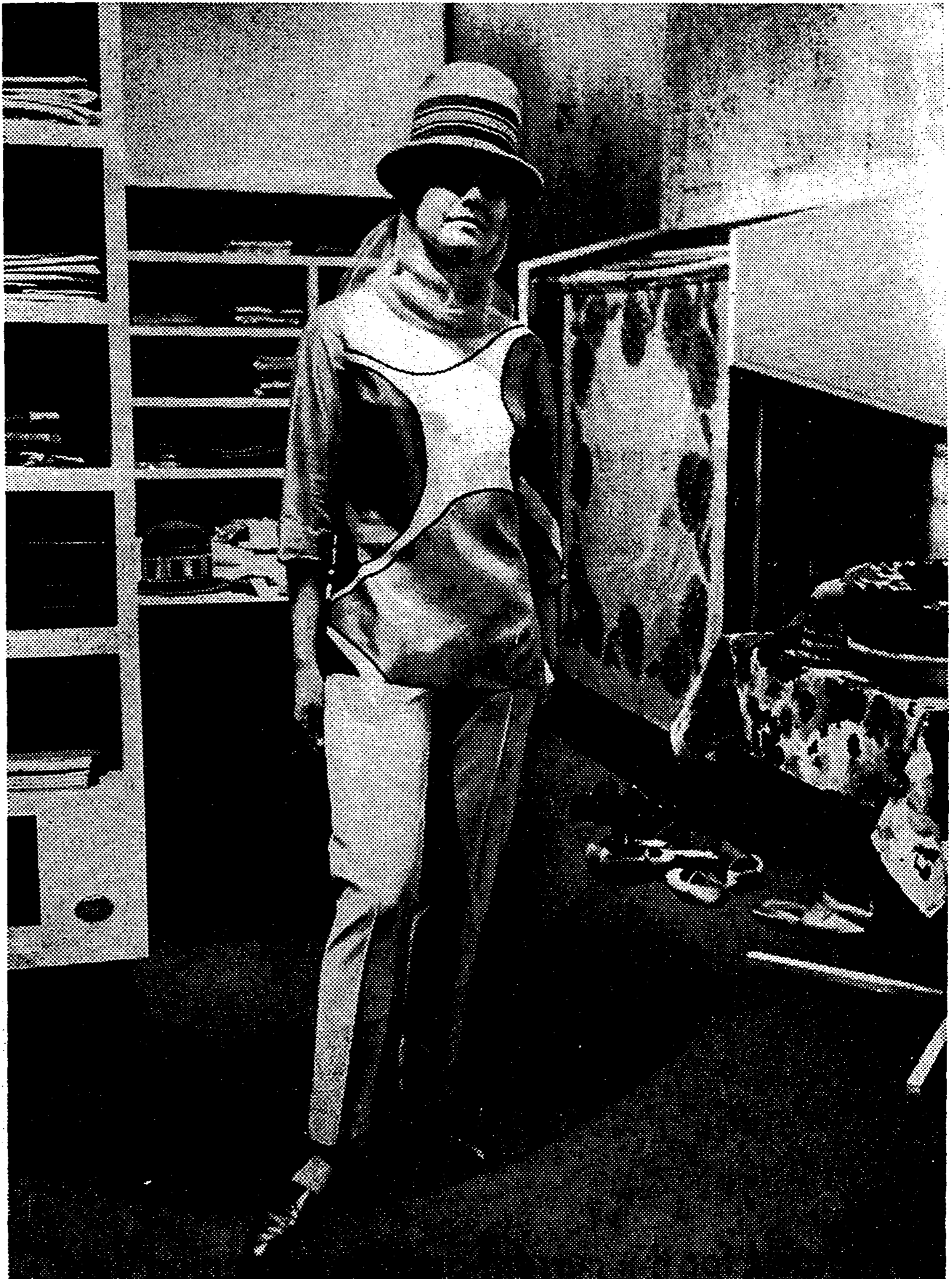
Six years ago she put two scarves together to form Jollytops, to be worn as blouses with pants and skirts. That was her entry into the sportswear business, which now encompasses pullover tops, shirts and shifts that are sold by about 4,000 stores.

Her fall collection was inspired by a recent trip to Peru.

"Last year it was Greece—it doesn't matter where I go so long as I break my routine and see new things," Mrs. Neumann explained. Her design usually starts as a painting in oils on a scarf-size canvas, and her travels provide her with new color schemes and motives.

In Peru she was impressed with the Inca pottery ("some of it looks op and I never saw so many polka dots"), the brilliant fiesta colors worn in the street processions (pink with orange, emerald with plum), the enamel work and the pottery, all of which found their way to her canvases and her scarves.

Jungle foliage, geometric designs and plaids are splashed over her 130 new



The New York Times (by Arthur Brower)

Abstract design on silk blouse by Vera was inspired by view from plane between Lima and Cuzco. \$19. Slit scarf called Verabout is worn under Peruvian straw hat.

scarves, many repeated in the sportswear so that everything goes together. The pants, however, are in solid colors.

"We had to make them so the customer could match them to the tops," Vera said.

While the designer used to work with silk and cotton exclusively, she added Ban-Lon in recent seasons because she

found the synthetic fabric took color extremely well. A new fabric for her for fall is Dacron challis, another synthetic, which she likes because "it feels like wool and is easy to print on." It appears only in shifts.

Her Peruvian visit also resulted in a new scarf that she calls the Verabout. Its shape

is a conventional square, but there is a slit in the center big enough to draw the face through. When the ends are gathered around the neck and tied, either in front or in back, the scarf forms a smooth, snug head covering. Vera says it was derived from the knitted helmets the Indians wear under their dome-shaped hats.