

Vera Tries Talented Hand at Luggage

By BERNADINE MORRIS

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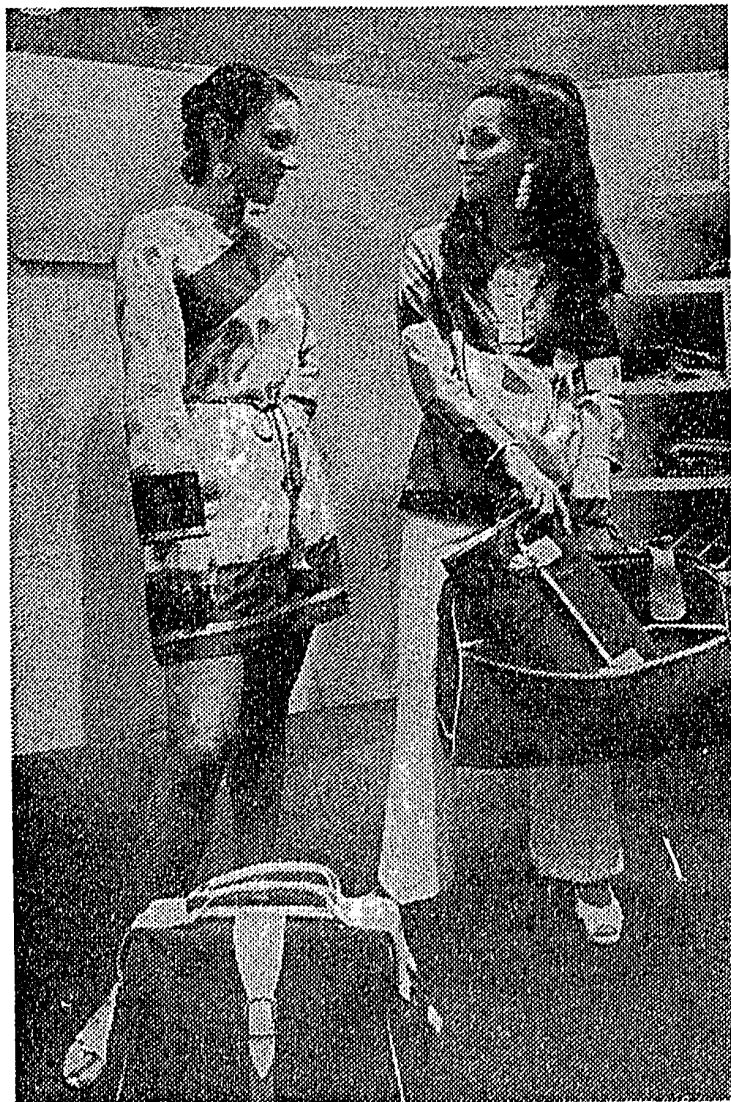
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MORE than 20 years of flying around the world in pursuit of fresh ideas for her scarves and sportswear has led Vera Neumann, the fashion designer who also designs her own fabrics, to a

new career: luggage designer.

Mannequins carried out her new dark green nylon canvas suitcases and totes as they showed her holiday and resort collection recently and gave every indication of weightlessness as they skimmed along.



The New York Times (by Philip LaChapelle)

Vera has designed luggage compact enough to stow under a plane seat. In green nylon canvas, from \$18 to \$45. At B. Altman, Oct. 1.

"Everything's light enough to carry yourself, unless you load it with bricks," she observed. What's more, everything's the right size to carry aboard an airplane and avoid those enervating vigils at the baggage ramp.

Mrs. Neumann, or Vera as she signs her clothes, did just that on a recent visit to Brazil. She wore the shoulder-strap bag and carried the cosmetic tote and the suitcase.

Inside the suitcase, tucked in an outside pocket, was the fold-up bag planned to give the traveler extra portage on the return trip.

Mrs. Neumann managed to pack all the necessities for the two-week trip into the three pieces, though she admits to a few extra overstuffed bundles on the road back.

Can't Miss Them

The bright orange plastic edgings and handles make her luggage stand out in a sea of bags, Mrs. Neumann observed. So do the "Vera's," repeated endlessly as part of the fabric design. The bags will be introduced by Altman's in October.

The Brazilian trip will provide the source material for her next fall fashion collection. The present one, due also in the stores in October, was based on a visit to India.

It resulted in abstract prints based on the Taj Mahal, sari designs transplanted to Dacron, an oddity called "the Mahar'anee's Pajamas," which is actually a jumpsuit with harem legs, and a Westernized version of the churidar the traditional pants worn by both men and women. Mrs. Neumann calls

these "Indianlegs" and suggests them under the occidental equivalents of the Indian kurta: tunics and shifts.

Around the neck of practically everything, she tends to drape a skinny six- or nine-foot fringed scarf. It's a Western notion that has been picked up by the Indians, especially the young ones, who wore it with their kurtas and churidars, according to Mrs. Neumann. They seemed to prefer it to saris, she added.

The solid color long scarves represent a departure for the designer, who is known for her printed square ones. But then she also uses solid color satins, knits and panne velvet fabrics for her sports clothes. She's expanding into other areas besides luggage.

Vera's prices are \$4 to \$15 for scarves, \$16 to \$45 for sports clothes and \$18 to \$45 for luggage, relatively modest for signed originals.