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BOULEVARD CHIC

If American designers have their way, everybody will be out on the street come springtime. You may walk, saunter, stride or sail down the avenues, spring fashions are keeping in step. Whatever the gait, Seventh Avenue has the appropriate clothes. From flat-sandaled, pared-down sportswear styles and jaunty nautical looks, to a high-heeled boulevard chic with distinctly Continental overtones. Diversity being the motto of the season, New York fashions roam back and forth. Between the self-effacing minimalism of a Calvin Klein, Perry Ellis or Ralph Lauren and the ladylike elegance advocated by such fashion leaders as Bill Blass, Carolina Herrera and Oscar de la Renta.



Spearheading the parade, Fall's long, full-backed swagger coat reappears in white linen over matching slacks. Elegant luncheon suits follow, with long, loosely fitted jackets over short, narrow skirts. Hats and high heels are a must. As are white combined with navy, black or grey and checks or pinstripes in lightweight wool or linen. Then daytime fashions take on a nautical mood. At some shows, the squared sailor collars, the striped knits and navy ornaments return sequin-embroidered or rhinestone-studded to give evening dressing a nautical air as well.

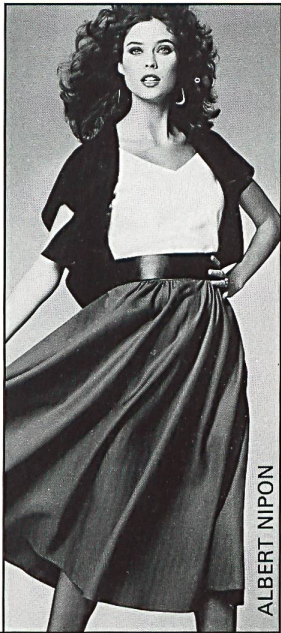
Sportswear's point of departure is a long, lean, clean-cut silhouette. Cotton knits layered over linen T-shirts and midcalf linen skirts as well as full-cut, cropped trousers are a natural choice this spring. So are the softly colored men's suits and slacks at Perry Ellis and Ralph Lauren, paired off with ultra feminine organza blouses.



The dress is this season's news, says Bill Blass. His short silk prints are draped or cowled in front or back. Other news-worthy styles include Oscar de la Renta's body-conscious cashmere knits, Calvin Klein's long button-through in cream-colored linen, with Geoffrey Beene's floating shapes adding a light and airy touch to a bevy of simple linen dresses — often sleeveless, sometimes bare-backed — presented by one and all.

As the grand simplicity of daytime dressing continues straight into the evening, column-like goddess gowns make an entrance — in a sensuous display of draped silk crêpes, sleek satins and embroidered organzas from Switzerland's foremost fabric and embroidery houses.

THE SPRING COLLECTIONS



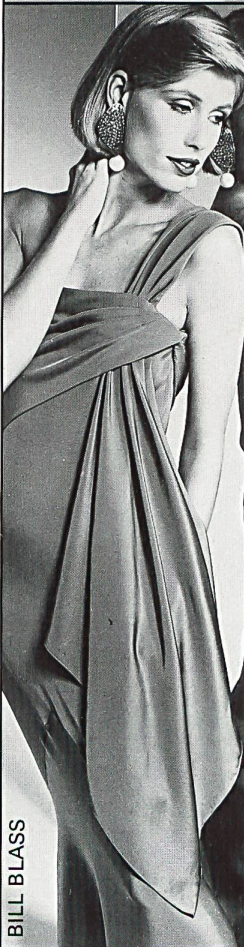
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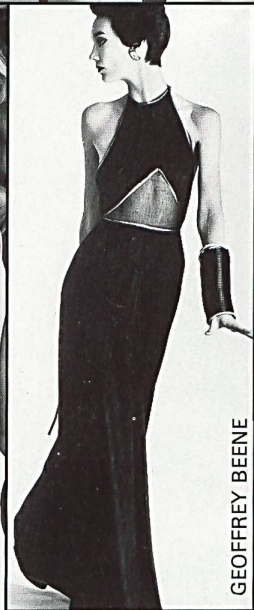
BILL BLASS



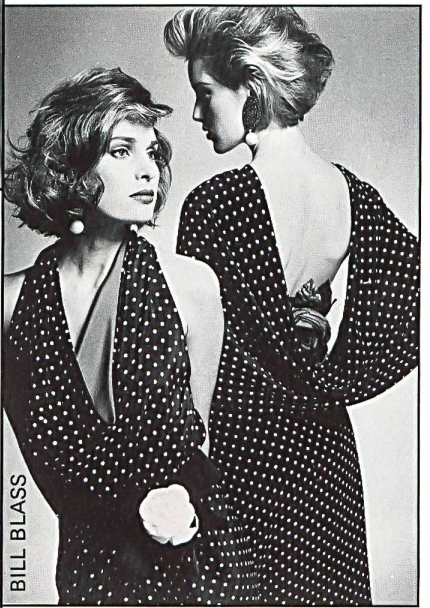
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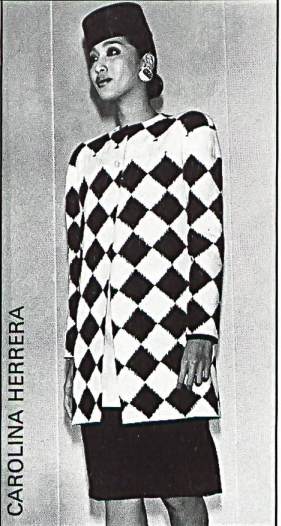
BILL BLASS



GEOFFREY BEENE



BILL BLASS

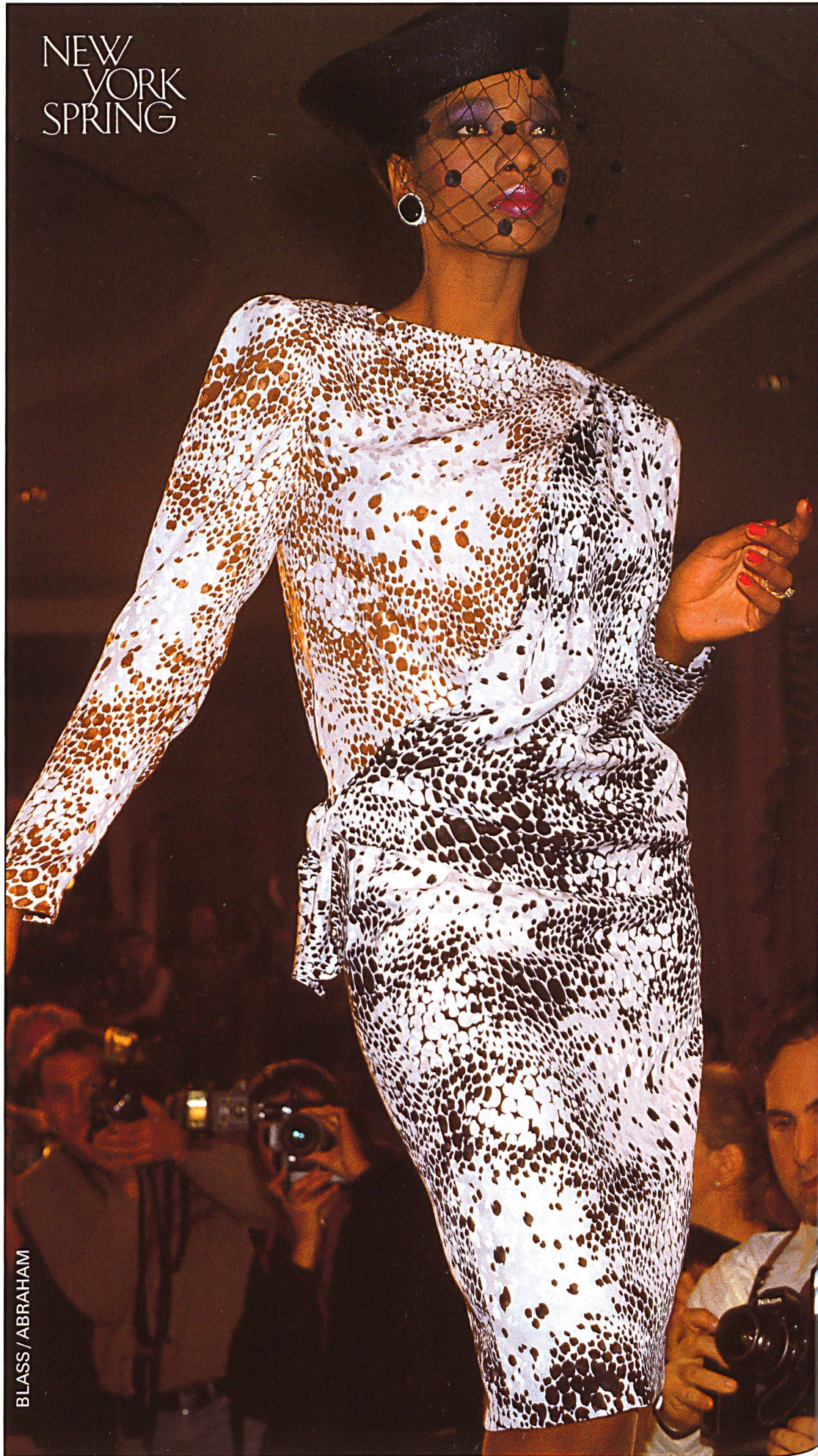


CAROLINA HERRERA

NEW
YORK
SPRING

APRIL IN NEW YORK

Boulevard chic on Fifth Avenue. Abraham's white and black or white and grey silk prints on crêpe and satin grounds. Draped on the hip or cowlled at the neck: Bill Blass. Gently flared godet pleats: Carolina Herrera. The lady likes veiled hats and high heels.



BLASS / ABRAHAM



BLASS / ABRAHAM

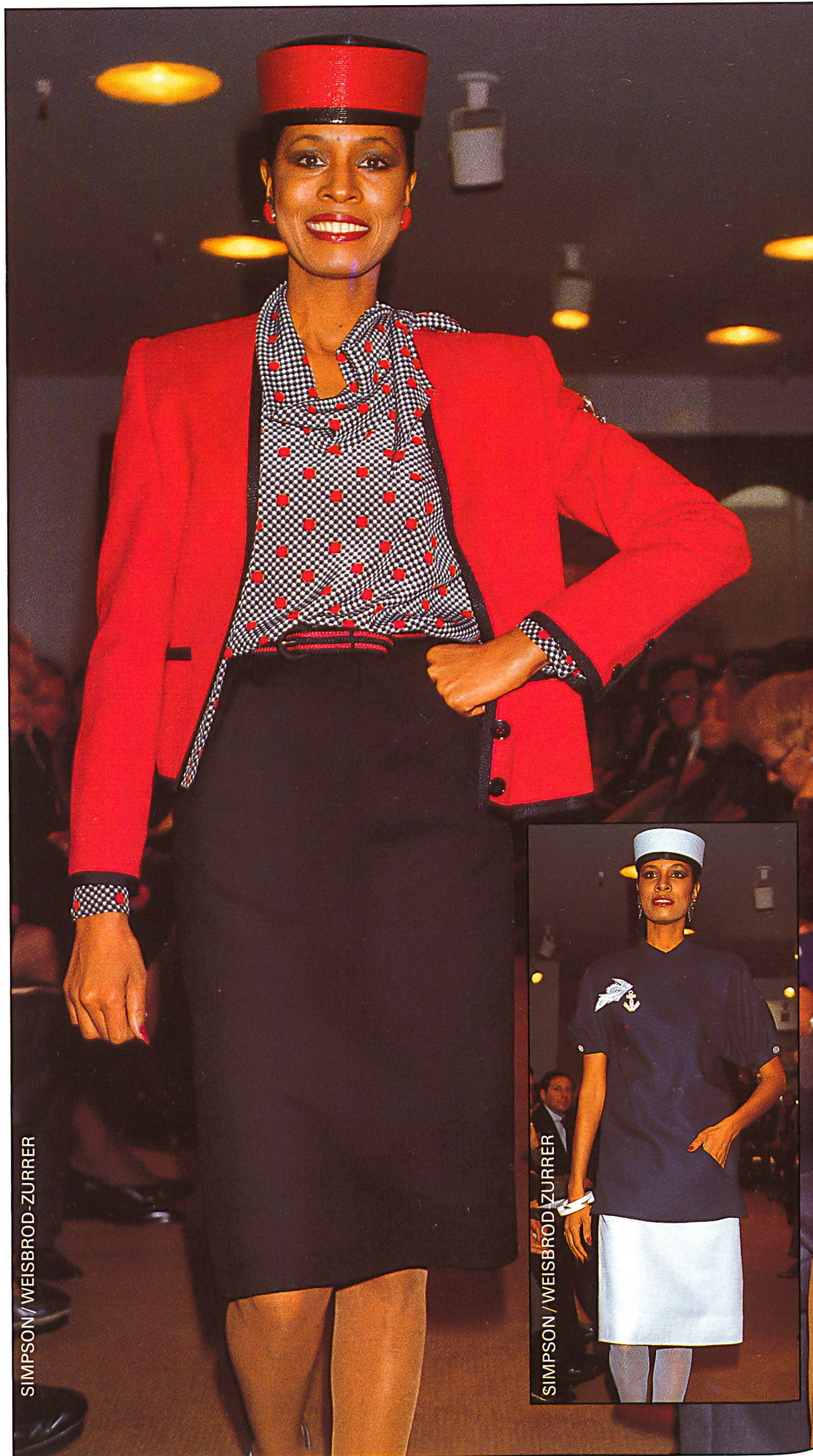
BLASS / ABRAHAM

HERREFA / ABRAHAM

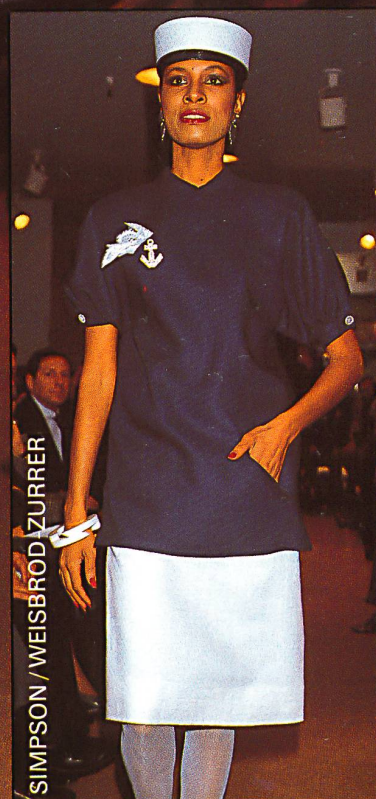
THE CLEAN-CUT SUIT

A medley of red, white and blue. But yellow accents are striking with black. Adele Simpson cuts a sensible suit in linen weaves from Weisbrod-Zurrer. Sometimes the mood is nautical.

Blass loves loosely fitted fingertip jackets over narrow skirts. The red and black print is pure silk crêpe. The yellow and black pure cotton poplin. Both from Abraham.



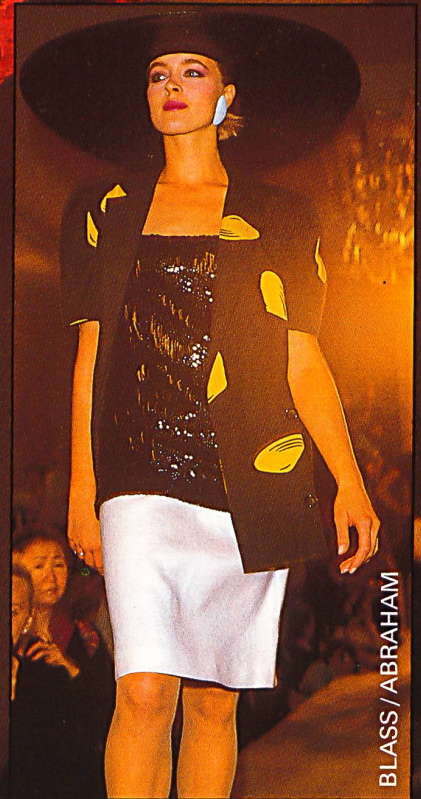
SIMPSON/WEISBROD-ZURRER



SIMPSON/WEISBROD-ZURRER

NEW
YORK
SPRING

BLASS / ABRAHAM



BLASS / ABRAHAM



MACKIE / BLEICHE

MACKIE / BLEICHE

MACKIE / BLEICHE

NEW
YORK
SPRING



NIPON/STEHLI



THE NATURALS

Wool checks and linen stripes in muted earth tones. Bob Mackie layers oversized checks over plain grey flannel. He adds a splash of yellow. His striped cardigan ensembles have purity of line. Checks, stripes and solids are in lightweight pure new wool from Bleiche.

Stehli's beige linen stripes on white cotton ground are a natural at Albert Nipon. Styles include the wrap coat-dress, the short-sleeved suit, the full-cut coat.

The town goes out on linen.