

Designer gas masks all the rage in NYC

NEW YORK (AP) — Gas masks could be a matter of life and death in the Middle East. But a celebrity fashion designer is using them slung over the shoulder to give extra punch to his new collection of "war fashions."

"The '90s are going to be remembered for the military and the gulf crisis," said New York designer Andre Van Pier. "The trend has begun, and I wanted to make it workable as sports wear and street wear."

The 29-year-old Van Pier, known for his expensive celebrity clothing, presented his pricey camouflage collection at his Manhattan showroom.

His war fashions, often lined in gold silk and worn with high-heel pumps, do not belong in the Saudi desert. His camouflage garments, which cost \$400 to \$4,000, will be most at home in discos that cater to the rich and famous.

"I wouldn't think I'll be making money off the war. I will be making a statement," Van Pier said.

Van Pier insisted that he is not making light of the war. He said he had a brother in the Air Force in Saudi Arabia who is crazy about the clothes.

"The troops are not going to be offended ... but just the opposite," the designer said. "Since they can identify with it, I think it will make them happy. It will make them smile."

He said some of the jackets and vests are actually bullet-proof.

Model Kelli Lockett, posing in the camouflage designs in front of a huge American flag, said, "I understand what he is trying to do. It is the style of the future."

However, she said she was worried "we were mocking" the soldiers.

She wore an olive camouflage pantsuit — an unstructured hip-length jacket, lined in dazzling gold silk, over skinny-legged jeans. The outfit was set off by a stretch lame mock turtleneck.

On her head was an authentic military cap. A working gas mask and canteen were slung over her shoulder.

The price tag was \$1,200 — just for the clothes.



Beating the heat

Bruce Samples of Eugene gets a splash of the Willamette River from Sara Russo near Alton Baker Park on a 90-degree day during the summer heat wave.

Photo by Andre Ranieri

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