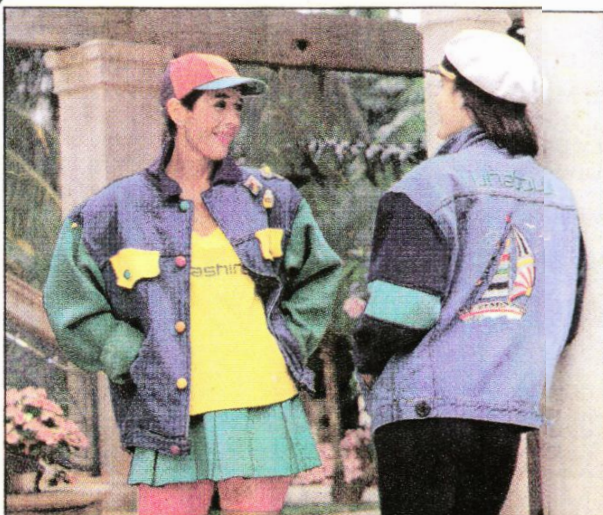


## Collection caters to young at heart

**SETTING THE TONE:** The enzyme-washed jackets with sweatshirt sleeves and oversized buttons have an embroidered motif on the back.



### Sportswear defined by whimsical designs

By M. ALEXANDRA NELSON  
Herald Columnist

**B**renda Rosenberg, once a merchandising VP for Burdines, has just issued her first collection and it plays like a Top 10, a hip-hop wardrobe for the young at heart. Assuming the heart's been aerobically conditioned so the body's well-toned.

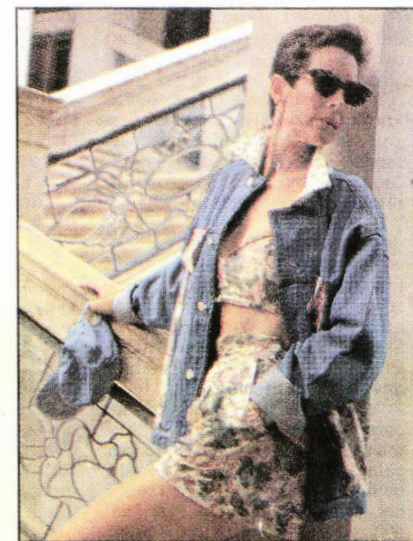
The collection centers on a series of denim biker's jackets softened by playground whimsy. The enzyme-washed jackets have sweatshirt sleeves and oversized buttons — thick red hearts, multicolored gumballs or official Navy peacoat buttons. A big embroidered motif on the back often sets the tone for matching pieces: There's Lucky

with its giant dice, Runabout with its crayon-colored sailboat, Sweetheart with a white leather rose. You might say the jacket's No. 1 on the countdown.

As to the accompanying mix-and-match pieces — the other nine red-hots — think Biker meets Big Band. It's sportswear sweetened with evening fabrics: black lace bermudas, a white lace sweatshirt, a short black chiffon skirt.

Rosenberg was in town recently showing her summer collection to store buyers. She paused long enough to cajole a couple of Coconut Grove friends, Gretchen Gettis and Lynn Hayes, into posing with her "playmates," as she calls her clothes.

"It started two years ago at the Lipton," she says. "Gretchen and I were moaning and groaning that we didn't have anything to wear, so we



MARICE COHN BAND/ Miami Herald Staff

**BIKER MEETS BIG BAND:** Mix-and-match sportswear is for the young at heart.

PLEASE SEE LOOK, 2E

designed a whole line as we sat watching the matches. As soon as I got home I started cutting up old Perry Ellis and Ralph Lauren dresses. The line began in a closet."

If this seems easy, you should know that what started with a pair of scissors and some outmoded schmattas had a two-decade history of hard work in retailing.

Beginning in the display department at Saks, Rosenberg went on to become the first female vice president at Hudson's, the department store of note in her hometown, Detroit. She spent 1985 to 1990 in Miami as a vice president for product development at Burdines.

"I was the soothsayer for the corporation," she explains. "My job was to predict when there was going to be change, what would be hot for the coming season... hot items, hot colors."

If you're intrigued, drop by Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's or Tennisimo and check out B.R.A.C., which stands for Brenda Rosenberg Adventure Club.

"I approach almost every event in life as if I were costuming it for a movie," says Rosenberg. "I've never outgrown playing dress up... I visualize everything."

What Rosenberg has visualized with her first design collection is "weekend or resort wardrobing for attractive women, regardless of age, who work out."

"I'm very trend-oriented and I felt that what stood between the average customer and buying the latest trends of the season was high price tags." The solution: At the bottom of her line, her bra tops and bike pants range from \$26 to \$38; at the top, the oversized jackets plug in at \$220 to \$270.

Rosenberg's own jacket has two white teddy bears dangling like talismans. Whether they're a throwback to the Burdines mascot she established ("I was the mother of the Burdines bears") or another example of her humorous approach to dressing, the bears caused a stir on South Beach. "I had everyone from very young children to grown men wanting to come up and touch me."

We'll nicely assume it was for luck, and just mention as an update for her many old friends in South Florida that Rosenberg has no plans to leave Detroit for New York or Miami. While it's hard to imagine the auto capital as a place to turn out fashion, Rosenberg seems to be doing just fine.