



LOOK SHARP
Pieces from Louis Vuitton's Staples Edition menswear collection, designed by the brand's men's director, Virgil Abloh. Photograph by Carlotta Manaigo; styling by Laura Stoloff.

CREATIVE BRIEF

BASIC INSTINCT

After working on what he calls his “sensational” spring/summer 2019 collection, Virgil Abloh, the men’s artistic director at Louis Vuitton, started exploring, he says, “the other pole of clothes-making, devoid of grand statements and instead rooted in garments and accessories that everyone has in their wardrobe.”

The result is the Staples Edition by Louis Vuitton, a 30-piece line of menswear essentials like the overcoat, the blazer, the chino and the low-top sneaker, to name a few, rendered largely in versatile neutrals. *For details see Sources, page 103.*

—Christine Whitney



SECOND ACT
The renovated Formosa Cafe, which was frequented by everyone from Ava Gardner to Elvis in its original incarnation.

RAISING THE BAR

THIS SPRING, THE FORMOSA CAFE IN LOS ANGELES IS RETURNING TO ITS POSTWAR PRIME.

THE FORMOSA CAFE, opened in 1939, is West Hollywood’s most enduring dive. Known for its classic cocktails, greasy Cantonese cooking and kitschy black-and-red lacquered décor, it’s had many lives in its 80 years. Elvis once tipped a waitress there with a Cadillac (or so the story goes). Frank Sinatra drank there in the 1950s, Warren Beatty in the ’70s. In the ’80s and ’90s, you might have seen the Beastie Boys or Bono sipping a Mai Tai. Chef-owner Lem Quon presided over the dining room from 1948 until his death in 1993. Efforts to raze the building were long met with opposition. Then, in 2016, Quon’s grandson Vince Jung shut the place down.

This month the Formosa roars back to life, restored by the 1933 Group. Partners Bobby Green, Dimitri Komarov and Dmitry Liberman started out building Los Angeles bars that might have existed long ago, then shifted gears and began reviving iconic establishments. For the Formosa, they pillaged Jung’s storage unit packed with original artifacts. Letters and the unpublished memoirs of longtime barman Lindy Brewerton informed a new book, out this summer, on the Formosa’s history and revival. “I wanted the main bar everybody remembers to be exactly the way it looked and felt,” says Green, the 1933 Group’s creative director.

The vintage Pacific Electric Red Car trolley used as a dining room has a new sparkle. The food, courtesy of consulting chef David Kuo of Taiwanese soul food restaurant Little Fatty, is the one historic anomaly: It’s a genuine attraction for the first time. “The food was terrible, and everybody knew that,” says Green. “I’m not sure they’ll care if it gets much better.” —Jay Cheshes