

The book was found

VINTAGE NEON: Los Angeles 1979



Synopsis

VINTAGE NEON: LA 1979 In 1979, singer and long time New Yorker Billy Vera relocated to Los Angeles to write songs for Warner Bros Music. After a decade off the charts, his song, "I Really Got The Feeling" had reached number one in a recording by Dolly Parton. "It felt like an omen, like I was back in show business," says Vera today. Hooking up with his former bass player, Chuck Fiore, who'd been in town for three years, the two hit upon the idea of forming a band, "to meet girls." Thus, Billy Vera & the Beaters were born. While in St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, Vera had taken some photographs with a camera borrowed from a well-known fashion photographer who told him he had a natural talent and an unusually good eye for composition that he should develop. With the newcomer's eye that sees what locals tend to ignore, Vera noticed that there were a lot of great old neon signs in LA, so he recruited his friend Fiore to drive him around at night to shoot pictures of them. In time, he had gathered almost a hundred slides. Compiled together, these told a noirish story of a city at night, a visual history of a time and place long past. He considered a book but, not knowing the first thing about how to get a book published and with his musical career taking off, thanks to his number one hit, "At This Moment," the photos sat, hidden away from all eyes, until now. One day not long ago, going through an old drawer, he came across some old slides and negatives and these neon shots jumped out from the rest. Shyly, he showed them to his friend, Tamela D'Amico, who immediately saw the value in the images and went about the task of securing a gallery showing and a book of this "found art." Grammy winner Billy Vera has a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and has reinvented himself for a new generation with his album BILLY VERA: BIG BAND JAZZ. www.mead-hill.com

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Customer Reviews

Neon and neon signs. In some parts of town, they were everywhere during the 1950s and 1960s. An examination of the culture behind neon signs triggers questions. What kind of a person invests in neon signs? Applying a binary overlay, there are two kinds of people in every situation. For example, there are those who use neon signs and there are those who see them as a result. Those who use neon signs may be differentiated from those who work for others versus those who work for themselves. Consider that most of those who work for themselves need to advertise their products or services. The rest are best marketed by word of mouth (i.e., doctors, therapists, personal assistants). What kind of people comprise a target market for neon? In the 1950s and 1960s the market for bent tubes of glass filled with neon gas was mostly made up of people who wanted to shout loudly, brightly and colorfully about their businesses. What were those people like? How well did they understand the needs and interests of their target markets? Were they successful in their efforts? The answers to these questions have been artfully explored by actor, musician, singer/songwriter and voiceover artist Billy Vera, known for hit songs such as "At This Moment" and "I Can Take Care of Myself". In the 1970s, before Vera's crooning induced romantic swooning in millions of passionate women, he indulged in a dark side - cruising the boulevards and byways of Los Angeles as a nighttime urban photographer. When fame finally caught up with his musical genius, Vera's camera and treasure trove of Kodachrome slides lay hidden in a forgotten drawer in a dark corner of his Hollywood castle until, thanks to a chance conversation with a friend, they were recently uncovered, enhanced by Vera's insightful wit, and transformed into *Vintage Neon: Los Angeles, 1979*, a brightly lit discourse on a forgotten moment in the history of our fair city.

I knew Billy Vera as a singer and songwriter and that drew my eye to this wonderful coffee table book of photos of an LA out of the past. What an eye this man has! Each picture has its own mood, some dark and others frivolous, and takes the reader to a specific place and time. His short descriptions of each photo are informative and fun. I recommend it as a perfect gift item.

Lousy quality. Paper stock was barely a step above newsprint.

Great, nostalgic table top book.

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