MAÑANA VINTAGE

Alex & Al, Owners

Photos by Julie M. Gile Photography
Written by Paige Udermann

Walking into Mañana Vintage feels like a step back into a nostalgic time where racks of vintage clothes intermingle with furniture to tell stories from the past. Old posters and t-shirts line the walls, and the energy of the space itself feels like that of another era.

Mañana Vintage is a thoughtfully curated shop born from a friendship and shared passion for valuing vintage pieces.

It all started with a chance encounter in 2021. Al Valentin was browsing a vintage market in Green Bay when he stumbled upon a vendor booth that caught his eye. The booth belonged to Alex Alvarez. The two struck up a conversation and became instant friends. Their friendship continued, building on the foundation of a shared love for vintage.

For Alex, his vintage journey began thanks to his wife.

> "We have a regular client base now, people who come back again and again. That means we are doing something right."

"My wife started shopping second-hand more, and she started bringing me all these vintage Green Bay Packers shirts," Alex says. "I thought it was so cool and a lot cheaper than shopping somewhere else, so after that, I started collecting more and more vintage pieces. I collected so much that I started selling it online and doing pop-ups around town. It grew from there."

For Al, it all started with a chair.

"I have been buying second-hand since high school," Al says. "I suddenly just got this love for furniture. I found one really cool chair at a thrift store, and I started trying to find cool furniture everywhere I could. That was almost 20 years ago that I started doing that. I have always liked old things. It adds value to the story."

With Al's two decades of experience in collecting and selling vintage furniture and Alex's expertise in clothing, the pair made the perfect team. Al had thought about opening a store for years, but it wasn't until one day when he was in line at a record store with Alex that he finally brought it up.

"Last year, Al brought up this idea of opening a shop together," Alex says. "I remember telling my wife, and she gave me the advice to just do it, so we did."

At the time, Alex had been selling vintage pieces at markets across the Midwest, and Al was selling antique furniture, but once opening a storefront became a possibility, the two paused their vintage sales and began saving inventory for their bigger dream.

“Finding the right space wasn’t difficult because Al had always admired the storefront attached to Kavarna in the Broadway District of downtown Green Bay.

“I loved the shop that used to be here,” Al says. “I thought that if the space ever opened up, I would jump on it.”

In a moment of serendipitous timing, the space did, in fact, become available. In August 2024, the pair opened the doors to Mañana Vintage. Once they partnered with Kavarna and got the green light to move forward with their store, they turned their dream into reality in under a month.

For Al and Alex, Green Bay was the only place they considered starting their store. They had both spent most of their lives in the area and knew this was the community they wanted to continue building in.

“From the markets that I would do, I could see how passionate the people are here and how they're always showing up,” Alex says. “You always have people looking for new stuff and wanting to support a small business.”

“Green Bay has this communal feel,” Al adds. “Especially downtown. It still feels up-and-coming, but to keep it coming up, it needs places that draw people in and reflect a younger, creative energy. It was important to us to be part of that in historic downtown.”

“The response has been incredibly positive, and the community’s support is resounding.

“The reception has been really good,” Al says. “We get a lot of positive comments, not just from the community, but even people from out of town. People have said that it feels like they are stepping into a big city and being transported. We are proud to have created a space that can do that.”

Outside of the aesthetics of Mañana Vintage, Al and Alex hope it inspires something deeper.

“The recycled use of things is very important to me,” Al says. “I’m not saying I’m a perfect environmentalist, but I’m conscious of the waste we create. These items we sell are probably circulated through many generations of people. Someone else wore it, and now it’s someone else’s turn. You could go to a big box store and buy some really cheap items, but the quality of the items that we carry is going to last. They've lasted for decades already.”

Their dream has been propelled forward by the Diverse Business Grant from On Broadway, Inc., which is a grant designed to support underrepresented entrepreneurs launching small businesses in the Broadway District of Green Bay.

“At first it was a little shocking because we were so new here,” Alex says. “We're still figuring out how to make things work smoothly. I think it's pretty cool because it gives us an opportunity to try different things, upgrade, or get things that we think would be cool and make an impact in the store.”

For Al, the grant represented even more.

“I think it's an honor,” Al says. “Especially now, in a time when things can feel divided, it’s powerful to know that Green Bay is willing to embrace businesses that are minority and women-owned. It sends a message to us and to others who might be too scared to start a business. They can see that in Green Bay it’s possible.”

Al and Alex plan to use the grant to further invest in marketing because they have already seen a huge impact on their business from their current efforts. Outside of the grant, On Broadway, Inc. has given them even more.

“It's nice to have a resource that we can go to for guidance because we're not experts,” Al says. “As first-time retail business owners, coming into a place that has many established businesses already was a little overwhelming. We wondered how we would fit in. With the support and guidance from On Broadway, we can rely on and bounce ideas off them. We know we have someone on our side who is here to support and help in whatever way they can.”

Today, Al and Alex still work full-time jobs and run Mañana Vintage on the side, but they dream of running the store full-time in the future. For now, they are proud of building a space where people feel welcomed and inspired.

“We have a regular client base now,” Alex says. “People who come back again and again. That means we are doing something right.”

At Mañana Vintage, each and every item is full of stories, and those stories continue on through Al and Alex’s stewardship. Every visit to the store is a chance to step into the past and carry a piece of it into the future.

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