

**COOK**

SOUNDS OF OUR TIMES

long play 1081

# Angel in the Absinthe House

*songs in the indoor manner by*

**LA VERGNE**

*Lover Man*

*One for the Road*

*Black Magic*

*One Scotch, One Bourbon, One Beer*

*Blues In The Night*

*You'd Better Go Now*

*and others*

*By candlelight in the Old Absinthe House*

*Bienville & Bourbon, New Orleans.*

*Art. John Witt*

## NEW ORLEANS

Tottering on the corner of Bienville and Bourbon in the *Vieux Carre* is The Old Absinthe\* House. Inside, four walls and the ceiling are covered with the thumb-tacked visiting cards of ten thousand sundown explorers. And there is a room. Not the secret room upstairs where Claiborne planned the Battle of New Orleans under the noses of the enemy, just a *back room* behind the bar. In that room LaVergne Smith sings, and for some reason the whole picture hangs together and makes sense.

In the old musty green atmosphere of wormwood and anise, this native New Orleans Creole girl ravishes the customers with her intimate style and song. When LaVergne sings, conversation stops; her mobile expressive face commands attention. Perhaps this is because her message is old, blue and basic, carried with parochial force; for her the sophisticated style is just a metaphor, a foil for the fanlight facade of The Old Absinthe House.

It was there that we recorded her, with early morning sounds of the French Quarter sometimes seeping in from the outside, there at the corner of Bienville and Bourbon.

\* —a green alcoholic liquor from oils of wormwood, anise, etc. Webster gratuitously suggests that its continued use causes nervous derangement. *Absinthe* is available in the *Old Absinthe House*.

## LA VERGNE

LaVergne\* Smith was born in New Orleans 30 years ago. With natural artistic leanings, her first professional efforts were toward painting and interior decorating.

By chance at the opening of Rip's Jungle Room in 1947 she was asked to sing; she has been singing ever since. At the Brass Rail for a year, at Tony Bacino's, Dan's International House, as well as 18 months at El Morocco, plus radio and TV appearances, LaVergne guesses that she's in singing to stay. At the time this record was made, she had been at the Absinthe House for nine months.

Working with Walter (Fats) Pichon, together they composed the song *I Like That Kind of Carryin' On*, which opens this record.

\* means *alder (tree)* in French

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