When it comes to store design, the folks at Barneys New York have a recipe for success: a dollop of luxury and taste, plus a generous helping of humor. Jeffrey Hutchison, who has worked on four of the department store's venues, humbly credits Simon Doonan's in-house visual merchandising team with the whimsicality. But at the Barneys in Las Vegas, Jeffrey Hutchison & Associates contributed more than a dash of wit, too. Take the curtain wall's fritted glass, inspired by suits of playing cards. Aces and clubs mingle with diamonds and hearts—a subtle allusion, to be sure. “It’s a nod to Vegas but not too literally,” Hutchison says. As the sun filters through, it casts their shadows onto the floor’s intricate, M.C. Escher-esque pattern in inlaid marble.

Given the store’s location in the Palazzo, an over-the-top Italianate hotel tower at the Venetian, it was crucial to incorporate classical elements. “Balancing antique and modern creates visual peaks and valleys,” Hutchison explains. In one playful gesture, he framed the entries to various departments on the main level in plasterwork cast in a pattern of overlapping old-fashioned picture frames. All Barneys outposts, regardless of location, are supposed to have a residential feel. Hutchison achieved this predominantly through the presence of natural light—rare in department stores and, he felt, especially essential in a town where almost everything happens in enclosed, artificially lit surroundings.

“Natural light creates an air of luxury,” he says. “It makes people feel comfortable staying longer, thus increasing sales.” The most concrete manifestation of the “residential” corporate mandate is a staircase reminiscent of grand old mansions. His oval rendition spirals through the center of the three-story, 81,000-square-foot interior, beneath a dome topped by French metalwork of the

an oculus. In addition to the staircase, bronze display fixtures recalling 1940’s are among the many old-world elements that reference the origins of a company that was family-owned for 84 years. (It now belongs to the government of Dubayy.)

To combat the homogeneity common in retail spaces, Hutchison made a point to differentiate between levels. ~
The hushed glitz of the main floor, with display islands wrapped in backlit frosted acrylic, seems a world away from the upstairs men's department, where leather-covered wing chairs dot the black-walnut parquet floor. The highlight of the mezzanine jewelry department, where high rollers purchase their bling, is a bank of glass display cases that look like Automat windows—with locks, of course.

Clockwise from top left: Fins of cast plaster crisscross a dome that culminates in a skylight. In the top-floor men's department, a mannequin stands against the curtain wall's aluminum mullions and fitted glass. The entry to the cosmetics department is framed, in a visual pun, by a portal ornamented with picture frames; they're cost in phials.
Clockwise from top: Depicted in the fitted gowns, playing card suits are among the few references to casino culture. The Lanvin boutique, with its mahogany paneling and silver-leaved cove, is furnished entirely with vintage pieces including a glass-topped bronze table. In the men's designer area, a steel-and-aluminum lamp sits 10 feet above a vintage sofa.

In a notable departure from the Vegas status quo, Barneys is the first retail fashion outlet with a facade on the Strip instead of deep inside a casino. So Hutchison treated the store exterior as a calling card. Tipping his hat to Vegas flash and “keeping things amped up,” he says, his signage glows red by day and white by night. Still, amid the visual noise that defines Sin City, the sophistication of Barneys is an oasis in the desert. —Debra Scott