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City sets the tone for vinyl sales

Chicago's record stores ranked among best in the U.S. **Business**

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



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Record players such as this Zenith, as well as records old and new, are sold at Audio Archaeology in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood.

Vinyl records find groove in Chicago

As sales continue to soar, city emerges as a top market

By ANASTASIA FORINA
Tribune reporter

Chicago is emerging as one of the biggest markets for vinyl records in the U.S.

The city has upward of 30 stores selling vinyl albums. Three of them, Dusty Groove, Dave's Records and Laurie's Planet of Sound, are ranked among the best in the U.S. by *Rolling Stone* magazine.

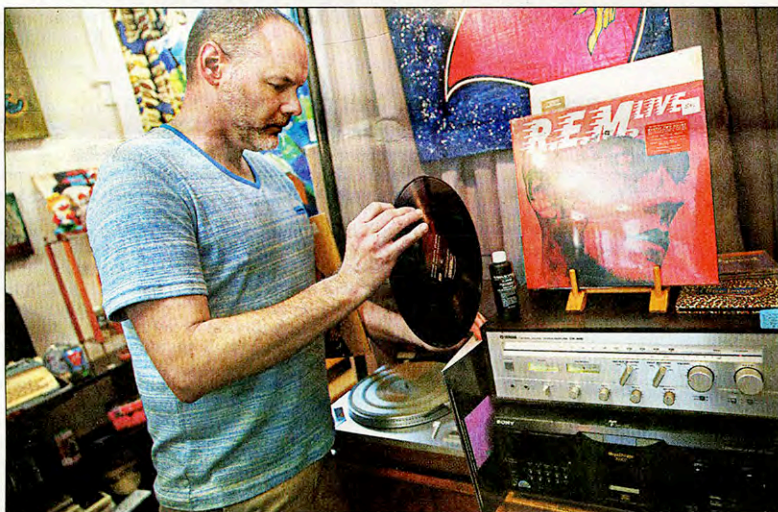
"Chicago is a great independent record base," said David Bakula, analyst for Nielsen Entertainment. "Record shopping is such a different experience here. Dedication to local merchants is very evident in Chicago," he said.

Vinyl record sales might hit a new record this year.

As of mid-June, some 3.7 million vinyl albums had been sold, a 40 percent increase over the same period last year, according to Nielsen data.

Jack White's new album sold 40,000 copies on vinyl in the first week of June, the most for any record on vinyl since 1991.

"Young people are driving growth in sales," said John Arnsdorff, who in March opened a store called Audio Archaeology in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood that sells new and used vinyl records and record players. "They like the



John Arnsdorff, owner of Audio Archaeology, says young people are driving the vinyl sales growth.

sound better."

New records at Arnsdorff's shop sell for \$15 to \$40 each and account for about a third of sales. Used records, priced at \$5 to \$6, represent about a fifth of sales. New and refurbished record players, priced between \$30 and \$1,000, account for the balance of sales. Refurbished record players made in Chicago

by Zenith and Grundig and Telefunken players made in Germany, also are popular, Arnsdorff said.

Classical jazz records from the 1980s and 1990s as well as Tom Waits, Talking Heads, Black Keys, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin are among the store's best-sellers.

Luck Corsiglia, a 17-year-old

student from Lake Forest Academy, said he prefers the sound of records over CDs. He said he has been collecting vinyl records for two years since his grandparents gave him a record player.

"The sound is more full and detailed, while MP3 is com-

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CHRIS SWEDA/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Owner John Arnsdorff, left, gets a thumbs-up from customer Adam Vavrick at Audio Archaeology, where used records sell for \$5 to \$6.

Vinyl record sales find groove

Vinyl, from Page 1

pressed. I'm listening to music on an iPad when I'm in a hurry. But at home I prefer records." Corsiglia said while browsing through Audio Archaeology's record stock.

Vinyl records have been growing in popularity since 2007 when sales hit 1 million. Six years later, sales had reached 6 million, up 33 percent from 2012. At the same time, sales of CDs fell 15 percent to 165 million in 2013 from 193 million in 2012, according to Nielsen data.

Independent record stores are riding the vinyl wave, reaping better sales than records sold by big box retailers and stores that focus on digital music, Bakula said.

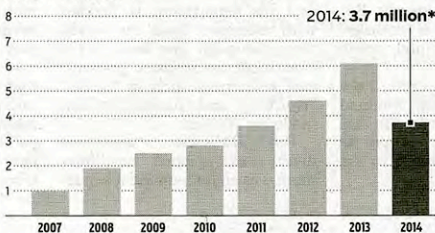
Chicago store Dusty

Sales spinning

The resurgence of vinyl record sales has built from 300,000 sold in 1993 to 6.1 million last year. In the first half of 2014, sales are up 40 percent over the same period last year.

U.S. VINYL ALBUM SALES

Scale in millions



*2014 results are for the first six months.

SOURCE: Nielsen

TRIBUNE

Groove sells about 500,000 albums annually, said owner Rick Wojcik whose personal vinyl collection

totals 15,000 records. His store, which started as an online business in 1996, now occupies a three-story

building on the edge of Wicker Park.

He continues to depend heavily on online sales; about 80 percent of the store's customers live outside Chicago. The store receives up to 250 orders a day, Wojcik said.

Used records at Dusty Groove start at 50 cents, while new records are priced from \$10 to \$30. Wojcik charges anywhere from \$50 to several hundred dollars, or even \$1,000, for rare records.

Jazz from the 1960s and '70s and soul music are popular, Wojcik said, along with what he calls "unusual music."

"We don't sell hits," Wojcik said, adding that he often travels to countries such as England, Brazil and France to scout for records that match his clientele's

eclectic tastes.

People of all ages and both genders are among the store's customers, notably people who grew up with vinyl, Wojcik said.

Album covers also are a big drivers of sales, said Bakula, the Nielsen Entertainment analyst.

Rob Medina, archivist at the Chicago History Museum who has a collection of 2,000 vinyl records of jazz, R&B and hip-hop, said he used to frame album covers and hang them on his walls.

"I grew up with records, so it's the sound I prefer," said Medina, 45. The popping sound of scratches is part of the listening experience, he said. "There is a presence of sound, because of the grooves, scratches."

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