



8 Must-Visit American Record Stores

Check out these vinyl meccas for LP connoisseurs.

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The record industry seemed headed for oblivion in the early Nineties and then something unexpected happened. A whole new generation of music lovers created a vinyl renaissance that continues to grow at a surprising rate. According to a recent *Forbes* magazine article, vinyl record sales are projected to earn close to one billion dollars for the first time this century.



www.amoeba.com

Streaming music services may have their converts but collectors of vinyl prefer the tactile sensation of holding an album, putting it on the turntable, studying the cover and liner notes and listening to the unmistakable sound of an authentic vinyl recording, imperfections and all. Another part of the appeal for vinyl fans is hunting for rare LPs or long-desired acquisitions in stores where the employees are more likely to be self-taught musicologists who can advise and aid them in their audio explorations. Here is just a small sampling of some of the most beloved vinyl meccas in the U.S. from coast to coast.

Amoeba Music, Los Angeles, California



www.amoeba.com

The gold standard among independent music chains, [Amoeba](#) opened its first store in Berkeley, California in 1990, added a second store in San Francisco in 1997 and followed that with a third outlet in Los Angeles in 2001. A one-stop destination for buying CDs,

DVDs, Blu-Rays and especially used and new vinyl, Amoeba can be an overwhelming experience due to the sheer volume of pop culture on display. Of the three stores, I favor the frenetic and spacious environment of the Los Angeles location and their eclectic genre classifications that range from rock steady and reggae to death metal and tiki bar lounge music. Lovers of jazz and classical music, in particular, will be amazed at the amount of collectible vinyl that is available here.

Dusty Groove, Chicago, Illinois

You'd expect a city with a rich musical history like Chicago to have an abundance of record stores and it definitely does with enough offerings to keep vinyl collectors shopping for weeks. One of the most famous local institutions is [Dusty Groove](#), which first launched as an online business in April 1996. Dusty Groove has since opened a brick and mortar store in the Wicker Park neighborhood and in 2007 launched their own record label which, like their store, is committed to serving up rarities and obscure delights such as recordings by The Metros (Northern Soul), Brazilian singer Gal Costa and jazz flutist Jeremy Steig. The bright, neatly arranged interior of the store is anything but dusty and is packed with new and used LP delights from around the world.

Easy Street Records, Seattle, Washington



Grady Tyree, www.easystreetonline.com/Store

Currently celebrating its 28th year, [Easy Street Records](#) is a Seattle mainstay for vinyl enthusiasts and a great place to mingle with fellow music lovers, thanks to their combination cafe/coffee bar/store arrangement. Their stock of new and used records is massive, and an additional lure are the shop's live music events. Ian Bremner, who handles social media for Easy Street, notes, "We've hosted tons of live shows over the years including local favorites Pearl Jam, Macklemore and countless other bands coming through town. Easy Street is mostly a great neighborhood hangout with food, coffee, music for musicians, fans, collectors and everyone."

Randy's Record Shop, Salt Lake City, Utah



Steven Vargo, www.randysrecords.com

Notable for offering the largest selection of vinyl records in Utah, [Randy's Record Shop](#) is still going strong after 39 years in business (it opened in 1978). Walking inside Randy's is like taking a time machine back to how a vintage used record store used to look in the 20th century and what's not to like about that? Yes, the store also sells CDs, used audio equipment (receivers, amplifiers and speakers) and new and used turntables, but the main attraction is records, records, records and genre diversity (Frank Sinatra, Ween, Carl Perkins, Judas Priest, Françoise Hardy, B.B. King, etc.).

Revolver Records, Phoenix, Arizona

If you find yourself in Phoenix and need a vinyl fix, this is the place to visit. Actually [Revolver Records](#) has two locations, a newer store at E. Thomas Road and the original downtown store on N. 2nd Street, which feels more like an obsessive record collector's secret bunker. With over 25,000 LPs in stock, bargain hunters are bound to find some gems in a vinyl sea that includes a superior jazz section and one of the most comprehensive, well-organized rock/pop collections in the state.

Twist & Shout, Denver, Colorado



www.twistandshout.com/

It started 28 years ago as a record store in a strip mall on Alameda Street but [Twist & Shout](#) is now a major music hub in the Lowenstein Cultureplex on Colfax Avenue that sells CDs, DVDs, books, collectibles and, of course, tons of vinyl amid a 11,000 square foot space. Record collectors come for the reasonably priced used and new vinyl offerings and often end up sticking around for some of the store's live music events featuring The Pretenders, Joe Doe, Damien Rice, Lucinda Williams and others.

Waterloo Records, Austin, Texas



Spencer Selvidge for Waterloo Records, www.waterloorecords.com

When it comes to variety and selection, it is hard to top [Waterloo Records](#)' impressive inventory which is well represented in every genre and even features a section dedicated to Austin's local music scene and Texas musicians. LP fanatics can find recent releases like Sturgill Simpson's *A Sailor's Guide to Earth* and Wolf Parade's *Apologies to the Queen Mary* or browse for vintage hip-hop singles, psychedelic folk or gospel blues. The live in-store music events are another righteous perk and recent acts include Japandroids, Black Joe Lewis & The Honeybears and Delbert McClinton.

Wuxtry Records, Atlanta, Georgia



Jeff Stafford, www.wuxtryrecords.com

Atlanta is a virtual playground for record hunters with such treasure troves as [Wax 'n Facts](#), [Fantasyland](#), [Ella Guru](#) and [Criminal Records](#) at the top of the heap but my personal go-to favorite is [Wuxtry Records](#), which opened its first store in Athens, Georgia in 1976 and then expanded with an Atlanta location in 1978. The Atlanta store was just a few blocks from my apartment so I spent a lot of time browsing the stacks there for vinyl gold. The front room is dedicated mostly to contemporary and vintage rock 'n' roll/pop but the back room is a great place to explore the bins of country-western, soul, movie soundtracks and other categories. jazz, reggae and blues are particularly well represented on vinyl here so genre specialists, take note.



Jeff Stafford, www.wuxtryrecords.com