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Vinyl fans hit area shops to snag limited releases



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Record Store Day

BY JOHN WIRT
Music writer
 May 07, 2013

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For Kerry Beary, co-owner of the Atomic Pop Shop, Record Store Day, arriving Saturday, April 20, is better than Christmas.

The Atomic Pop Shop in Baton Rouge, which sells new and vintage vinyl records and furniture as well as Beary's artwork, is among Louisiana's Record Store Day outlets.

Other participating merchants include New Orleans record stores the Louisiana Music Factory, Peaches Records, Euclid Records, Jim Russell Records, Skully'z Recordz, Mushroom Records and Lafayette's Vinylville.

A happy and suspenseful day for vinyl fans, the sixth annual Record Store Day is the day when independent record stores throughout the world put their limited edition Record Store Day releases on the shelf.

Stores order Record Store Day releases but never know exactly how much of what they've ordered they'll get. Beary tripled her requests this year over last year. She's impressed with the 2013 offerings, the majority of which feature high quality packaging and 180-gram vinyl.

"There is colored vinyl, some releases with extra EPs and 45s, posters,"

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she said. "All kinds of great stuff and a lot of downloads, too."

Releases include discs from Mumford & Sons, the Rolling Stones, the Black Keys, the Grateful Dead, Coheed and Cambria, Bob Dylan, Buddy Guy, Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie and Bon Jovi.

Highly anticipated artists, Beary said, include Sigur Ros, the Flaming Lips, Cream and the White Stripes.

Phone calls to Euclid Records about Record Store Day began weeks ago, store manager James Weber Jr. said.

"Most of the early calls are from out-of-town or out-of-state folks trying to plan their day," he said. "Every year we see more non-New Orleans residents."

Like other Record Store Day participants, Euclid Records, Louisiana Music Factory, Atomic Pop Shop and Vinylville sell vinyl records throughout the year.

"But Record Store Day brings additional interest," Louisiana Music Factory owner Barry Smith said, "because of the limited editions and special releases."

Self-confessed vinyl head Vic LeBlanc, who'll be operating his Vinylville shop Saturday at the Jockey Lot Flea Market, 3011 I-49, booth No. 500A, is among the smaller Record Store Day outlets. He also sells records 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesday through Friday at 1426 Eraste Land Road.

"Record Store Day helps guys like me get exposure," he said. "Last year I ordered about three dozen items and I got about eight. They sold in nanoseconds that morning. But the little trickle I get, Best Buy will never get. The releases go to mom and pop shops. Record Store Day celebrates the little American business owner struggling to make it."

"It's our big holiday to celebrate being an independent shop," Berry agreed. "We provide something to people in Baton Rouge that they can't get anywhere else."

Berry, Weber and Smith have all noticed increased year-round interest in vinyl.

"There's been interest in it for the entire 21 years of our store," Smith said. "But in the past few years a lot of younger kids got into it. They buy new releases and the reissued classics. Old jazz and blues, rhythm-and-blues, funk and the local records that come out."

Weber sees more vinyl fans every day, he said.

"Teenagers and retirees digging through racks of records together is a wholly positive thing," he said. "It's important that there is a physical clubhouse to foment arts and culture dialogue. The Internet can be a reductive force sometimes. Conversation in a record store is where it's at, we think."

LeBlanc's Vinylville has also been picked to present the official Record Store Day film, Last Shop Standing. The free screening will take place at 7 p.m. Saturday at Feed & Seed, 106 N. Grant St., Lafayette.

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