



MUSIC

FOR THE RECORD

Vinyl versus digital—homegrown vinyl records stores in the metro talk about the thriving charm of the good ol’ plaka.

BY HANNA SORBITO



NORTHWEST ESTATE AND COLLECTIBLES

This go-to collectibles shop has stood its ground for five years. Northwest Estate and Collectibles takes pride in having the largest inventory of all-original and affordable collectibles in the country. Their store in Kamuning and their newest branch in BF Homes Parañaque house a wide selection of discs, toys, movie posters, ephemera, and of course, vinyl records and audio gear!

Contrary to the fleeting and hypercompetitive digital music industry, they like how each vinyl record is sentimental and carries its own story through time— a quality that interests their younger market. When asked about the appeal of vinyl, they expressed, “Bitin ang digital streaming.” The distinct sound distortion that comes with playing a record has its charm as opposed to the predictable quality of digital music.

PLAKA EXPRESS

True to its name, the community praises Plaka Express for being on their toes in finding and offering fresh finds for all ages. Their quaint store in Bagong Pag-asa, Quezon City first opened its doors in 2016 and since then housed the biggest collection of metal albums in the country. They are inspired to satiate the vinyl hunt of their patrons, especially the new and young customers who visit their store to get their first records.

For them, being able to “hold your music” is the most enchanting part of collecting vinyl: “With streaming, you really have no tangible object that represents your music.” As they continue to serve a growing and younger community of enthusiasts, they look forward to a bigger future for the vinyl industry in the country.



SPINDLE HOLE RECORDS

What started as decluttering turned out to be a solid business venture for Spindle Hole Records. Four years ago, it was just about selling preloved and duplicate copies online. Until in 2017, its owner Randall Ballesteros eventually decided to open up his shop in Makati. Known for its fresh look and feel, the store serves as a hub for multiple sellers, such as Black Circles, Haul, On The Corner, Rootdown Records, Bear’s Den, Good Morning Records, and Gamit Panghiwalayan.

For Spindle Hole, collecting vinyl records is not just about the music. It’s a journey of discovery and rediscovery, literally finding new music from secret troves and exploring the rituals that accompany the music. “From the album artwork in front, the production details at the back, the inserts, the media itself and the music, [the record] contains a more complete and compelling story.”

Getting into the vinyl trade is somehow intimidating, so it’s no surprise that vinyl connoisseurs are extra enthusiastic and hopeful when they speak about it. As opposed to digital music streaming that has become too accessible, listening to vinyl records is a multi-sensory experience that has its unparalleled appeal. As long as we have front runners who keep the records playing, we’re yet to see a fully realized community of vinyl victors in the country. Now, which record should we play next?

