

Deck the Shelves with Mounds of Vinyl

House of Records has you covered BY ANDY VALENTINE

The walls at House of Records are made of wood, but if they keep collecting vinyl the way they have been in recent years, they might have to substitute slats for LPs. Walking into the small shop is really an undertaking for somebody with little time on their hands. Right as you enter, you're greeted by posters, cassettes and CDs galore, and then there are the records. Holy shit, sweet, sweet vinyl. You probably won't know where to start – I suggest the "new arrivals" section – but if you're on the hunt for something specific, be it Tiny Tim's *Lost and Found* or something, well, a little more collectible, it's probably a safe bet that you'll track it down.

If you're like me, you probably feel audiophile jargon like "Half-Speed Masters," "Quadraphonic SQ," "CD-4 Discrete" and "Nautilus SuperDiscs" flying right over

your head. Never fear; you don't need to know about all that nonsense in order to end up with a good-quality record. Even some of the most busted-up, over-touched record sleeves inside House of Records contain discs in perfect condition. You might not care about sound quality, but the person you're buying for this season might, so this fact will probably help allay any concern.

The folks that run the place are pretty damn nice, too. If you're literally lost in the shelves upon shelves upon shelves, the knowledgeable and friendly staff down there can help you out. They won't be pretentious douchebags about it, either. Record stores have propensity to be sort of snotty establishments, but House of Records ain't like that. The staff are knowledgeable and nonjudgmental, whether your music taste incorporates brilliance or just Lil Wayne, and they'll help you search based on *your* style instead of rambling about whatever fucking Washed Out record they think is coolest (I'm looking at you, Portland).

So if you're looking to buy a record fanatic some new vinyl over the holidays, there are definitely some gems to be found here. Even for folks with the kinds of collections that span 20 shelves and most of the garage, there's a good chance you'll be able to find them something new. Records at House of Records are priced at an expansive range – starting as little as \$2 – but the average price is somewhere in the \$10-\$20 range. Not bad: two or three records for that \$30 "budget" that you definitely won't stick to. It's the season of giving. Give vinyl. **GG**



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