

Repo Record

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The music scene got a shot in the arm six months ago when the venerable Repo Record returned to town in a new brick and mortar. This means more options for record buyers, a new home for musicians to hang gig flyers and the return of a beloved homegrown small business brand.

"I love this spot," owner Jimmy Parker said of the building and property he bought from the proprietors of the Heywood Sewing Center. "I think things are slowly but steadily going to grow, and not just at the store, but in this general little area," he added, referring to the strip of buildings across the street, home to a general store and graphic design shop.



Since opening in December, main customers have been the ol' Repo faithful, customers from the store's original run in 1988-2005: Baby Boomers, O.G. Hippies and X-ers. "We do really great with out-of-towners too, people who come into town to see shows," Parker said. And Record Store Day in April was a homerun. "We had so many new faces come on that particular day and sold out of everything I'd ordered. It was great."

You can find the "golden oldies," as Parker calls them, at Repo: 1960s-70s-80s rock, punk, soul, jazz and country. The store is stuffed to the gills with used LPs from said genres and can easily boast the best country section in town. Another focus for the shop are new LP reissues of classic titles. (My personal recent scores: new pressings of Radio Birdman, Gram

Parsons and John Coltrane.)

In addition to the crates full of sonic gold, a steadily growing collection of kitschy music and pop culture items now line practically every available square inch – the hallmarks of the kind of classic, funky record shop you want to lose yourself in for a good hour. The vibe is great. The store is even dog friendly these days and has a stash of treats for any K-9 visitor.

One thing missing, though, Antiseen co-founder Joe Young, who passed away in April. Joe and his brother Jeff Young, longtime friends with Parker, helped open the new store.

“I miss Joe a lot,” Parker said. “The way everyone has come together, though, the outpouring of care and concern, that really did let us know we have a family. People have been so good to Jeff. Joe would be really happy about that.”

Despite the loss of a friend who was also a big part of the business, Parker’s excitement with being back on the scene is palpable. He still loves the record biz, which he entered in the late ‘70s. He began in Atlanta as a warehouse employee for local record one-stops before opening the original Repo Record on Central Ave in 1988. Repo would grow to three stores in Charlotte in the ‘90s before closing to sell online only.

“I love buying records. We’ll still drive out to people’s homes and look at their collections if it sounds like they have stuff that’s worthwhile. I’m still waiting to find someone with a nice R&B collection to sell.”

Parker is clearly enjoying himself. “This is the more laid-back Repo,” he said one evening recently as he walked through the store barefoot. “I don’t even chase down UPS drivers anymore.”

Repo Record
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