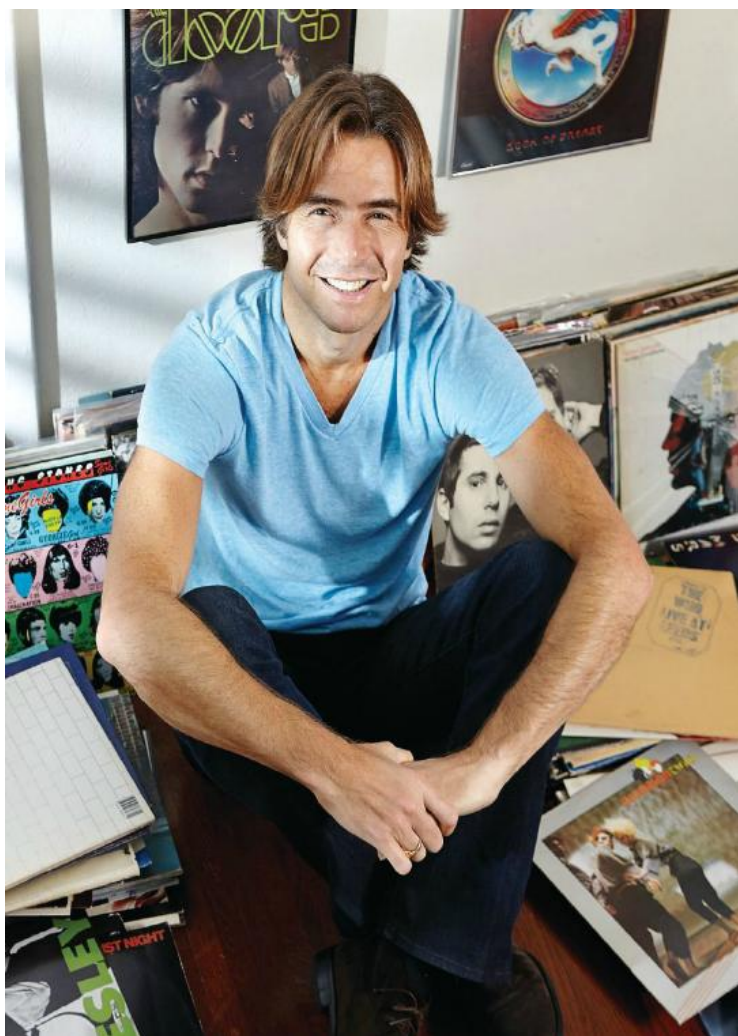


{THE COLLECTOR}

Tadd *schwartz*



In the era of a thousand songs in your pocket, this Miami media exec prefers to keep things classic—with an impressive collection of vinyl records.

Tadd Schwartz is a fast-talking guy, fitting for a man who owns and runs Schwartz Media Strategies, one of the largest and most successful public relations firms in Miami. Yet even a whirlwind like Schwartz needs a way to unwind—and for that he turns to his collection of more than 2,000 vinyl records. But it's not only the music (blues, rock and jazz from the 50s, 60s and 70s he inherited from his father) he finds soothing. What Schwartz loves even more is the ritual. "You pull the record out and the paper sleeve is yellowed and torn and smells musty, a piece of the past," Schwartz said. "You take the album out and check it for scratches, and blow on it to get rid of the dust. When you put the record on the turntable, you place the needle right in the groove and then you have to listen to the whole thing. Back then it wasn't the ADD world where you fast-forward to just the part you like."

Schwartz grew up in Miami, an only child whose father wanted to expose him to the music of his youth. By age seven, young Schwartz was a fan of Miles Davis, the early doo-wop of The Paragons and The Jesters, as well as Elvis Presley, classic 60s rock including Herman's Hermits, The Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton and The Yardbirds, and 70s groups like Fleetwood Mac and Jackson Browne. "The beauty of listening to the record back then was the cover," he said, noting he never would have been drawn to The Doors if not for the mysterious face of Jim Morrison on the cover of Doors '67. "The songs personified the cover or vice versa."

The band that most captured his heart and imagination, though, was The Beatles. Although his father wasn't the kind of classic record collector who fussed over the how the vinyl was handled, Schwartz' architect uncle was. Ironically enough, it was his uncle who let Schwartz borrow his copy of The Beatles famed White Album, a double disc so rare it was numbered. The precocious young Tadd was certain the album wasn't meant to be white—so he took his crayon and wrote "The Beatles" (misspelled, to boot) on the cover. It was enough to send his uncle into a tailspin, but all these years Schwartz still laughs and the album is now part of his collection.

Such musical devotion is a family tradition Schwartz is trying to pass on to his two-year-old daughter Siena, whose room is decorated with album covers. Daughter and dad's nighttime ritual is for Schwartz to point to different albums and ask her to identify the artists. "I'll ask who's that? And she'll say, 'Van.' Van Morrison in Astral Weeks. The first thing she hears in the morning is music and the last thing she sees at night is trippy music from her grandfather. What's better than music?"