

The beat goes round and round for Spinners



It's all about the vinyl: Toni Jenkins is among a group of Spinners in Warrnambool who meet four times a year to share their love of music...played on record players.

[dropcap style="color:#DC943C;"] I [/dropcap]t began as a good idea for a housewarming party that has taken on a life of its own as a regular rug-twisting, hip-swinging, good-time-guaranteed-get-together for a group of friends who love LPs.

If you know what the acronym LP stands for, then you are off to a good start to be a "Spinner": a person who loves listening to actual vinyl records rather than CDs, MP3s or digital downloads.

"It is the sound – the richness and quality of the sound – and when you hear it again after not having heard it for a long

time, it is wonderful,” explains the founder of the Spinners in Warrnambool, **Claire Jennings**.

Claire inadvertently started the Spinners when planning her housewarming party in 2011 – a year after she had moved in – and decided that because she was a year late with the festivities, the party had better be something out of the ordinary. Why not set up a stereo and play some records?

“But I didn’t have a record player and I didn’t have any records – I had nothing,” Claire throws out her hands and laughs.



[dropcap style="color:#DC943C;"] T [/dropcap>he solution was to borrow a couple of turntables and ask the guests to bring along their favourite records to “spin a set” in a seamless transition between one turntable and the other, just as DJs

used to do when Claire and her friends were in their teens.

"I organised for a bit of a practice-run a month before the actual party, just to see how it would work, and the few people I invited ended up dancing all night...I basically ended up having two housewarming parties," Claire says.

Like all memorable nights, the talk the next day was all around "we must do that again!"

So they did.

And then they did it again.

And now a core group of around 12 people meet four times a year, with other "Spinners" included by invitation-only, to play their 25-minute "sets", enjoy some food and, if they feel like it (which they usually do), to dance.

"To hear *Smoke on the Water* again on vinyl after so many years, well, it's just magical," Claire says, adding that she loves rock and roll and is a mad Beatles fan.



The record-breaking cake stand that is used by the host of each Spinners' night to serve the snacks.

[dropcap style="color:#DC943C;"] S [/dropcap]pinner **Toni Jenkins** said the group reignited her passion for music – she has eclectic taste from The Cure, to Janis Joplin, Bette Midler and just about anything from the 80s – and that there is a particular joy that comes from hearing great songs.

“There are still songs out there that you have never heard before and, every now and then, someone will come up with an absolute gem,” she says.

Toni admits she has her favourite Spinners – **Roy Reekie, Paul Sheehan** – who can keep her on the dance floor for most of the night.

“To dance through a whole set of about 10 songs is not for the

faint hearted,” she laughs.

A few rules have been added in recent times, such as playlists being written down rather than chosen at random, and each Spinner bringing their own glass and taking their shoes off at the door, just to save on dishes and floor damage.

In the end, however, it is still all about the music.

“The songs represent a particular time and a particular era – it is our history – and there is great joy in being completely immersed in that again,” Toni says.



Songs and artists from another era are brought back to vivid life through the Spinners nights in Warrnambool.

[box] The Spinners are hosting a farewell and tribute night to Warrnambool’s legendary Capricorn Records and owner Mick Fitzgerald (who is a Spinner) on Sept 20 at the Ozone Room, Warrnambool Hotel. Tickets are \$10 from Long Gone, 115 Fairy St, Warrnambool. [/box]

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