

plastic covers. Bags Unlimited is probably the best place to buy what you need to protect your records (see their ads on pages 4 and 76). I am sure that they would be happy to assist you.

Some words of advice: It is best not to handle your records unless you need to. That way, you avoid damaging them. Never play your records. Playing your records over time will cause the sheen to wear away. Also, it is possible that you can accidentally drop the needle on the disc, or the needle will all of a sudden go across the record while the record is playing — I have seen this happen first hand — or you can drop the disc.

I think that this hobby really needs someone who is an expert and who knows how to grade records and sleeves properly to offer this service. That being stated, I am going to start a grading service in hopes that I can standardize things. When people who don't know how to properly grade records buy records that are over graded and then go to sell them and lose money because of that, it gives the hobby a black mark. It hurts all of us. They then broadcast to their friends that they got ripped off. We could — and I believe that we do — lose potential collectors because of this every day. Contact me if you want an expert who knows how to properly grade stuff. I will charge a low fee for my service, but it will be worth every penny of it.

Pick up a good price guide. This means not just any price guide. You need a price guide that is pretty accurate. I recently authored the new Beatles record price guide. It has 232 pages that have tons of large photos of records and picture sleeves (most of the rare records and rare picture sleeves have photos), and the printing is big enough so that it is very easy to read. There is a description and a price for most records and picture sleeves. It also includes my Top 40 records and picture

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sleeves. Please remember that it is a price guide. What you will pay for a given record or picture sleeve will be determined by many factors which are specified in the book. This also holds true when someone goes to sell their records. So far, from the many opinions that I or my publisher have received, all have been very positive. If you are interested in purchasing my Beatles record price guide book you can



Brian Epstein predicted that The Beatles would be bigger than Elvis Presley. The day after The Fab Four met The King at Elvis' Bel Air, Calif., home on Aug. 27, 1965, in what became known as the "summit meeting of Rock and Roll," Memphis Mafia member Jerry Schilling asked The Beatles to sign some photos for Elvis' friends, including this one for TV personality George Klein. It sold for \$13,145 via Heritage Auction Galleries.

purchase a copy from my publisher (Osbourne Enterprises Publishing).

What was the first big-ticket item you purchased to add to your collection? How long had you been seeking it out, and how, when and where did you finally acquire it? It is still part of your collection, or have you since sold it off?

SP: I remember it as if it was yesterday. The very first big-ticket item that I purchased for my collection was the commercial "My Bonnie" single on the Decca label that is still in my collection today. I got it in October 1990, when a dealer mailed a list of the records that he had for sale to me. When I got home from work one day in October 1990, I had seen that I got the list of records that he had for sale, so

I opened his letter and found that he had that record on his list. So I rang him up and acquired it! It is still the best-known copy. It does have a date stamp that was done at the factory. That stamp represents a very historic date. Yes, usually any kind of stamping or writing on the label does cause a record to lose some value, but in this case — and I told the person who I was buying it from — that to me this is an exception to the rule, because it is their very first record. I believe it adds a very nice premium to the value of the record. In my opinion, only a true Mint copy can beat it. It was on my "most wanted list" since Day One!

I NEVER will sell individual pieces from my collection. If I ever offer it again to anyone, they will have to buy the whole collection. In the past, I have received offers from collectors for some of my records and picture sleeves that were close to if not "sky is the limit." They tried their best to get me to break up my collection, but I stood my ground and rejected their offers. If I was breaking up my collection I would have accepted those offers. Recently, I received great offers for my Mint mono open "Sgt. Pepper's" album for \$1,700 and my Mint mono "Songs, Pictures and Stories" album for \$3,600. I rejected

both offers, because I am not ever going to break up the best ever American Beatle record collection. To me, it would be a crime to do so just for money. If my collection was just a good collection, I would probably be willing to break it up. Having the best American Beatle record collection is so special, you just don't do that to it.

What's your collecting motto/