

Vertigo - A History

Paul Rigby reviews a book charting the iconic record label that featured a superb range of artists.

The Vertigo Swirl Label: **Worldwide Discography & Price Guide**

Authors: **Ulrich Klatte & Marcel Koopman**

Price: **£35**

Vertigo was an imprint of the Philips/Phonogram record label started in 1969 by Olav Wyper, covering both LPs and singles. Content-wise?

You're looking at a lot of prog-based releases and other non-mainstream styles ranging from Black Sabbath to Magna Carta to Gentle Giant and many more.

The label is also one of the most collectable entities on the planet, I've known some people whose entire aim in life is to collect every single one of them. Original pressings can fetch silly money: from around £100 to the multiple thousands. If you've ever stood in a record fair and someone mentions buying/selling a Vertigo swirl LP, just watch the ears prick up. Vertigo is always big news.

This specialist, new hardback book, packs in 320 pages and 400 coloured images and is devoted to the Vertigo label during its swirly design period with additional coverage for the label when it later adopted its UFO label design.

When I unpacked the book, I have to admit to a measure of disappointment at the size of the tome, 21.5cm high and 15cm wide. I wondered if there was enough space to tell this image-intensive story.

Then I realised that this book will most probably be used 'live', on

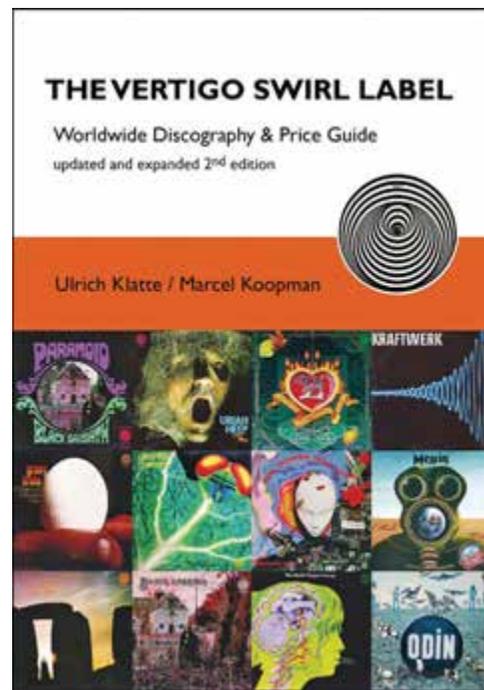
site in a record store, at a record fair or at a dealer's location and a ready reference might just be what's needed before a potential purchase. This is not the time to be toting a massive and very heavy book.

And while we're on the subject, relating to one minor yet important design point, I'm happy to see a bookmark ribbon attached to the binding to select a valuable page for later quick access.

Inside this book – also described as an 'Updated and Expanded 2nd Edition' – you'll find a brief label history and a description of the book as a tool, the development history of the label design and additional sales territories such as Germany. Pricing advice is sensibly given as a range instead of a specific (i.e. €500-€800). This is a European production, hence the Euro price points.

There's an excellent multi-page visual explanation of the different swirl designs plus a nice interview with the designer of the label design itself, Linda Nicol.

Near to the front of the book – an ideal position for those in a rush – is the full catalogue of each Vertigo release, the LPs and then the singles. After that, the book settles down to examine each and every LP release. Here my initial fears were erased. The book places the sleeve image on the left with an opinionated review



underneath. Whatever you think of the review style and content, I'm happy to see this feature. It brings the music to life and at least offers a view on the music, removing the threat of this book becoming too dry in nature.

This is the place where you'll find gatefold (and multi-section gatefold) sleeves, opened in full when required. Posters are displayed here too.

On the right is the label number, band name, LP title, catalogue number, format and release date, plus monetary value along with the band line-up, production information, cover design and even matrix numbers, plus additional notes if required. The book is completed with a review of foreign sleeve art and label styles, plus singles sleeve art.

An excellent, detailed, in-depth analysis of the label with a host of valuable advice, production insights and a list of rarities that will have many a knowledgeable vinyl collector slaving in hope and anticipation.

Contact: www.cpg-books.com
or call 01323 736598 for local dealer information.