



Sub Pop by the years!

1979: Bruce Pavitt, a student at Evergreen College in Olympia, Washington, creates issue #1 of *Subterranean Pop*, a fanzine focused on independent American rock records.

1983: Pavitt begins writing a "Sub Pop U.S.A." column for Seattle music magazine, *The Rocket*. He also uses the name for an underground music radio show on KCMU-FM.

1986: Pavitt releases the vinyl compilation *Sub Pop 100* (SP10), featuring Northwest punk bands the Wipers and the U-Men. The back of the record includes a black and white logo originally created for the "Sub Pop U.S.A." column by Helene Silverman and Wes Anderson and revised significantly by Art Chantry. For the album, Dale Yarger stacks the word Sub above the word Pop, and a soon-to-be world-famous mark is born.

Spring 1987: Jonathan Poneman, a promoter whose "Audioasis" show on KCMU-FM features local bands exclusively, meets Pavitt and offers to finance Soundgarden's *Screaming Life* EP (SP12) on Sub Pop. Soon, Pavitt and Poneman are full partners in Sub Pop Records. (And, "Audioasis" continues to this day, two decades on, as a Northwest music show on KEXP.)

June 1987: Sub Pop Records issues *Dry as a Bone* (SP11) by Green River, a Seattle rock band that includes future members of Pearl Jam and Mudhoney.

April 1, 1988: Pavitt and Poneman quit their jobs, open a tiny office, and the modern Sub Pop begins.

October 1988: Mudhoney releases the *Superfuzz Bigmuff* EP (SP21), the quintessential grunge record. In a 1981 letter to the *Desperate Times* fanzine, singer/guitarist Mark Arm described his first band in 1981 as "pure grunge, pure shit..." Oops.

November 1988: The Sub Pop Singles Club 7-inch record subscription series launches with Nirvana's "Love Buzz" b/w "Big Cheese" (SP23).

Fall 1988: Sub Pop begins selling iconic T-shirts that feature "Loser" on the front and the Sub Pop logo on back.

June 9, 1989: Nirvana releases its debut album, *Bleach* (SP34). It goes on to sell 1.6 million copies and becomes Sub Pop's best-selling release.

June 9, 1989: Mudhoney, Tad and Nirvana play "Lamefest" at Seattle's 1,400-seat Moore Theater. The sell-out show suggests that Seattle rock is reaching more than just scenesters and is about to explode nationwide.

August 1990: Mudhoney is the first Sub Pop band to play the Reading Festival, the UK's premier outdoor concert.

August 1991: Seattle music magazine *The Rocket* publishes a cover story on Sub Pop's financial difficulties titled "Sub Plop: Is the Price of World Domination Too High?"

August 23, 1991: Nirvana performs at the Reading Festival.

October 23, 1991: *Seattle Weekly* publishes a cover story on Sub Pop's financial difficulties titled "Is Sub Pop About to Pop?"

August 30, 1992: Nirvana headlines the Reading Festival, which also features performances by Mudhoney and L7.

October 1993: Sub Pop opens its own Seattle retail store; at nearly 500 square feet it is aptly dubbed the Sub Pop Mega Mart.

March 15, 1994: Neo-lounge act Combustible Edison issues debut album, *I, Swinger* (SP244). So-called Cocktail Nation is born.

May 10, 1994: Sub Pop releases *Diary* by Sunny Day Real Estate (SP246). The disc becomes a how-to manual for making emo records for the next dozen years.

January 1, 1995: Sub Pop enters a joint venture agreement with Warner Bros. Records. In return for its investment, Warners receives 49 percent of Sub Pop.



June 1995: Bruce Pavitt leaves Sub Pop Records.

August 11, 1996: *The Seattle Times* publishes a story on changes at Sub Pop that concludes, "as a shaper of tastes, its most rarified days have probably passed," and "Poneman's rich and somewhat powerful company might never be as great again."

November 8, 1996: *Hype!*, a film that documents the microscopic media attention turned on Seattle in the wake of Nirvana's success, premieres. Sub Pop issues the soundtrack.

April 21, 1998: Sub Pop introduces a new edition of the Singles Club subscription series, which over the next four years will release 7-inch records by Modest Mouse, the White Stripes and Bright Eyes, among many others.

June 9, 1998: Acclaimed noise-pop band the Jesus & Mary Chain release *Munki* (SP426) their first album for Sub Pop. Band dissolves three months later.

November 12, 1998: *Rolling Stone* publishes "Sub Popped," which notes layoffs and office closings at Sub Pop, and says, "its future looks bleak."

January 19, 2000: Sub Pop issues its 500th release, Mudhoney's *March to Fuzz (Best Of and Rarities)* (SP500).

May 30, 2000: Sub Pop stuffs the entire Mega Mart operation into the already bustling subpop.com, closes physical retail store. Rent goes way down.

June 19, 2001: The Shins release their debut album, *Oh, Inverted World* (SP550). The band vaults beyond indie circles when actor/director Zach Braff includes two of the album's songs in his hit film *Garden State* (2004).

November 5, 2002: Sub Pop issues its first comedy album, David Cross' *Shut Up, You Fucking Baby!* (SP590), which in 2003 is nominated for the Grammy for Best Comedy Album.

February 18, 2003: The Postal Service release *Give Up* (SP595). At nearly 1 million copies sold, it's Sub Pop's second-best-selling album.

May 24, 2005: Critic's favorites Sleater-Kinney release *The Woods* (SP670), their first album for Sub Pop. Band goes on indefinite hiatus one year later.

July 31, 2006: Sub Pop goes green by purchasing renewable energy credits equal to the company's energy use.

September 12, 2006: Punk stalwarts Dead Moon release *Echoes of the Past* (SP706) a 20-year retrospective and their first album for Sub Pop. Band retires two months later.

January 13, 2007: The Shins become the first Sub Pop band to perform on NBC-TV's "Saturday Night Live."

January 31, 2007: The Shins' *Winning the Night Away* debuts at #2 on *Billboard's* 200 Albums chart, marking Sub Pop's highest appearance in the ranking.

March 9, 2007: Jonathan Poneman launches Hardly Art, a new label distributed by Sub Pop that pairs smaller bands with innovative business models.

October 2007: Sub Pop opens its own MP3 store at subpop.com.

February 10, 2008: Folk duo Flight of the Conchords win the Grammy for Best Comedy Album for *The Distant Future* (SP746).

Spring and Summer 2008: Sub Pop celebrates its 20th anniversary with a rerelease of Mudhoney's *Superfuzz Bigmuff*, a new edition of the Sub Pop Singles Club and an outdoor summer music festival in Seattle.