

Capitol Records Inner Sleeves

c. 1953 - 1967

When the LP was first introduced in 1948, most companies that bought into the new format appear to have believed that the cardboard or posterboard cover was protection enough for the record it contained. By the middle of the 1950's, record companies had realized that this was not the case and had introduced protective inner liners. In many cases, this consisted only of a plastic "baggie," which some companies considered adequate -- even into the middle of the next decade. Other companies quickly noted that the "inner sleeve" could be used to promote other products by the same record company. Although Capitol continued to use plastic bags, they were one of the industry giants who made the move toward colorful paper inner sleeves.

Capitol's first inner sleeve appears to have been this one, promoting their introduction into the world of High Fidelity. On the other side it explains, "This protective envelope is another example of the care used by Capitol...."



This plain inner sleeve accompanied all Capitol LP's circa late 1956. It appears to have been used to house mono records at the end of the decade also. This is the most common Capitol inner sleeve from the pre-Beatles period. The "front" side of the liner promotes Capitol's "high fidelity" sound, explaining that Capitol records are

being housed in such sleeves "so that it will reach you in 'mint' condition." The sleeve also explains how to clean a record and that diamond needles are superior to sapphire ones – something that had been absent on the earlier sleeve. The reverse side shows how to insert and remove the LP (and inner sleeve) from the album jacket. Original copies of this first Capitol inner sleeve *do not have* the designation "12 BW" on them. When the same sleeve was used later in the 50's, it was numbered "12 BW," with the "12" pointing out that the sleeve was to be used on twelve inch records, and the "BW" an indicator that the sleeve was in black and white.



In early 1957, Capitol offered up their first inner sleeve promoting the record company's releases. None of the records are pictured, but numerous records are listed by title and catalog number. There is no number designation for this sleeve. The front side features a large Capitol logo and an assortment of "popular" albums. Albums such as Lord Flea's *Swingin' Calypsos* (T-842) and Tennessee Ernie Ford's *Favorites* (T-841) are among the latest LP's mentioned. On the reverse side, the T-Rim trademark is prominent, along with a brief description of what T-Rim is. Additionally, an advertisement for *Music Views* magazine appears, along

with a large variety of album listings, including six "hi fidelity demonstration albums" and a collection of various artists "top hits" albums.

This inner sleeve (c. 1957) predates the advent of stereo records. The paper sleeves were numbered for identification, with this sleeve being called "12 CFC-1". The "12" signified the fact that the inner liner was to be used on twelve inch LP's. The trailing "FC" stood for "four color," since the sleeve was printed using a color printing process. This early liner was used on both "popular" and "international" releases. The front side features color photographs of thirty "popular" LP covers, including the special LP promoting *Full Dimensional Sound* (SAL-9020) and Frank Sinatra's *Come Fly With Me* (W-920), which cover Sinatra reportedly objected to. The reverse side pictures thirty albums from the "Capitol of the World" series.



Immediately before the advent of stereo records in mid-1958, two parallel sleeves were issued: one in black-and-white and the other in color. The black-and-white sleeve displays 20 popular albums on one side and 19 on the other, showcasing Capitol artists like Frank Sinatra. The most recent record depicted on either side is Louis Prima & Keely Smith (*Las Vegas Prima Style*) (T-1010). No mention of stereo is made anywhere, but one side is captioned "A Wide Range of Wonderful Hi-Fi albums," and this probably indicates that stereo was coming. None of the records have stereo prefixes, however, and the *Oklahoma!* soundtrack retains its original catalog number (SAO-

595) on this sleeve. This liner uses the logo for T-RIM. The sleeve is numbered "12 BWT", with the "T" possibly standing for "Tower": the sleeve might be titled, "Top Stars and Styles from the Capitol Tower." This sleeve was certainly contemporary with the color sleeve below.

One side of this full-color sleeve displays 30 popular albums, while the other side shows 30 international releases. The most recent record depicted on the popular side is *Louis Prima-Keely Smith (T-1010)*. No mention of stereo is made anywhere, but the title to SAL-9020 has been altered to *A Study in High Fidelity*, a minor shift showing that stereo was coming. None of the records have stereo prefixes, however, and the *Oklahoma!* soundtrack retains its original catalog number (SAO-595). This liner for the first time mentions that "All Capitol Long Playing Records feature the patented 'T-RIM.'" The sleeve is numbered "12FCT", with the "T" possibly standing for "Tower": the sleeve might be titled, "Best Selling Albums from the Capitol Tower."



Capitol made this sleeve available shortly after they introduced stereo LPs. Based on the fact that the highest-numbered LP on the sleeve is (S)T-1086, the sleeve was probably in use on mono LPs in early 1959. One side indicates "Top Stars and Styles from the Capitol Tower." The other side refers to "A Wide Range of Wonderful Hi-Fi Albums!" The sleeve is numbered "12FCP." It pictures 52 albums and lists several more. By this time, the catalog numbers for earlier LP's had changed to indicate the presence of stereo. For example, the soundtrack to *Oklahoma!*, which was shown on the earlier inner sleeve with its original catalog number of SAO-595 (with "S" standing for "soundtrack") is listed on this sleeve with the number WAO-595 (with "W" being the price code) -- since "S" now stood for "stereo."



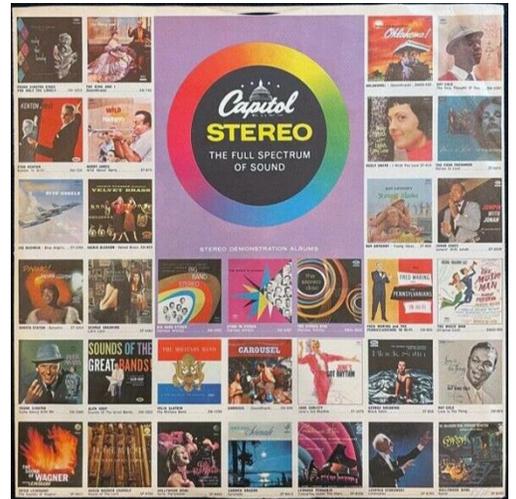
With the introduction of stereo, Capitol decided to market mono and stereo records separately with their inner sleeves. The first stereo sleeve simply read "Capitol STEREO" in the middle. Capitol's first stereo sleeve, "12SFC," provides information about stereo records on one side. It uses Capitol's first stereo slogan, the Full Spectrum of Sound," but does not mention "Full Dimensional Stereo."





This sleeve for mono records promoted "Everything in the World of Music," including once again popular records but mostly focusing on LP's representing the sounds of different countries (Mexico, Holland, England, Germany, Spain, etc.). On the sleeve, albums that were also available in stereo are indicated by an "(S)" next to the title. A total of fifty-one LP's are pictured and several others are listed on the liner. This sleeve is also numbered "12CFC-1" -- "2" would have been correct.

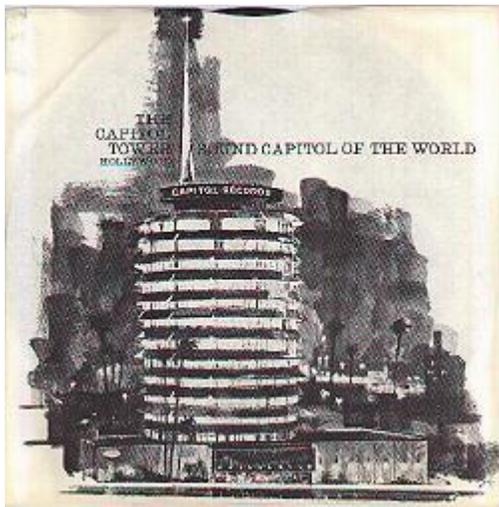
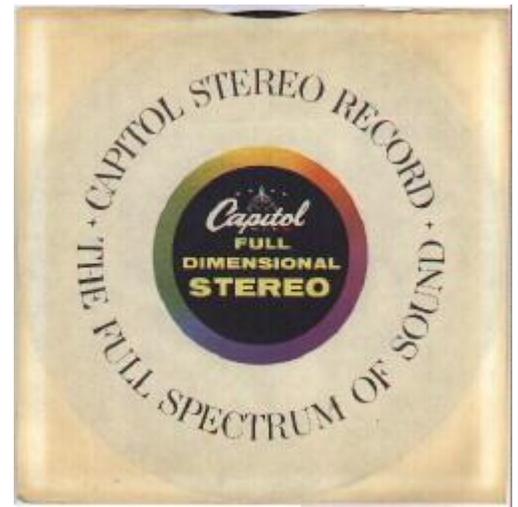
The second stereo sleeve, dating to spring 1959, promoted the Full Spectrum of Sound on the back side and pictured 30 stereo albums and three demonstration albums on the other side. Notice that it still does not mention "Full Dimensional Stereo."



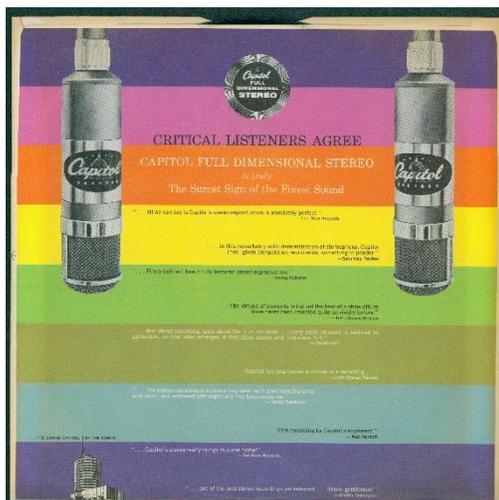
In mid-1959, the sleeves began to promote "Full Dimensional Stereo." This sleeve, numbered "12SFC-3," with "S" standing for "stereo," proclaims "Capitol FULL DIMENSIONAL STEREO begins right here!" The front side depicts two microphones and a color band of sound (representing stereophonic music). The reverse side explains the stereo recording and playback processes.



This next color sleeve is numbered "12SFC-4." The reverse side has not been changed from its previous incarnation, still depicting an explanation of stereophonic records. The obverse, however, now displays a large "Full Dimensional Stereo" rainbow logo. The sleeve proclaims that its contents are a "Capitol stereo record." "The Full Spectrum of Sound" was Capitol's promotional slogan for stereo records and can be found at the top of many stereo LP covers from the period.

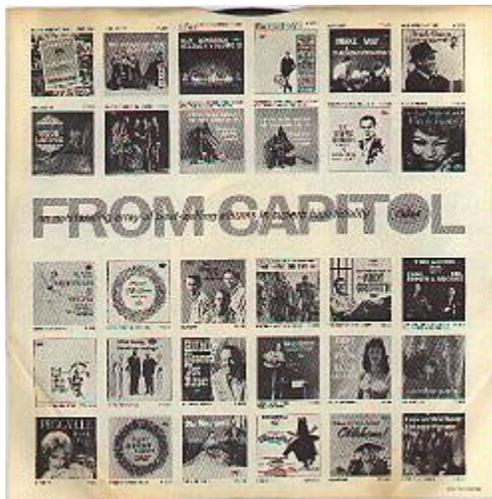


The next Capitol sleeve for mono records has a reverse side that closely parallels its stereo counterpart. The obverse is a striking artist's rendering of the Capitol tower on Vine Street in Hollywood, California. Thirty albums, all mono versions, are promoted on the reverse side, including the Kingston Trio's *String Along* (T-1407) and Frank Sinatra's *Nice 'n Easy* (W-1417). Since the inner sleeve is in black and white, it is numbered "12BW2."



The stereo sleeve paralleling the above is numbered "12SFC-5" and features reviews of Capitol's "full dimensional stereo" process, including two from *HiFi/Stereo Review* and another from *Saturday Review*. "FC" likely stands for "four color." The reverse side illustrates only twenty stereo LP's, but all of them are in color. Each of the LP's, including those mentioned on the above mono sleeve, is shown with its stereo catalog number (e.g., SW-1417).

Capitol's next black-and-white sleeve (12BW3) from 1961 has the same drawing of the Capitol tower on it that had been on 12BW2, but the second side now features Capitol's entry into the world of compact 33 records. Compact 33's did not last long, and so Capitol's advertising would change later that year.



In this case, the mono sleeve (12-BW-4) and its stereo counterpart were both printed in black and white -- probably to save money. The mono sleeve displays the covers of sixty available Capitol releases, with Judy Garland's popular *Judy at Carnegie Hall* (WBO-1569) in the upper left-hand corner of the obverse.

The stereo version of the above sleeve is noteworthy for several reasons. First of all, it was the only Capitol stereo inner liner to be printed in black and white, indicating that Capitol was cutting the costs of printing inner sleeves. Secondly, of the twenty-five true stereo LP's pictured on the obverse, five of them were stereo demonstration albums, showing that a push was on to present stereo sound as the logical successor to high fidelity sound. Thirdly, the reverse was now devoted to Capitol's process for rechanneling mono recordings into stereo. The Duophonic process was promoted as superior in enjoyment to the "overall letdown of monaural recordings played over a Stereo system." Also, certain records are shown as being available in the four track stereo reel to reel tape format. Finally, the sleeve (numbered S BW 6S [Scranton] and S BW 6LA [Los Angeles]) was the only Capitol sleeve to indicate (via an embossed seal) the patent number for a paper inner sleeve: 2,827,223.

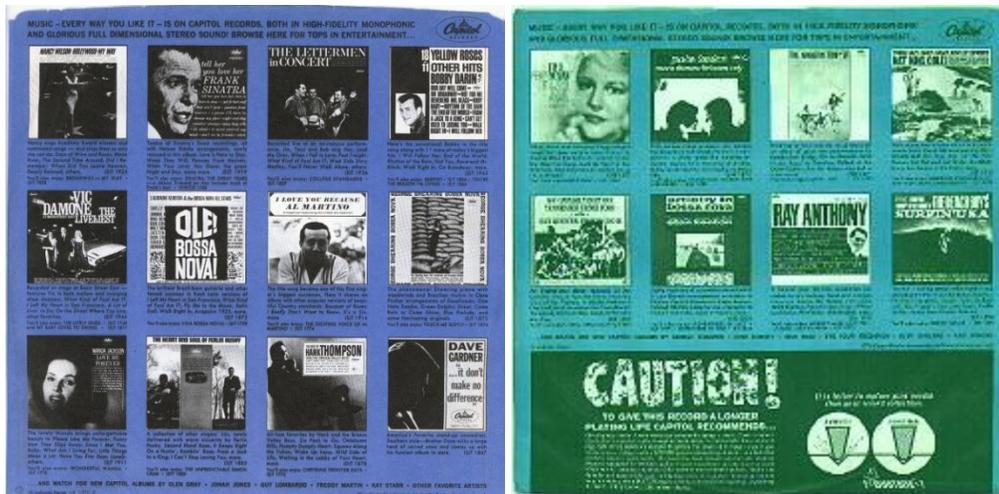




For the first time since the introduction of stereo recordings, Capitol decided to print the same inner sleeve for all of their record albums, although the public would see the occasional custom sleeve (such as Stan Kenton's KBW-1 sleeve). With black banners framing the sleeve which proclaimed that the albums were available "in magnificent Capitol high-fidelity or suburb full dimensional stereo," the sleeve for 1962 featured 20 LP's on the obverse and another 20 on the reverse. The albums cover a variety of styles and for the first time the catalog numbers are listed in what would be the familiar format, with both stereo and mono numbers: (S)T-1757. The (S) indicates that the record was available in stereo, whereas a (D) means that while true stereo is not available, the record could be purchased in Duophonic. The sleeve is numbered "12 BW U," with the "U" apparently standing for "universal" (or something like that).

In the end, Capitol decided that black and white inner sleeves were not attractive enough. The full color printing process was still too expensive, but there was a less costly yet attractive compromise: Capitol sleeves from 1963 on would be printed in black and white on single-tone paper. This last pre-Beatles sleeve proved to be a taste of designs to come. Only 24 covers are pictured on the sleeve, with the latest being Nat King Cole's *Dear Lonely Hearts* album [(S)T-1838]. The sleeve is numbered "12TC". Apparently "TC" stood for "two color," indicating that the printing was done in grayscale on paper that was partly colored on the outside.





When the Beatles released their first Capitol album in early 1964, Capitol was using a blue inner sleeve for all their mainline LP's. The sleeve featured mock-ups of 20 of their popular albums of the time, including records by Nat "King" Cole, Al Martino, and the Lettermen. The blue inner sleeve continued on Capitol LP's until after the release of *Beatles' Story*; some copies of *Beatles '65* also have the blue sleeve. All Capitol Beatles albums until that time originally featured the blue sleeve. At first, the sleeves were a dull blue color (above left) but by the middle of 1964 a brighter blue (above right) came into use. Both variations are designated "12-TC-1" and "12-TC-2". It is not known why there are two numbers.

At the end of 1964, Capitol replaced the blue sleeve with an orange-red sleeve that I call the "Teen Set" sleeve because it advertises a special club for teens. Featured on the sleeve are 35 Capitol albums, including two Beach Boys albums and *Meet the Beatles*, *Beatles Second Album*, and *Something New*. This sleeve prevailed into the middle of 1965. Early copies of the sleeve are designated simply "PE 12-2A." This quickly gave way to a version with a factory designator: "PE 12-2AS" for Scranton and "PE 12-2AL" for Los Angeles copies. Finally, and for reasons not known, the LA plant began to use copies designated "LA 12TC-3". "PE" stands for "Protective Envelope," and "TC" signifies a two-color inner sleeve.





During the early to mid 60's, Capitol's popular artists (such as Al Martino) had their records housed in all-white sleeves with "Capitol Records Inc." running around the border. Occasionally, you will see a Beatles record from the same period packaged in one of the pop sleeves. There are both Scranton (PE 12-2DS) and Los Angeles (LA 12TC-A) copies of this sleeve.



By about the time of the *Help!* album in the middle of 1965, Capitol replaced the orange sleeve with an inner sleeve promoting its improved stereo sound. "Capitol's New Improved Full Dimensional Stereo sounds better than stereo has ever sounded before," proclaimed the sleeve. Similar information would be found on newer Capitol albums, such as *Beatles VI*. The sleeve featured 50 Capitol albums, including *Beatles '65* and *The Early Beatles*, and was used into mid-1966. This time, copies were designated for Scranton (PE 12-2ES), Los Angeles (PE 12-2BL), and the new factory in Jacksonville, IL (PE 12-2EJ). Later east coast copies have a black bar at the bottom of the sleeve.

The "Capitol '66" sleeve replaced the olive colored '65 sleeve early in 1966. Beatlewise, it was used on original pressings of *Yesterday...and Today* and *Revolver*. By now, Capitol was sporting 54 of their albums on every inner sleeve. In this case, *Help!* and *Rubber Soul* were among them. Again there exist copies for each factory, numbered PE 12-2FS (Scranton), PE 12-3BL (Los Angeles), and PE 12-2FJ (Jax).





The album after *Revolver*, namely *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, featured a custom red and white inner sleeve, instead of the sleeve shown above. The above sleeve can be found on most Capitol albums of the period, and I've found it on a used copy of *Sgt. Pepper*, although I don't know for certain that the album was in that sleeve originally. Some claim to have found the sleeve on *Magical Mystery Tour* and on later copies of Beatles LP's that predate *Pepper*. Among the 54 albums found on this cover are the Beatles' *Rubber Soul*, *Yesterday...and Today*, and *Revolver*. Also of note is an ad for a hard-to-find Capitol documentary album about LSD. The Scranton copies of the sleeve are numbered PE 12-4BS, with LA copies having the designation PE 12-4BL, and Jax copies being called PE 12-4BJ. Notice that on this occasion all three factories chose to use similar numbering.

After the end of '67, Capitol stopped using custom inner sleeves, preferring instead to house their albums in plain white inner sleeves. The white sleeves continued into the early 80's, when plastic sleeves took over. Nothing after 1967 ever had the flair of the colorful inner sleeves of the 1960's (and earlier). I always try to hunt down original sleeves to accompany the used Beatles albums that I buy. Since buyers of the time were greeted by the colorful ads every time they opened an LP, the inner sleeves, too, are a piece of Beatle history in the US.

NOTE: Knowing when the inner sleeves were made, if you should happen to find a **"still sealed"** Capitol album, you can tell when it was actually pressed -- whether it's an original issue or not.

A Bit of Inner-Sleeve History

Robert D. Allison was the general manager of the Hartford (CT) branch of the US Envelope Company. He was also the one who brought the inner sleeve into being. When the LP debuted in 1948, there were already paper sleeves being used to house 78 RPM singles. However, at first it appears to have been the case that the LP cover alone was considered to be ample protection for albums in the new format. Soon it became desirable to create a protective envelope for the record so that it would not become scratched as it slid into and out of the outer cover. Existing paper sleeves (originated in 1945) had overlapping seams. When new records were stacked inside the sleeves, the seams tended to cause warping. A. J. Franck had introduced a paper sleeve with much larger seams; however, this had a disadvantage of making

