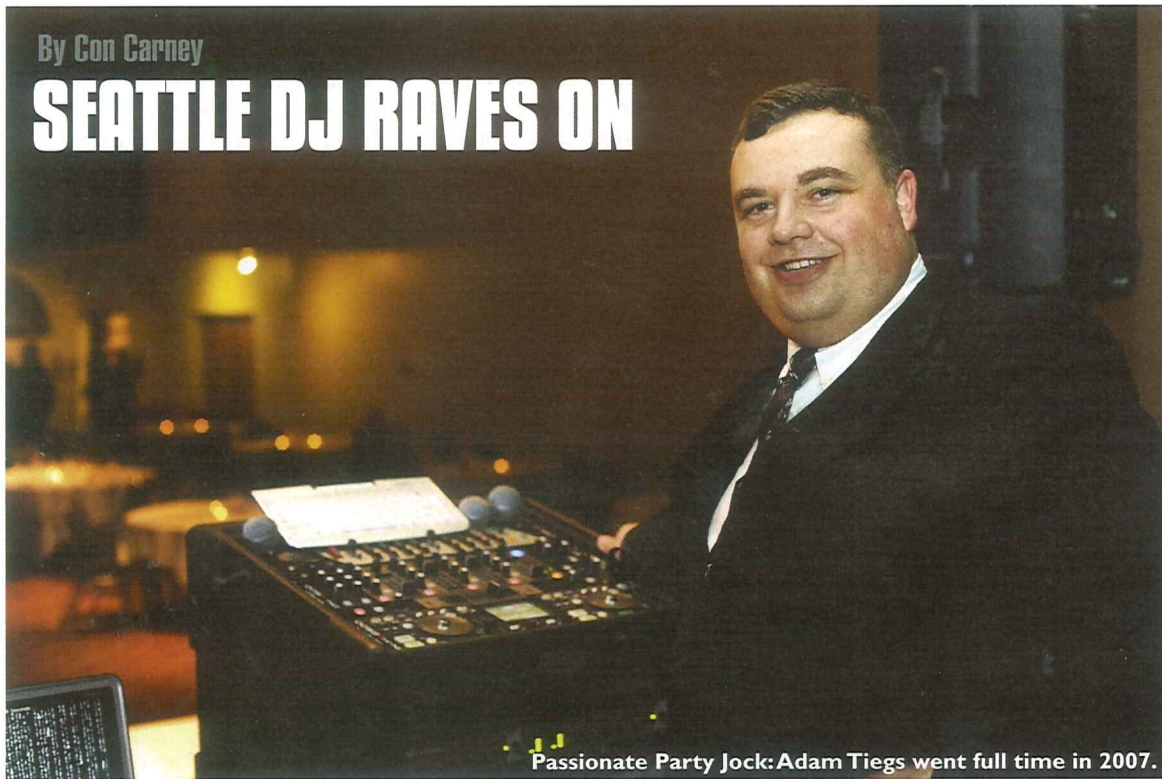


By Con Carney

SEATTLE DJ RAVES ON



Passionate Party Jock: Adam Tiegs went full time in 2007.

Seattle, Wash.—Adam Tiegs is the kind of DJ who is equally excited about going from AMD platform to Intel as is he is about Timo Maas; or switching from dual-core to a quad-core PC and name-checking anything from Paul Oakenfold's Perfecto label.

In short, Adam Tiegs fits the profile of just about anyone who makes their living behind the console, because at the end of the day (or night), the Seattle native believes a party is better served when he's the one programming the music.

Sound familiar?

A Washington State University grad, where he discovered he did *not* want to become a lawyer, Tiegs began mixing CDs at college parties after attending one too many where the mix wasn't to his satisfaction. "Too many parties where the selection was lacking," he recalls. "There was no beatmixing, long spaces between songs, that sort of thing."

In short, recognizing he had DJ Disease—the strident belief that any party, no matter the location or the audience, would be better with him as the music programmer—Tiegs had to figure out a way to do it and make money.

"It all started when I figured out I didn't want to get into law enforcement or be a lawyer," he says, "and I was getting into vocal house and breaks, so a friend of a friend hooked

me up with a chance to spin at a club, and that was it."

Using the DJ name DJ T-Gro, and inspired by the mixing styles of Jazzy Jeff and Mixmaster Mike, Tiegs bought some turntables after college and began spinning regularly at a club in Belltown, spinning vocal house, trance and breakbeats. "That was my love," he says, "spinning club music for the drunk kids."

But it didn't pay.

"I saw all these club DJs who were so highly praised, and I thought I could do that," he says. "I would come home from my day job and practice spinning for six hours, but after a while, I realized that most of these guys didn't really get paid that well."

But at the same time, about 10 years ago, Tiegs was also DJing at friends' parties and the occasional wedding. "I was doing gigs on the side, but I got sick of doing these gigs for free, or for low prices, and I was also doing some side work for mobile DJ companies, and that's when my eyes really opened up."

Tiegs saw there was room for improvement at a lot of mobile gigs. "What I saw at many of these gigs were DJs with a lack of passion, and the way they were dealing with people made me want to start my own business," he says. "The DJs would show up late, wearing inappropriate attire, not playing the music the

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clients asked them to play, or playing music the client asked them *not* to play. Plus, there was no crossfading or beatmatching. There was no art of DJing, and to me the art of the DJ is what makes an ordinary event great."

So, in 2002 the former rave and club DJ started his own part-time company, Adam's DJ Service, while working full-time for an equipment company, renting forklifts and construction vehicles. In 2007, he began making more money with the side job than he was making at his full-time job, so it became very clear which direction he was going. "By July of 2007, I had already pulled in 35K for the year with my DJ job, and that was my annual salary at the day job. So I said to myself, 'What the hell am I doing?'"

Now, of course, operating out of

his home office, with a garage full of DJ gear, halfway between Tacoma and Seattle, a six-figure salary is attainable. In 2008, Tiegs booked 138 events and, at press time, had booked 135 in '09—helped along by advertising in *theknot.com* and by his membership in NACE.

And as for that computer geek who gets excited about switching from dual-core to quad-core PC? "Believe it or not, when I DJ I don't like to use computers," he says. "I had a DJ that worked for me at an outdoor event and his PC overheated because the sun was too hot, it wouldn't play any files, it locked up on him. I waited for many years, having been a vinyl DJ and a CD DJ, for a hardware product that didn't rely on a computer—that would just allow me to control digital files like a turntable. The answer came with the Denon DN-HD2500, and granted, I've never been a fan of portable audio, but I've gotten quite used to my little jog wheels, and I can do everything that I can do on a turntable and then some on these things."

Tiegs might be the only DJ we've ever heard of that has a Death Clause in his contract. "If I die, or one of my DJs dies, we have a backup assigned," he says.

Fortunately, they've never needed to invoke the clause, but there was that one incident of the wedding cake that died a horrible death. "There was a cake being delivered at a gig, and the lady who delivered it got into an accident and the cake was ruined; so I put out a video screen up in front of it during the slide show. When the replacement cake showed up, the photographer took the couple out for pictures, and we replaced the cake. The bride and groom never knew it."

As for the future, Tiegs hopes to expand beyond his solo/sub operation. "Perhaps expand in 2011—that's the plan," he says. "That's when our debt will be cleared, so we can assume more debt and expand."