

idea of what I wanted—either an upright acoustic in ebony or a digital keyboard.

Aesthetically, I preferred the look of an upright piano. If we had a good spot for a grand, that would have been a great option, as well.

But in my heart of hearts, I felt my daughter would spend more time on a digital keyboard.

Now, the real shopping would begin.

We drove up to Cordogan's Piano Gallery. I have known Dianthe and John Cordogan for a number of years. We've reported on their company, and they've even written an article for *Music Inc.*

We stopped into their store in Deerfield, Ill., a North Shore suburb of Chicago, not far from where we live.

Sales pro Rick Knebel met us at the door and asked us what we were interested in seeing.

We explained our needs, and I told him up front that I worked for *Music Inc.* After giving us a chance to say a quick hello to John, Eric dutifully showed us a few acoustics. He could sense, though, that my real interest was in having my wife and daughter check out the digitals.

Rick played the sale perfectly. He went to the lowest-end digital, but didn't demonstrate it. He said that was too low for our needs. He couldn't let us look at that one.

So, he demonstrated the next model up. I'm not going to mention brand names here. That's not the point of the article. All the major manufacturers make great products. This sale was based on my knowledge of, and relationship with, the retailer.

It was a nice keyboard with great sounds, and some bells and whistles that my daughter would love.

He invited my daughter to sit down and play a song on the keyboard. He invited my wife to sit down and play on the keyboard. He then used the onboard recording capabilities to show them how they sounded.

The hook was set.

He invited my wife and daughter to compare it to the action of the acoustics. They agreed that there was little, if any, difference.

The major hurdle had been cleared.

Rick then demonstrated the next model up, a great product with more sounds and a few more bells and whistles. We loved it, and the price was right.

Where Do We Sign?

My wife and daughter were ready to make the purchase, but I had reported on enough keyboard sales training courses to know there was another step.

Eric suggested, just for fun, that we check out some of the really powerful digital keyboards.

The number of sounds leaped from 18 to 512. Instead of a simple recorder, there was a 12-track recording studio. Headphone jacks, sure. But a microphone jack with karaoke capabilities, now you're talking.

My daughter loved it. My wife loved it. I loved it.

The price was beyond what we planned to spend, but the product was well beyond what we planned to buy.

My wife and I agreed that this would be a good purchase for the whole family. My daughter would learn to play on it. When her friends stopped by, they would use the karaoke feature.

My wife could pick up the piano again, and through software, maybe learn to play better.

And I wanted to goof around on the recording studio.

So, we crunched some numbers, deciding we could afford it if we just tightened our belts for a few months.

Remorse Sets In

We made the purchase. But as soon as we walked out the door, my wife asked, "Did we do the right thing?"

I wonder how many sales are lost due to buyer's remorse? I fully believe if my wife were making the purchase on her own, she would have called and cancelled the order that day.

The salesman was perfectly professional. He did his job. The product was terrific. The manufacturer did its job. The price was

more than we planned, but it was a good value for the money.

Still, my wife spent the rest of the day lamenting over whether we did the right thing.

Her stress became my stress. I grabbed my chest from time to time to make sure I wasn't having my first heart attack.

She called her parents to tell them about our purchase. Bad move. They were a little less than enthusiastic.

A digital? Isn't an acoustic piano better?

When my wife couldn't sleep due to her lament, I suggested she go back and see the piano with her parents in tow.

Closure, Sweet Closure!

That's exactly what she did. The next day, while I was conveniently at work, my mother-in-law, father-in-law, wife and daughter stopped back in at Cordogan's.

At this point, I have to publicly thank Rick and John for their patience. I kept thinking, "My God, what have I done to these nice men??!"

Rick took them through the demonstration. They all asked questions—lots and lots of questions, I'm sure. They compared the action between the digitals and acoustics. And, not only did my in-laws give the purchase their endorsement, but got so excited that they wanted to contribute to the purchase.

Now, this was a very pleasant, unexpected bonus from my vantage point.

My mother-in-law saw the potential learning advantages for my daughter. My father-in-law said it looked like so much fun that he would love to have one at his house. And, my wife got the third-party assurance that she needed.

Yes, we did the right thing.

The Aftermath

Did buying a digital piano eliminate the need to push, prod and plead with our daughter to practice. No. Face it, nothing will ever change that.

But it's great to watch her. She'll practice a song a few times, then