

Forum Topic: Cleaning Machine Forum

Postby Harry » Tue Jan 06, 2015 1:45 am

I have now collected three ultrasonic cleaning machines for inspection and use, plus I enjoy cleaning records!! For the most part they do a nice job, they definitely change the sound, but at the same time really bring out some new staging and textural details. My favorite is the one made by Dave R because it lets you do multiple records, is relatively easy to use, and there is no way for it to fail. The other two are extremely complicated, take a long time for one record, and still need to be dried at the end to really clean them.

Dave got the prize but I did have to rebuild the entire rotisserie setup for rotating the records on a consistent basis, not heavy duty enough for me and my 10K+ records. The trick is to use Dave's machine (do some mods if you are like me with a huge collection) and then vacuum off the records on a Cyclone or 16.5. You get the best of both worlds without stacking up records to dry and then having accidents you really don't want to happen (lost a mint Basie 88 when it rolled out of the drying rack!!!!) while they are hanging out in a vertical position. Plus it still costs much less than the foreign made units and works better. BTW, the vacuuming does not put static back in the record, that happens from living in heated spaces!!

HW

Postby 10ovr » Tue Jan 06, 2015 10:19 am

I don't know Harry,,My Audio Desk Systeme would be hard to beat ,,Just say-n ,,

Postby allvinyl » Tue Jan 06, 2015 6:22 pm

Harry wrote:

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Plus it still costs much less than the foreign made units and works better. BTW, the vacuuming does not put static back in the record, that happens from living in heated spaces!!

HW

I agree with you about Dave's V8 Ultrasonic record cleaner. My personal regimen is reversed from yours. I use the 17F to first clean with AI enzyme and archival fluids, then off to the V8 for a distilled water bath and dish rack for drying. I ditched his rack right after I tried to carry it fully loaded only to see 8 LPs end up scratched on the floor. I still get ill thinking about the LPs that were ruined. Still love the cleaner and have never been happier with my clean, quiet, static free records.

John

Postby Harry » Tue Jan 06, 2015 10:21 pm

No argument, the Audio Desk will do it but I wont live long enough to clean my records with it!!

Dave's rotisserie unit just warped so the columns don't align anymore, and I now have to build the "U" piece out of black Delrin so it will last forever. Plus I'm going to make a new motor mounting bracket that is adjustable and make the wood pucks out of Delrin with rubber "O" rings on the edges. I love this unit and the fact that I can clean 4 at a time leaving space between the records for great cavitation. Then just throw it on the Cyclone and dry it.

HW

Postby babybird » Wed Jan 07, 2015 1:25 pm

Harry you mention that Daves machine changes the sound. Can you extrapolate on that briefly? I get the part there may be far fewer clicks and pops but beyond that how would it change the sound? Thanks

Postby Harry » Thu Jan 08, 2015 2:33 pm

To me all three machines make high frequency transients sound less real.

Play the acoustical traffic jam on RCA called "Gaité Parisienne" a good copy, and the triangle floats out above the orchestra in a way that the real thing does. At a concert the triangle, or the harp, or whatever, floats above the acoustic bombast that is playing and comes out to the listener in the same way the mike picks it up, it is there, you hear all three sides and it floats above the noise. The same thing with cymbals, high hats, etc., they float above the noise.

I am listening on a Classic direct with 12" 3d arm and Lyra Atlas so no problem reproducing this. After cleaning on these three machines the sound is very clean with a solid almost real feel to it but the triangle player take 10 paces back!!! Almost as if it is wiping away some of the super high frequencies cut in the vinyl. I'm not certain of this yet but my suspicion is the vinyl is very soft and the dirt being cleaned from the grooves is hard and slamming back into the ultra tiny wiggles and smoothing the sharp edges. It sounds as if you are burnishing the grooves. I still love the result but it is definitely changing the sound on the record.

I'll have more on this as I keep playing and start comparing these discs to tapes before and after.

HW

Postby babybird » Fri Jan 09, 2015 12:28 pm

Interesting conclusion or hypothesis and to a mysterious problem. Makes one wonder if ultrasonic cleaning is the way to go. Be curious to see how you progress with this.

Thanks

Postby TomD » Fri Jan 09, 2015 12:48 pm

Thank you for sharing your insights!

I look forward to hearing more when you have time for more comparisons.

Postby dirmae » Sat Jan 10, 2015 8:14 pm

Thanks for sharing your experiences. I recently saw one of these in action and was wondering how they would compare to my HW-16.5

Postby Lewisranchmike » Sun Jan 11, 2015 7:04 pm

I use an ultrasonics cleaner like the V8 but I use the a much better rotating solution I found on EBay. Check this link.

Check out Ultrasonic Vinyl Record Cleaning Kit - "Vinyl Stack ULTRA Sonic Spin Kit" #thevinylshack <http://www.ebay.com/itm/-/161402849405? ... tkn=hkg2Ys> via @eBay

I first do an ultrasonic clean with a 6l Ultrasonic cleaner I bought and use the "Vinyl Stack Spin Kit" to do the rotation in my ultrasonic cleaner. A lot cheaper.

Mike

<p>Postby thesmurfsvillage » Thu Jun 21, 2018 11:37 am</p> <p>I always use Gruv-Glide as a post cleaning lubricant for my LP's, and I use the Onzow Zero Dust after the ME. But my stylus was damaged, and I believe that's why I was seeing some black residue. So I ended up sending my Universe to Soundsmith for repair. I had close to a thousand hours on it anyway, but it sucks not being able to listen to records..</p> <p>Thanks to all for the advice</p>
<p>Postby Mr_Putty » Thu Jun 21, 2018 12:51 pm</p> <p>Harry,</p> <p>Thanks for posting the links. I have mine on order.</p>
<p>Postby Packgrog » Thu Jun 21, 2018 1:12 pm</p> <p>I'm not sure who had shared this list previously, but here's a less expensive alternative that I had saved and finally ordered today.</p> <p>https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01G305PK0/ https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0014C5D64/ https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00D049XFQ/ / https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000HE5DUQ/ https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AB5W25K/ https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AB5WYVC/</p> <p>Order total with free shipping was about \$60. Less powerful pump than Harry's, and not self priming, but should do the trick if you just run it for a couple of minutes.</p> <p>EDIT: It is now installed and running. I had to get a larger barb for the input to the pump (the output nozzle from my tank is 1/2" instead of 3/8" like the rest of the barbs), and I didn't want to wait for the one straggler piece from Amazon, so I got a brass nozzle for the filter output. All</p>

works, the pump linked above is nearly silent, and works just fine as long as the tank fluid gets to the pump on its own. Good stuff! Will share photos later.

Postby Peer Gynt » Sun Jun 24, 2018 8:44 am

I looked at this thread this morning because I've been buying used records lately, and I've cranked up my HW16.5 and my Nitty Gritty 2.5FI II. When I sold VPI 30 years ago, I also had an HW17.

I've been interested in the ultrasonic cleaning machines, but somewhat alarmed at the black specs that appear in the waste water. It looks like the reason HW has noted shifts in high frequency response.

I'd rather listen to a few ticks and pops than miss the shimmer of cymbals or the suspended triangle or xylophone.

With that said, of the three RCMs I've owned, I think the HW16.5 is the one that most closely conforms to the notion "first, do no harm."

The stress of the Nitty Gritty rim drive always makes me nervous. Records are not designed to be buckled and driven from the rim.

The HW16.5 forces the user to pay attention. I think that, at least for me, this leads to less likelihood of getting distracted and ruining a record.

The HW16.5 works well, and there is very little that could go wrong with it. Wear parts are available.

I think I'm going to offer the Nitty Gritty on eBay.

And I'm really not motivated to pay money to subject my records to the abrasive blasting of an ultrasonic cleaner.

The other thing that stood out was the cleaning of many records at once.

I listen to one record at a time. And I keep the RCM near one of my listening rooms.

It only takes a couple of minutes to clean a record. Less than 30 seconds of actual machine time per side.

Once clean and well cared for, it may never need to be cleaned again.

I rarely listen to more than 6 records a day, and often as few as 3. It is not an onerous task to clean several, one at a time. I often listen to the same record two or three times. Last night it was Oscar Peterson and Clark Terry. I listened on three different set ups and was mesmerized the final two times through on the last system. The point being that I don't mind 20 minutes of careful cleaning. It may be enough to set me up for a whole week.

I would be devastated by priceless records rolling out of drying racks.

As an old darkroom guy, I would want to use a dust free drying cabinet if I were going to air dry.

Otherwise you're just inviting airborne detritus to hop back on and rebond with your vinyl, albeit to a lesser degree than before.

So my point is that the HW16.5 is a great machine and a great value ... it may be all you ever need. And it sounds like you'll want either an HW16.5 or Cyclone even if you go the ultrasonic route.

Try cleaning without ultrasonic and let your ears help you determine whether or not you are willing to take the risks associated with the ultrasonic process.

Postby Harry » Sun Jun 24, 2018 11:35 am

I could not agree with you more about the 16.5, I use the Cyclone version of it after USC but have been using a manual VPI cleaning machine for 40 years. The USC is for all the records I pick up at Goodwill, junk stores, dumpsters, etc. and it does a really great job but I vacuum them first, then USC, then vacuum again.

It will really turn a horrible looking record find at Goodwill into something very enjoyable, especially the old mono's where noise is less of an issue anyways. The other day I found a Duke Ellington "Jazz Party" and it looked terrible. Did vacuum-USC-vacuum and it plays quietly on my Zero mono cartridge. That is not the usual result with stereo records though, always more noise even when at acceptable levels. People really abused vinyl!!

HW

Postby Peer Gynt » Sun Jun 24, 2018 1:19 pm

Good point. I have to admit, if the USM can resurrect something from the dumpster, it might be worthwhile.

We have a lot of used record stores. McKays and The Great Escape are two of the better ones. They only buy stuff that either looks decent, or is historically important. Maybe I ought to be checking thrift stores too.

Posted on the Hoffman forum. Looks like a less expensive solution to using a pump.

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B072B ... UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B072B...UTF8&psc=1)

Postby seamonster » Sun Jun 24, 2018 2:14 pm

aurelio, I don't think an aquarium pump/filter is a good idea. Filter is not fine enough, and you'd be gassing up the fluid via the cascading water.

Postby Mr_Putty » Sun Jun 24, 2018 4:59 pm

Peer Gynt wrote:

Good point. I have to admit, if the USM can resurrect something from the dumpster, it might be worthwhile.

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Back in the 80's I used to review some new releases. You know, the ones with the corners clipped or had a hole punched in the jacket, labeled not for resale. I recently pulled one that had very little use and cleaned it with my USM. I was surprised to hear how good some songs sounded, and how bad some of the recording/production was on songs on the same record side. The only explanation for the variance from my original and most recent impression is the removal of new record crud by the USM. I have no doubts about the worthiness of this cleaning method. And yes, in the 80's I cleaned with distilled water, but never got the results I wanted. Grab some old junkers and experiment. What do you have to lose?

Postby Harry » Sun Jun 24, 2018 8:40 pm

Tried the aquarium filter with a replacement filter used instead of the original, worked for a day or so but that was it, had to continually change the filters. Go with a cartridge filter and pump for long term cleaning without a problem.

HW

Postby Peer Gynt » Mon Jun 25, 2018 8:29 am

Mr_Putty wrote:

Back in the 80's I used to review some new releases. You know, the ones with the corners clipped or had a hole punched in the jacket, labeled not for resale. I recently pulled one that had very little use and cleaned it with my USM.

Actually "cut outs," as they were called, we're not sonically inferior as a rule. They were just over stock. They often show up in our used record stores as companies and individuals take advantage of the resurgence in the vinyl market.

They never needed more cleaning to play well in my systems than their "non cut-out" counterparts.

I don't care if people like usms. Maybe on some nasty records, like those treated with Gruv-Glide in 1985, the usm is just the ticket to sort things out.

Postby Harry » Mon Jun 25, 2018 8:48 am

PG, check those thrift stores, Goodwill, and antique stores. I have filled in my collection there and replaced some old ones with old ones in better condition. I have many 1S RCA's due to filthy knees rummaging around in antique stores. Don't forget flea markets, some great stuff there too!

HW

Postby Mr_Putty » Thu Jul 05, 2018 11:51 pm

Speaking of some of my old 1980's records, has anyone noticed some had beautiful (very small) script of a name or slogan in the inner dead wax zone? If so, did you find anything interesting? What does say, what does it mean? Was this done by hand? Some look too perfect, we're they a sales pitch or some inside code for fun? Maybe they are for testing eyesight!

Postby Peer Gynt » Fri Jul 06, 2018 7:41 am

The marks vary. Some are stamped. Some are hand written. Some are simple codes to identify the job. Some include stereo or mono to distinguish between two otherwise the same. Some include company info.

They're on the pressing mold.

Postby Mr_Putty » Sun Jul 08, 2018 12:15 am

Harry wrote:

Tried the aquarium filter with a replacement filter used instead of the original, worked for a day or so but that was it, had to continually change the filters. Go with a cartridge filter and pump for long term cleaning without a problem.

HW

I just finished my USM water filter per Harry's suggestions. I went with the 1/2 inch filter inlets, 1/2 inch lines and the one micron filter with the 115v pump Harry suggested. Very happy with the result. Pump is quiet with good flow. Runs cool. I first flushed the system without the filter using a bucket with tap water, then tap water and some detergent. Then I reflushed with tap water and some record cleaning fluid. Finally, cleaned my USM tank and filled with distilled water. Installed the filter. Ran the pump and all looks good to go except for a minor leak. DIY note: use only good quality stainless hose clamps. The cheap ones will break from the torque needed. Reinforced clear tubing is very stiff and a pain to work with. But, you won't have any problems with kinking. Use five wraps of Teflon tape (not three), for plastic fittings. If the threads are not perfect you will likely have a leak.

Anyone else made this? Mine is built on plywood that I screwed to the end of a cabinet. Total cost was about \$120.

Postby Harry » Tue Jul 10, 2018 5:32 pm

Nice job Mr. Putty, nice job!

HW

Postby Packgrog » Wed Jul 11, 2018 11:17 am

Packgrog wrote:

I'm not sure who had shared this list previously, but here's a less expensive alternative that I had saved and finally ordered today.

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01G305PK0/>

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0014C5D64/>

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00D049XFQ/>
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000HE5DUQ/>
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AB5W25K/>
<https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00AB5WYVC/>

Order total with free shipping was about \$60. Less powerful pump than Harry's, and not self priming, but should do the trick if you just run it for a couple of minutes.

EDIT: It is now installed and running. I had to get a larger barb for the input to the pump (the output nozzle from my tank is 1/2" instead of 3/8" like the rest of the barbs), and I didn't want to wait for the one straggler piece from Amazon, so I got a brass nozzle for the filter output. All works, the pump linked above is nearly silent, and works just fine as long as the tank fluid gets to the pump on its own. Good stuff! Will share photos later.

Here's a photo of my own setup in action. Awful photo, but you get the idea. Cheap and easy to set up and run.



Postby Harry » Thu Jul 12, 2018 12:26 pm

Looks great. The difference using a filter like that is quite startling.

HW

Postby smashatoms » Mon Jul 16, 2018 8:59 pm

I'm finally putting together my Amazon shopping list for a full USM setup. The array of 40KHz machines is difficult to sort through and the internal dimensions on the 10L machines are misleading. For some listings there are even two different sets of ID measurements which contradict one another. Can anyone recommend a currently available, reliable machine with confirmed dimensions? I'm looking to keep the cost of the USM below \$200.

Thanks,
Smash

Postby seamonster » Mon Jul 16, 2018 10:10 pm

This one -

[https://www.amazon.com/TruSonik-Ultrason ... ith+Heater](https://www.amazon.com/TruSonik-Ultrason...ith+Heater)

Price has been jacked up \$15.00 since my purchase. Inner dimensions are (L/W/H) 11".5 X 9".25 X 6".25.

I can easily center a VinylStack triple-array within it, and completely submerge the groove on any record I've cleaned so far.

Postby seamonster » Mon Jul 16, 2018 10:32 pm

Oh, one more thing - the unit I received does not have the four depressions in the tank bottom. I inquired about that, thinking it was incompletely manufactured. Here is the reply from Amazon seller J & R Wholesale:

Not to worry, you have received are new and updated model. The pictures are different due to Amazon's system, that does not allow us to edit the listing pictures. The pictures in the listing show are first generation and the ultrasonic cleaner that you have is our newest generation. Please let me know if you have any further questions, I am here to help.

Best regards,
Christine

Customer Service

Postby madrac » Tue Jul 17, 2018 5:41 pm

seamonster wrote:

This one -

<https://www.amazon.com/TruSonik-Ultrasonik-Heater>

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I can easily center a VinylStack triple-array within it, and completely submerge the groove on any record I've cleaned so far.

I have the same tank...works great. Similarly, mine doesn't have the 4 depressions as shown on the Amazon picture.. it does have 4 much smaller depressions, though. The instructions I got were also for the old model -- new model doesn't have a knob on the back to adjust the frequency. Apparently, this is automatically done now.

Postby smashatoms » Wed Jul 18, 2018 11:56 pm

Ok, I have my list sorted out, thanks to the contributors here on the forum and that handy article by Paul Rushton. I'll be placing orders in a few days.

If I'm reading correctly, a lot of folks use their VPI RCMs to vacuum dry their records after they come out of the tank. How do you do that without getting the mat wet?

Cheers,
Smash

Postby seamonster » Thu Jul 19, 2018 9:43 am

From what I've read, many folks use an extra mat which is removed after the first side is vacuumed, leaving the original RCM platter/mat dry for the second side. Having an Okki Nokki, I simply dry the platter with a chamois after vacuuming the first side. There is very little water remaining on the LPs after a gentle shake prior to vacuuming.

Postby Packgrog » Thu Jul 19, 2018 10:02 am

I use a sort of gasket/spacer between the RCM platter and the *LABEL* of the record to try to prevent the grooves from ever touching the RCM platter. It can't be too thick (in my case it's thin Grungebuster material), otherwise the clamp won't secure properly and the spring loading or rotation lock of the vacuum wand won't work properly. The more compliant spacer also causes a but of flex in thin records which also helps keep them from sagging and touching the edge of the platter. I don't currently have a photo of this, but I'll try to share one tonight or tomorrow.

Postby smashatoms » Fri Jul 20, 2018 12:50 am

seamonster wrote:

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Thanks for the suggestions guys. I'll pick up a mat and chamois and experiment with both. I'm not sure where I would find a spacer.

Postby seamonster » Fri Jul 20, 2018 10:01 am

Spacer could be DIY, from whatever material you choose. In my case, I also spray RO/DI water over each LP side prior to vacuuming, to reduce friction between the felt vacuum strips and the record surface.

Postby madrac » Sat Jul 21, 2018 4:29 pm

Packgrog wrote:

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Order total with free shipping was about \$60. Less powerful pump than Harry's, and not self priming, but should do the trick if you just run it for a couple of minutes.

EDIT: It is now installed and running. I had to get a larger barb for the input to the pump (the output nozzle from my tank is 1/2" instead of 3/8" like the rest of the barbs), and I didn't want to wait for the one straggler piece from Amazon, so I got a brass nozzle for the filter output. All works, the pump linked above is nearly silent, and works just fine as long as the tank fluid gets to the pump on its own. Good stuff! Will share photos later.

thanks for posting these options. I just got the pump & filter housing/filters from Amazon and set up today. Got the fittings locally. Works great!

Postby Mr_Putty » Tue Jul 24, 2018 11:39 pm

Just a note about Harry's UCM system. One reason I picked it was because with a filter change after cleaning records (for health) I can filter my tap water for drinking. High output pump means I can quickly fill bottles. So I see this as a dual purpose setup. I like that there are two price ranges one can pick. Just another 2 cents.

JTA