

Audiodesk Systeme Vinyl Cleaner Pro record cleaning machine

by Alan Sircom



There will be those who think we've been here before. I have to admit, in unboxing the Audiodesk Systeme Vinyl Cleaner Pro, I struggled to see the differences between it and its predecessor, the Vinyl Cleaner. In fact, on a surface investigation, you'd need to have the two side-by-side in order to see any real difference. But they are different, and the differences are worthy of note.

As before, the Audiodesk Systeme Vinyl Cleaner is a fully automated vertical ultrasonic record cleaning machine designed by Reiner Gläss. To recap, you part-fill it with cleaning solution (supplied in concentrate form, enough for five litres of liquid), insert the record in the slot at the top of the machine and press the red button. A traffic light arrangement follows – yellow for 'I'm working on it' and five minutes or so later green lights up for 'This disc is clean'. Inside is a set of counter-rotating microfibre cleaning barrels, and the fluid sump works in a way not too dissimilar from a jeweller's ultrasonic cleaning bath, only on a larger, more LP-shaped scale. The fluid is also constantly filtered, to prevent any stray crud from being moved around a record instead of removed from a record.

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► So... what's changed? Since its initial release, Audiodesk Systeme has beefed up the drive mechanism, improved the pump, and switched to quieter fans, which makes the cleaner more than a little quieter and a lot more robust. In the latest release, the top plate has been redesigned with a wider aperture at the left hand side that allows for easier loading and removal of the LP at the end of the cycle. This means there is less chance of catching the LP on the microfibre barrels and having to remove water smears after cleaning.

Originally, the Vinyl Cleaner and the Vinyl Cleaner Pro were both fitted with white coloured wiper blades, but these were prone to squeaking when cleaning records and had a relatively short life. So now, new black wiper blades are fitted as standard. These have a coating on them that, allegedly, extends their life. The blades are suggested to have a lifespan of around 500 LPs before they need replacing. However, the manufacturer of the record cleaner thinks you can get nearer 700 LPs before a wiper blade change is required. While I'd love to say I tested the blades to destruction... I didn't. However, Audiodesk Systeme suggests that if you start to see droplets regularly remaining at the end of the drying cycle, or that the blades start to make squeaking noises, it's time for a blade change.

Looking back over our original review in Issue 117, sonically speaking everything that was said then applies now (except for the Jim Reeves LP... that quickly disappeared). The cleaner is extremely good at cleaning extraordinary amounts of deep-groove crud out of what seem like clean records, and this is audible in the reduction in both the distant frying pan sizzling background sound, and even on LPs with low background noise... they get even quieter.

Between successive generations there doesn't appear to be any significant changes in performance, both in terms of crudstraction or in the time it takes to cycle through its cleaning routine. It's as easy to drain and clean as before, and the only material changes (aside from the different colour blades and the quieter fans) are that possibly it has become a little more precise in fluid bath filling requirements. But this could be memory playing tricks.

There is also now a special outrigger for 7" singles. This can be retrofitted to Vinyl Cleaner Pros built in 2018 or later. I don't have a large collection of 7" singles and those I still have are not the kind that get played very much anymore (even hardcore Paul Young fans – if they exist – are unlikely to get that excited by listening to 'Toast' by Streetband and I don't have the desire or energy to flail around for two and a half minutes to 'Where's Captain Kirk' by Spizzenergi anymore), but the attachment is effective and not too difficult to put together. Anyone who does have a large collection of seven-inchers (and there are many who have tens of thousands – I know an avid Northern Soul collector who only owns 7" singles and he has close to three large rooms full of the things) this is something of a god-send. I suspect those who buy the £235 7" add-on might never use anything else.



One thing I think I missed in the last review was just how important the automation becomes in the cleaning process. I think this comes from years of working with a Keith Monks in the distant past. I mistakenly thought of the manual process as part of the record ritual, but there is a disconnect between record cleaning and record playing. Where queuing up a record is a joy when you get it right, cleaning them can become a chore. By taking the drudgery out of the record cleaning process, all you get is joy. +

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Cleaning cycle: 5mins

Water capacity: 4.5 litres

Cleaning concentrate required: 20ml

Dimensions (WxHxD): 33 x 27 x 20cm

Weight: 5.5kg (empty)

Price: £2,525

Manufactured by:

Audiodesk Systeme Gläss

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