



Record Doctor V

Even the most carefully kept records, lovingly stored in extra-smooth static-free inner sleeves, and further protected by thick plastic outer covers, attract dust, dirt and even grime. Don't ask me how, but it happens.

I've never been one for fluids and preparations when it comes to cleaning vinyl. Visions of some magic formula turning into a sticky mess at the bottom of the groove has made me a firm believer in the carbon fibre brush as the best, least intrusive means to get rid of dust.

And it works, as long as you use it every time you play a record, and as long as the LP itself was pristinely clean to start off with.

However, as the experts will tell you, even the apparently clean surface of a brand new record may be sullied by all sorts of chemicals and residues left behind as an artefact of the manufacturing process.

Of course, many of us also look out for and buy used records, where there is often no indication of how well they've been cleaned. Again, what seems to be a clean record may well be not.

Even the discs in my own record collection, carefully stored and looked after, emerge a lot dustier and dirtier than I would have expected when they haven't been played in a while – and some have haven't been played for years.

All of this points to the very real need to clean records regularly, and more thoroughly, than a dry brush can manage. Record cleaning machines have been around for decades, and vary greatly in price and sophistication. But if you're looking for an inexpensive cleaner that does the job properly, the Record Doctor V could be the answer.

This no-nonsense device consists of a sturdy MDF enclosure finished in matt black, with a platter on one side, and a felt-tipped slot on the other. The idea is to mount the record on the platter,



hold it down with the disc-shaped record turner, and then turn the record by hand while cleaning it.

The Record Doctor V comes with a bottle of RxLP cleaning agent, which is spread sparingly across the record's surface (and I mean sparingly), using the included brush while slowly rotating the disc by hand.

Because the platter is quite small, the record has to be pressed down onto the platter firmly with the record turner, while spreading the fluid with the applicator brush. This needs a good few turns to accomplish.

Once done, flip the disc and start the vacuum pump, which sucks the fluid from the record's surface, while the felt strips on either side of the slot act as cleaning strips. For best results, the disc needs to be turned slowly, and three to four revolutions will suffice.

After both sides have been cleaned, the result should be a very clean, dry record with no marks or residue. And yes, it makes a big difference. An old copy of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* that sounded flat and edgy gained a new lease of life, with a much improved tonal range, including a nice, full bass, and a significantly better harvest of upper-treble detail.

I then cleaned an almost brand new, and apparently clean copy of Jeff Buckley's *Grace* that, according to me, sounded pretty darned good – and found that it sounded substantially better once it had undergone the Record Doctor's treatment.

Once you're in the swing of things, cleaning a record takes less than five minutes. Using just the right amount of cleaning liquid takes practice, and the vacuum motor is noisy. But the results make the effort well worth while.

Yes, you get fancier record cleaners that make the task easier. But the Record Doctor V does the job just fine. And your records will sound better – guaranteed.

Deon Schoeman

VITAL STATS

Description Vinyl record cleaner
 Motorised No
 Integrated vacuum Yes
 Dimensions (WxHxD) 318 x 178 x 178 mm
 Weight 5 kg

Price R4 440

Verdict

Simple but effective, this record cleaner makes a seemingly complex task easy. And the results make the effort well worthwhile!

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OUR RATING: 78 / 100

