

AUDIO DESK SYSTEME LP-CLEANING MACHINE

Pristine Vinyl

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Sep 30th, 2013



Until a few weeks ago several imposing piles of LPs rested on shelves in my laundry room. I had accumulated them over several years, but could never bring myself to clean them all. Oh, I had occasionally fired up my Odyssey cleaner, but never really had the heart to clean more than a few. It was too laborious a task to excite my interest, even though it never stopped me from acquiring new LPs and from feeling vaguely guilty about not tackling the project of cleaning them all.

No longer. Since the \$3995 Audio Desk LP ultrasonic cleaner arrived from UltraSystems, which imports the machine from Germany where it is manufactured by one Reiner Glass, my LP world has been upended. Gleaming, empty shelves have replaced the disorder that used to prevail, all thanks to this ingenious cleaning system.

The Audio Desk has three great merits. The first is that you don't have to hover over it while it works. Plop the record in, push a button, and then walk away. The machine does it all for you, including cleaning both LP sides simultaneously in about five minutes. The second—and not inconsiderable—merit is that it gets LPs about as clean as possible, which translates into improved sound on every level. The third is that the Audio Desk's air-drying system doesn't leave your LP with a static charge to attract dust, as vacuum-based cleaners do.

How does it do this? Conventional machines rely on some combination of brushes, nozzles, and vacuum tubes to scrub and dry LPs. The problem is obvious: What happens when you go from LP number one to two, and so on? What happens, alas, is the transfer of residual dirt and grit from one LP to another this is where the beauty of the Audio Desk resides. You pour about four liters of water and a small bottle of cleaning solution supplied by Audio Desk—it stipulates that any other solution will violate the warranty—into a central chamber in the unit. After activating the unit, four bi-directional microfiber rollers gently brush the LP as it is gradually immersed in water, which is filtered through a side sponge placed in its own, separate chamber. The cleaning process, Audio Desk says, relies on “cavitation”—generating microscopic vacuum bubbles via ultrasonic energy

that implode to create liquid jets that clean the grooves. These bubbles reach into areas that are too small for even the finest bristle. Next the water and rollers recede and a rotating LP is blow-dried for several minutes. A beep is sounded and a spotless LP is ready to be extracted for play.

Sound like magic? Well, the effect is pretty darn supernatural. Your stylus will love a pristine LP and track it better. On Shelby Lynne's *Just a Little Lovin'* the bass was audibly deeper—and this was an LP that I had previously cleaned on the VPI Typhoon. So it went for LP after LP. The only real downside to the Audio Desk is that it will not clean 10" LPs or 45s.

For a long time, I hesitated about the Audio Desk. There were too many reports about irregular performance by what is a complicated piece of machinery. But importer Robert Stein says that the machine has been "de-kinked." All I can say is that after burning out on cleaning LPs, I'm back in the game. When it comes to conventional cleaners, I've been there and done that. The Audio Desk has reinvigorated my enthusiasm for pristine vinyl. It is the most effective cleaning machine that I have ever encountered.

SPECS

Dimensions: 13" x 10.7" x 8"

Weight: 12 lbs.

Cleaning time: Five minutes

Warranty: Two years