

Pro-Ject

VC-S record cleaning machine



DRY CLEANING AN LP using just a brush or cloth is the go-to method for most vinylistas and can easily be done each time you get a disc out to play it. Unfortunately, this will never completely release all of the dirt that has sunk deep into the groove – this can only be done with a wet clean, and the best way to do this is to use a dedicated record cleaning machine (RCM) that vacuums off any dirty fluid after cleaning, ensuring that any dirt particles suspended in the fluid are disposed of and the record dried at the same time. The catch is that RCMs can be rather expensive, making the dry cloth option far more appealing. Enter Pro-Ject's VC-S, which at just under £300 is far more affordable than many of its rivals.

The VC-S spins the record in both directions to ensure that all the cleaning fluid is removed properly and has a motor that is claimed to spin faster than many of its competitors. There's a high-power vacuum unit that can dry a record in just two rotations. The vacuum arm that sucks up the dirty fluid from the record and then dries it is very robust and is supported by a stable pivot. The record is fixed in place with an aluminium clamp that is lined with a rubber seal that holds the LP against the small motorised platform. This is the size of a record label and keeps cleaning fluid away from the label during use. The small platform means that a full-size supporting record platter is not required, which could potentially bring dirt into contact with a clean record surface.

To clean a record, first clamp it to the support platform and apply a small amount of cleaning fluid and then turn the motor on. Next, using the supplied goat-hair brush spread the fluid evenly across the playing surface to ensure that it gets into all of the groove. Finally, swing the vacuum arm over the record and turn on the vacuum motor. Within a couple of rotations (one in each



direction), the side should be clean and dry. Flip it over and repeat the process on the other side. The LP is then immediately ready for playing or inserting into a new protective record sleeve. The dirty solution that is removed from the record's surface is stored in an internal 2.5-litre waste container. There's a handy gauge to indicate the level of dirty water on the side of the VC-S and emptying is easily accomplished using the supplied funnel.

In operation

The VC-S is supplied with 100ml of vinyl cleaning solution – Wash-IT – together with all the accessories required to start cleaning up your vinyl collection. Other items, including a special alcohol-free cleaning solution – Wash-IT 78 for use with 78rpm shellac records – a dust cover and various sizes of the standard Wash-IT cleaning solution, are also available separately.

I mix the Wash-IT concentrate with deionised water as per the instructions and fill the supplied

application bottle before testing the VC-S with a newly purchased record on which I had previously noticed some slight surface noise when playing. I switch on the motor to rotate the record and apply the fluid and then use the brush to spread it evenly over the playing area. I wait for 10 seconds, then swing the cleaning arm over and turn on the vacuum to suck up the fluid from the surface. The motor is so powerful, that only one revolution is required to dry the surface completely, but I repeat it in the other direction just to be sure. After cleaning the flip side using the same process, I play the record again. I am pleased to discover that the background noise has now completely disappeared. It is extremely quick and easy to clean an LP using the VC-S and I am able to rattle through a dozen or so of my records in next to no time with excellent results.

Of all the RCMs I have tried, Pro-Ject's VC-S is certainly one of the best and what's more it is also excellent value. **NR**

DETAILS

PRICE
£299
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REVIEWED
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OUR VERDICT

