

Hummin Guru Ultrasonic Cleaner and S-DUO

Necessary tools to keep your vinyl in shape.

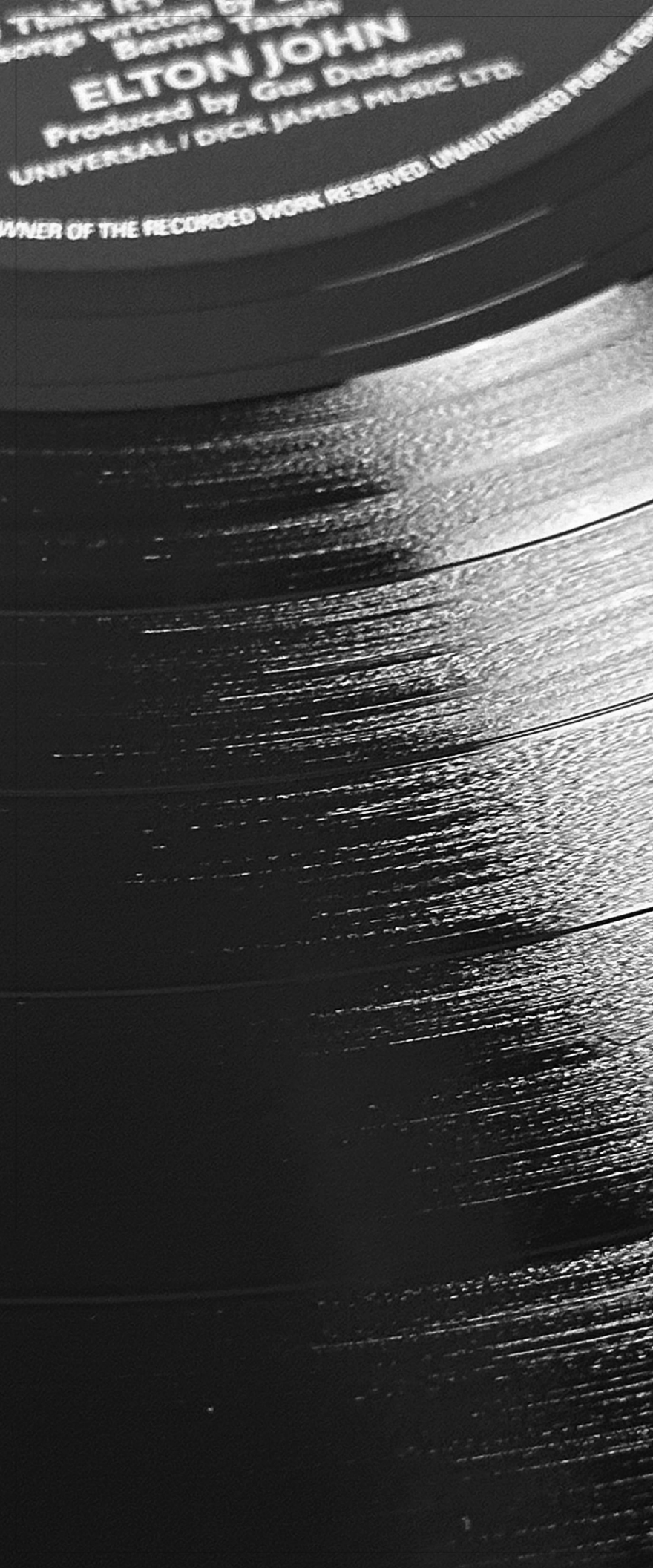
\$377 and \$114
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What do Sir Elton John and I have in common? We both have Rega P9 turntables. I'm not kidding. He may or may not have a Hummin Guru ultrasonic record cleaner. (but he should) So, it only seemed fitting when my 50th Anniversary pressing of Elton John's classic, *Honky Chateau*, arrived, that I use that as the first record to clean on my Hummin Guru.

Let's get to it - for just under \$400, the Hummin Guru is a benchmark. It works flawlessly, and makes ultrasonic cleaning available to everyone, with even a modest sized record collection. Power to the people, right on.

A lot of vinyl enthusiasts would love to add an ultrasonic cleaner to their system, but the \$3,000 - \$5,000 price tag is a bit much to justify for all but those with extensive vinyl collections. That point made, something like the Degritter does a slightly more thorough job than the Hummin Guru, but it's not ten times better. However, what you do get with a Degritter is a more robust mechanism. Again, those with more moderate systems and record collections will probably not use their RCM as much as someone with a massive collection, or those who regularly buy a lot of very dirty records from the used bin.





The obvious competitor is the VPI 16.5, which now has a thousand-dollar price tag attached and does not do nearly the job cleaning your records, is much noisier and much messier. Not to mention that cheap plastic cleaning nozzle that will break at least a few times before you wise up and buy the upgraded nozzle.

The Hummin Guru is even quieter than my Degritter, in fact, it's the quietest RCM I've ever used.

The Hummin Guru is super compact, has a very nice hard plastic cover attachment, so you can store it easily on a shelf with your records, if you don't have a dedicated record cleaning area, and an excellent instruction manual.

Setup and use

Preparing your Hummin Guru for use is easy, and should only take a few minutes. Remove the fluid tank from the left side, and fill it up with distilled water, or if you're planning on cleaning heavily soiled records, add a few drops of the included cleaning agent to your water. Take the water and pour it into the center of the machine and replace the tank. The tank then stores the water/cleaning fluid when cleaning is complete and you're in dry mode.

You can clean (only) manually for 2 or 5 minutes, and the same for manual drying. Otherwise, the auto setting for regular or deep cleaning will do both cycles one after the other for you. This is so easy to use, consider auto mode at all times.

Like any other ultrasonic cleaner, you can see when the fluid is getting cloudy and in need of change. This will depend on how dirty your records are to begin with. Everything seemed fine after cleaning about 25 new or like new records, so for now, I'll follow the same regimen as with the Degritter, about 50 records per tank. You'll figure it out when you integrate the Hummin Guru into your vinyl workflow.

It's worth mentioning the HG's dry only mode – 5 or 10 minutes. I still use a VPI 16.5 as a “first pass” on the most stubborn records, and even after a quick vacuum, it's nice to blast through a couple minutes on the HG, especially if not ready to send a batch of records through the ultrasonic for another cleaning operation right now.

As with the other ultrasonic cleaners I've used, the HG provides a similar result. Records are now pop-free, low level surface noise is eliminated or lowered dramatically, and even brand-new records sound much better after a quick pass through the HG.

Clean and optimize that stylus

There's no point in caring for your records if you have a dirty stylus plowing through them. Hummin Guru's S-DUO again sets the mark for giving you a digital stylus force gauge and an ultrasonic stylus cleaner all in one compact enclosure. Putting both of these tools together is pure genius.

If you have more than one turntable/arm/cartridge combination, a good digital stylus force gauge is indispensable. Comparing the HG to my much more expensive Clearaudio Weight Watcher proves the HG to be right on in terms of accuracy. Both read the same downforce on five turntables in a row, from a Rega P3 up to the SME 20.

Unfortunately, our S-DUO did not arrive with the three small rubber rings, that make a tiny cleaning trough to put some liquid in and then lower your stylus into position. Replacements are on their way from Hong Kong, so we'll report back as soon as we have a chance to try this last bit of the HG cleaning suite.

It's a chicken and egg thing. The cleaner you keep your records, the less often you'll need to clean your stylus, and the more you do both, the longer your records and stylus will last and provide musical enjoyment. Both of these Hummin Guru products will add so much joy to your record playing process. If you've never spent a lot of time with a record cleaning machine, I suspect it will be a big “a-ha” moment for you. All those ticks and pops you thought you had to live with are no more, thanks to the Hummin Guru. It's nice to listen to records that are CD quiet.

Considering what records cost these days, these are two vinyl maintenance tools you can't afford to be without. Highly recommended. It's time to turn the record over. Sir Elton, if you're reading, you need one of these!

