

CLEAN MACHINE

Cleaning your records isn't as simple as some think. The Hannl „Mera“ shows how it's done.

Good things get copied: it's a fact of life, and one Hans Günter Hannl learned the hard way. He created the „Waschbär [Raccoon]“ record cleaner about 20 years ago, commissioned by Blue Danube, before developing his own machines in the middle of the analog slump – machines whose basic concept convinced people all over the world. Who then promptly copied it.

But Hannl, a clever and experienced tinkerer, has managed time and again to stay at least one step ahead of the competition, and his love for detail is immediately apparent when unpacking his latest machine, the “Mera”. All accessories are included: two bottles of cleaning fluid, antistatic replacement lips and rubber nibs, a spray bottle for the round brush cleaner, a puck to secure records during cleaning and a few tools to enable simple maintenance. You also get first-class design and manufacture down the smallest detail, and everything is „Made in Germany“.

In addition, news has spread of the first-class service, the readily available spares, and the upgrade potential via chip replacement, not to mention the technical innovations, such as the processor-controlled

automatic functions and the possibility of regulating the quantity of cleaning fluid yourself. However, Hannl is especially proud of his patented round brush including its special cleaning fluid Vi3C, which we will pick up a bit later.

You can of course clean records a lot cheaper than with the „Mera“... but will that budget cleaner be as quiet, as fast or as perfect? After several weeks of work and cleaning innumerable records, some hot off the press, some worn out from the flea market, we can safely negate any questions of the value for money offered by the “Mera”.

The machine is operated using just two knobs / pushbuttons. There is also a multi-step status display which provides information about revolution speed and suction level. The user can decide whether he would like to control cleaning fluid quantity, turning direction, suction level and duration of the cleaning process manually, or whether all these functions should be taken care of by the machine, in which case the user can still tweak the settings.

The “Mera” produces convincing (and gentle) results for all normal to dirty records, and despite the many adjustment possibilities, proves easy to operate: even

after just a quick glance at the manual there should be no major problems. But if you want to delve deeper, the design of the cleaning and suction arm is explained in exemplary manner, and there's a heap of other useful information for operation and care, to ensure long-term use.

The manual also helps when you need to learn about the ultimate cleaning tool – the round brush. Contrary to the first instinct of wanting to press the round brush onto the record, all that is required is a gentle contact between the two, primarily to swirl the almost foamless cleaning fluid under the bristles and thus rinse the grooves thoroughly.

Skip to pop

We were able to find out how incredibly well this works in practice using a few records we had actually already cast aside because they were skipping, even after being cleaned a few times by other means. In some cases, after a few minutes under the round brush, the apparent skip on the vinyl had reduced to a mere small pop – and the record had been saved.

Since all the settings of the “Mera” are really easy to adjust, it is almost fun to take a day and clean your collection – in great contrast to other washing chores. And since the noise level during suction is also pleasantly low your ears won't ring after going through a whole stack of records. I don't think there is any quieter method around.

Michael Lang

Hannl Mera ELB 24V
complete about 3100 Euro
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▲ The Mera is very comfortable and yet easy to use. A ventilator on the bottom sucks air out and dehumidifies it. The Mera is also available in a shiny chrome coating.

The accessories package is complete down to the microfiber towel, and packaged in a very organized and appetizing manner. ▶



▲ Exemplary: The suction arm (below) is made of metal and is grounded against static electricity charges. The velvet lips are also antistatic.



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