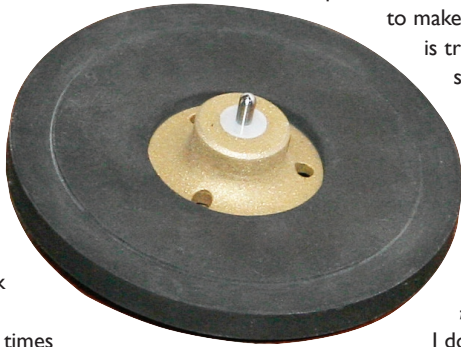


BASTIN GARRARD IDLER £120

Martin Bastin has long been my source of Garrard parts; he's spent a lot of time researching the consistent parts of 301s and 401s, down to almost molecular levels. He started with the main bearing, developed the Maxplank plinth and in more recent times has been seeing what can be done to improve the idler drive wheel. On a Garrard this little rubberised wheel is the link between the inside of the platter rim and the motor pulley. Martin has long made noises about the original ones being "okay, but improvable". So after many years in the shed, Martin has



developed special rubbers, a decent casting and much better bearings than the original Garrard item. There is a special procedure to ensure perfect finish to the edge, and to make sure the thing is truly round in shape. The new idler wheels are supplied complete with a tube of suitable grease. Total cost is £120, which I do not think bad considering the amount of work that has gone in to development and manufacture.

Fitting the idler is of course a doddle. If on a standard Garrard 301/401 main bearing, raise the edge of the platter with your fingers, and strike the bearing with the wooden end of a small hammer. The original

idler is then removed with one screw. Put a small amount of grease on the idler's bearings, and replace everything back as normal. It was clear the new idler fit much tighter in the bearings...

Sound wise I was quite staggered to find it did indeed make the deck quieter. A familiar recording of Jimmy Smith's 'Organ Grinder's Swing' lost noise that I had put down to a faulty pressing, a kind of worn groove 'shush' in the back drop disappeared. Similar on a charity shop special Decca Phase Four Stereo Sampler there was just an extra edge of detail, due to this marginal lowering of the noise floor. The more dynamic recordings didn't seem to benefit much, but there was no demerit either. A win-win situation then. Strongly recommended, it's a real improvement on the original Garrard item. **HB**

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soundbites

RECORD REVIRGINIZER £29.95

Record cleaning machines, gadgets and fluids sit, cheek by jowl, within a crowded accessories arena. The feeling is that it would take something pretty unusual to make a splash and get noticed – and that's what the Record Revirginizer, all the way from Australia, does.

A manual method of cleaning your records, this system is in the current market, unique and intriguing. It arrives within a 500ml bottle containing a viscous liquid; this light blue coloured, anti-static polymer is simple to use but does require patience. You pour a quantity of the liquid directly onto your vinyl. Judging the right amount will be down to time and experience but I would recommend a little at a time. The Revirginizer is viscous but non-toxic and, once you've poured a quantity onto your record (avoiding the record label), you carefully spread it over the vinyl and then leave to dry for a few hours (which is where the patience comes in). The company recommends that you lay a small piece of paper or card on the edge of the record so that, when the

liquid dries, the card can be used as a handle or tab to help pull off the rest of the film. Once dry, you simply peel the now skin-like material off the record and discard. What you have left is a clean record!

I tested the liquid on an old, original issue, Peggy Lee LP that had more than its fair share of 'Rice Crispy' noises on playback. Listening to the treated LP, I noticed significant noise reduction, of around eighty percent I'd guesstimate. It may seem obvious, but it's worth stating that the reduction in noise allows more sonic details to be heard, especially the more subtle, nuanced information which was being blanketed by the noise. My LP may have benefitted from a second application but I believe that a fair amount of the remaining noise was basic wear and tear.

As with good quality record cleaning machines, LP cleaning like this does more than remove the more obvious pieces of muck and grime from clogged grooves, it also removes the release agent. Hence, an unexpected benefit of the treatment was general sonic improvement. The

overall presentation sounded more focused, with a new and unexpected transparency that revealed a welcome clarity. This is an effective cleaning system. **PR**

[Contact: www.recordrevirginizer.com,

