

RECORD FLATTENERS FURUTECH DFV-1

In the groove

As any vinyl fan will know, there's nothing more frustrating than a priceless LP record warped so badly that your turntable's tonearm and cartridge simply won't track it anymore.

I remember ordering, unseen, a rare used copy of a double album by Dutch progressive rock band Focus featuring the bizarre hit, 'Hocus Pocus', only to find that one of the two discs in the set was warped so badly, it couldn't be played.

With little prospect of ever being played, and even less chance of being refunded, I should have turfed the offending LP. But the other disc was fine and, besides, I'd read various accounts of record flatteners and record flattening techniques.

However, I never got around to trying any of these remedies, and the album – together with several others that had suffered the same fate – remained in my cupboard. Until the Furutech DFV-1 came along.

The DFV-1 is a record flattener that promises to restore any warped disc to its original, perfectly flat state. It does this through careful and gradual application of heat, using two vertical

plates of armoured glass, with the warped vinyl record affixed between the two.

The device is intelligently executed in that it stands upright, thus saving space and limiting the unit's footprint. The two halves have spring-loaded latches which clamp the heated glass plates with an even pressure, while the record itself is easily fitted using a two-piece locating plug.

Once closed, the DFV-1 is switched on, activating the LCD display on the base of the unit. The display provides ongoing status information on the flattening process.

The default flattening cycle is a 1.5-hour heating cycle, during which time the disc is heated to maximum temperature of 65 deg C. A cool-down cycle of two hours follows, before the disc can be extracted from the flattener.

For discs requiring more intensive care than that, the heating cycle can be extended to two or even 2.5 hours. In each case, the cooling cycle remains the same.

And yes, it actually works. The said Focus album is now as flat as

the proverbial pancake, and the Linn's Ittok tonearm and Ortofon cartridge track its grooves with slick precision.

Even better, the process doesn't inflict any damage to the rest of the record, since the heated glass plates only touch the outer edge and the centre of the disc.

I tried the Furutech with both badly and only slightly warped vinyl records, and the results were consistently good in every instance. A major pluspoint is that the entire process is automatic and completely foolproof.

For those who regularly scour jumble sales, church fairs and flea markets for used LPs the Furutech DFV-1 will become an invaluable tool. Of course, it cannot fix scratches or other surface damage, but this baby will ensure you never have any warped records in your collection.

Deon Schoeman

VITAL STATS

Energy consumption.....	45 watts (normal) 140 watts (max)
Maximum heating temperature	65 deg C
Dimensions (WxDxH)	425 x 507 x 170 mm
Footprint.....	178 x 483 mm
Weight	9 kg
PRICE	R13 770

VERDICT

Useful and very effective remedy for those priceless LPs that have become warped. Simple to use.

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