

FURUTECH

Monza LP Stabilizer Review

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Positive-Feedback

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DISCOURSE

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Still spinning those black discs from years gone by? Not black CDRs but real 'vinyl' black discs... you know records? What you say... yeah sure (heck even my 21 year old son prefers vinyl over digital which is why he is now buying records when he can—he owns a turntable!). But have you tried any record clamps lately? Say what? Well clamping a record to the platter can yield great benefits, and how it is done will defiantly has it influences. My Transrotor Leonardo came with an elegant chrome clamp (not a standard option but an upgrade that I went for) that is a relatively heavy affair which settles down onto the record and does what one should do: adds mass to dampen resonances and such when spinning vinyl. Its works (vinyl sounds better *with* than *without* in all the appropriate ways) and not having anything to compare it to, well... it was as good as it gets till I tried Furutech's Monza (\$495). Now while the Transrotor clamp

appears to just be mass-adding device, the Monza is a completely different beast altogether; what else would one expect from the boys at Furutech? No, Furutech likes to really push the envelope. That is they go WAY beyond what anyone else is doing and explores areas that one would never expect to be an issue. Like what they have done with making a record clamp, or as they prefer, a record stabilizer. To quote for their press release:

"The beautifully finished precision machined nonmagnetic stainless steel base and top modules are separated by a layer of damping carbon fiber. The bottom surface is covered with 16 concentric cushioning grooves made of an extremely effective Piezo Electric damping material. It was developed for the Innovations award-winning FI-50 connector series. In that "active technology" system Furutech engineers created a unique material comprised of nano-sized ceramic particles and powdered carbon. Nano-ceramics couple with carbon powder create the piezo effect. Nylon and fiberglass are added in the connector, and the whole forms an extremely effective mechanically *and electrically* damped matrix. Piezoelectric effects are the key. The nano-polycrystalline ferroelectric ceramic particles exhibit *electro-generative* properties (mechanical pressure creates an electrical charge) and the carbon powder exhibits *thermal-conductive* characteristics. The mechanical and electrical damping effects occur while "interconverting" thermal, mechanical, and electrical energy."



Furutech Monza on the left and the Transrotor on the right

Marketing rhetoric? Well, if it didn't make a difference, then well... maybe. But yikes, music with the Monza Stabilizer is so much better than what had been heard with the Transrotor clamp that they HAVE to be on to something here. Prior to the Monza, the Transrotor did sound quite nice, but yeah, music had a sense of leanness or lightness to it—it would be nice to have a tad more weight to the bottom-end along with a touch

or two more warmth and richness to the upper bass and lower mids. Well, no... make that vinyl without the Monza was lacking in 'color', richness, and weight. Yeah it sounded good, really good and in many ways still better than the better digital, but too many records lacked a certain degree of fleshy-richness or 'color' and weight—all of which would be a nice addition. Is this more of a characteristic of the table itself (no doubt being based on acrylic is responsible to a degree), or the cartridge (the Shelter 901 which being an MC is *also* responsible to a degree), or the phonostage (the Sutherland PhD which being from Ron is *also* responsible to a degree)—but since we prefer a more upfront open sound then, well... we got what we wanted. Of course one can change and now find yourself wanting a wee bit less of *this* and a whole lot more of *that*—that missing weight and tonal richness or warmth that as we get older sounds nicer. Which is not to be confused with being way *more* dark and tonally lush—no, that we aren't after. We aren't after those SET euphonic colorations that make things mush and mash—nice and listenable, but too bloated and tonally fat for the long run. But a bit more of that darker, lush, weightier quality added into the mix, yeah... that would be the ticket. Like I said earlier about the Claytons when mated to the Marigos... it would be nice if we could have it all.

Well, with the Monza I think we are getting pretty close. Plop it on a record and yeah, things clearly become heavier, weightier... meatier. There is more flesh or *fat* to them *musical* bones (one should not have *just* muscle or flesh, you do need some fat!), and more weight and oomph to the bottom-end. The music now has more tonal heft and fullness with none of those potential tradeoffs—that evil bloat and over-the-top richness that makes things appear to be less resolving or open than they really are in their absence. Cool. With the Monza, we still get the resolution along with a neutral tonal color and all that vinyl goodness... wow, the Monza is nice step in the right direction. It clearly mitigates any of the shortfalls in the analog system that I had mentioned above. With the Monza we are get it all and in spades! It is easy to swap in and out to realize what it is doing (and the Transrotor clamp is not doing). It works as advertised and is a clear winner.

by Dave Clark