

soundbites

BREN 1 RECORD CLAMP \$48.99

In this country at least, for many years record clamps were, for some strange reason, unfashionable. Maybe it was the legacy of the eighties, and a generation of British belt drive superdecks that didn't suffer them gladly, but the end result is that for a long while it has been difficult to purchase one here, especially one of the weighty types such as this. Tipping the scales at 414g, the American-made Bren 1 is CNC cut from polished solid USA certified 6061-T6 aluminium, to a diameter of 76.2mm, a height of 44.45mm and with a spindle depth of 30.22mm. There's also the option of an anodised gold finish. Should your turntable not fit this universal size, the clamp can be supplied to fit the spindles of Empire, Thorens, Acoustic Research, Luxman, VPI, Systemdek, Well Tempered, Sota, Music Hall and Merrill turntables specifically. The weight of the Bren 1 is said to be just enough to achieve proper clamping, but won't damage turntable main bearings or slow

down the platter. This is a key point, as some of the heavier designs can even have high torque direct drives straining, producing a noticeably inferior sound as the motor summons up more power to cope. If you're still worried, the Bren 1 Lite is slightly less heavy, bringing the weight down to 329g; this I would suggest would be ideal for budget decks such as Regas and Pro-jects. Ordering is done direct from the manufacturer in the US; there's a range of postage options including \$12.50 1st class international.

The overall look and feel of the Bren is excellent given its modest price, and it works well; we liked the slightly angled (50 degree) recess which makes centring it easy. On a Pioneer PL600 the Bren sat well, and produced an instant sonic improvement; it seemed to filter out a fine layer of 'mush' from the midband, bringing solidity to



instruments and greater finesse to the sound of the instruments themselves. Bass achieve a subtle but worthy improvement in grip; there was less propensity to

just make a 'boom' sound, and instead you could hear the envelope of bass guitar notes better. In some ways this resulted in a slight lessening of bass power, but the tighter bass notes sounded lighter yet more pronounced and rhythmic. You could also hear when they were accented and when they weren't, where previously they simply seemed the same. Even treble received a slight improvement in clarity and finesse; there was less splash, and a greater sense of focus. All in all a very worthy vinyl accessory; every deck should have one. **DP**

[Contact: www.bren1recordclamp.com]