

## Black Ravioli Record Ground

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It's not a weight...

\$950  
blackravioli.com

Unfortunately, listening to the title track from Slayer's *Show No Mercy* album, I couldn't hear much difference from having the Black Ravioli Record Ground in place or not. If you happen to play nothing but metal nothing but loud (not that that's a bad thing) you probably don't need one.

For the rest of you, this is a very worthwhile turntable upgrade, even though nearly a thousand dollars might sound like a lot for a record weight – however, the BR Record Ground is not a record weight. It is a device to siphon energy from the actual record surface, and it does its job very well. The BR Record Ground is one of those subtle things that brings you closer to an absolute analog, non-mechanical, non-electronic way that once you experience it, you can't go back. I've had excellent results with their isolation pucks for years, and the Record Ground is equally good. I need to mention that according to the BR's designer, Derrick Ethel, the Record Ground needs to spend a day at room temperature before using for maximum effect.

Being the manual reading, direction following person I am, I just stared at the BR Record Ground for a whole day before using it.



Listening begins with Rene LaFlamme's excellent pressing (on the 2XHD label) of Bill Evans *Some Other Time*, and the BR makes it easier to really get into the record, which is perfectly produced. Mr. LaFlamme has been making some incredible remasters on SACD, high res download and 45r.p.m. vinyl. If you've seen Nagra gear at any of the hifi shows in the last 5 years or so, he is the man behind the incredible setup that Nagra brings.

Switching the program from Slayer to acoustic jazz with a lot of space and air, the difference the BR Record Ground makes is subtle, yet immediate. As my reference SME 20 uses a screw down clamp, I did not enlist the SME for test listening but did use a Technics SL-1200GR with the latest Luxman MC cartridge (and Cardas Clear tonearm cable), a Rega P9 with Apheta 2, and the Linn LP-12 Basik with Linn Adikt cartridge. All about \$3k-\$6k setups. The main reason for trying this instead of the new Luxman PD-171 that has just arrived was wanting to confirm the Record Ground makes a positive difference on a reasonable analog setup. It's even better on the Luxman, btw.

### Subtle, unmistakable, but fantastic

When listening to rock records without a lot of real instruments for reference, or selections on the techno/electronic side of the fence, the Record Ground is still very worthwhile. The overall effect reminds me a lot of what I hear with the Furutech DE-Mag. Everything is quieter overall, with the top end being smoother. I won't bore you with countless selections of different albums, as you have your own favorites. I do suggest trying your favorite selections in your collection that are of the highest quality – these will show more difference immediately, yet as I listened to the BR Record Ground on the SL1200GR and P9 I certainly prefer it in place than not.

When I say smoother, I don't mean sharp edges rounded off the corners of details and transient edges, but more gradations and shadowing of tones. The whole presentation is more analog, organic, and realistic. After about an hour of listening, when going back to no Record Ground, the effect is instantly recognizable. Yet this is not quite the same effect as swapping out better interconnects, or going up a grade in cartridge from what you are using now. In the past my go to record weight was the Furutech. The BR outperforms the Furutech on every level. The Furutech makes things a little quieter, but a little duller in comparison to the BR, which makes everything a bit livelier.

### It's a system

Let's say for a minute you have a turntable/arm/cartridge combination in the \$2k-\$10k range, and you'd like to extract more musical information from your current setup. If you agree that analog is all about resolving musical detail, as your system improves, the hope is that most of the changes you make to your analog front end will either reveal more music, make a more pleasing tonal change, or in some cases, both.

Over the last 40 years, I've swapped more than my share of cables, cartridges, tubes, and power line conditioners, as well as various forms of vibration control. Nothing does what the Black Ravioli Record Ground does. I'll even go as far as suggest that using a BR Record Ground will make it easier to hear other changes you might make in your analog front end going forward.

Again, at almost \$1,000 the BR is not inexpensive, but it provides an improvement you won't get elsewhere. Highly recommended.



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