

gear review **RON GARANT**

When the original Bravo was released, it was something that we here at MI Media, LLC could really use. Both of our magazines, *Bassics* and *Fingerstyle Guitar*, include companion CDs and especially for *Fingerstyle Guitar*, we have a need for replicating the CDs for issues that we no longer have original copies of, and we need them on a constant and ongoing basis. We've since upgraded to the Bravo II, which serves our needs nicely, and Primer Technology also wanted us to check out the upscale BravoPro high-performance CD/DVD publisher.

Both the Bravo II and the BravoPro burn and print CDs or DVDs robotically, the main differences being that the Pro handles up to 100 discs compared to the II's 50, and features two drives instead of one and prints twice as fast as the II. Migrating from the Bravo or Bravo II to the BravoPro is simple and flawless. Both use the same software on the Mac (CharisMac DiscRibe) and they also work with PCs (using PrimoDVD 2.1 duplication software by Sonic). It was very easy to get the Pro hooked up and working; I encountered no problems whatsoever. The only thing that I wish worked a little differently, but apparently has to do with OSX on the Mac, is that when you want to copy from a disc in your CD drive, you have to start the software first with the CD tray open, otherwise you'll have to quit the program and start again in precisely that same manner. But this is not a factor when copying files from your hard drive.

Features • BravoPro was the world's first automated 100-disc capacity CD/DVD duplication and printing system for both Mac and PC users. It uses a robotic arm to automatically transport discs to the drives and to the printer, with all three processes occurring simultaneously for fast throughput. Images printed on the disc are photo-quality at 4800 dpi, and offer the industry's smallest ink droplet size of 3 picoliters. No labels are required and Primer

also offers the water-resistant inkjet-printable Tuff Coat with AquaGuard surface series of discs for water and smear resistance, and better color reproduction with sharper images. Users can design disc graphics in Photoshop, Illustrator and CorelDraw among others (but not native QuarkXpress files, those must be saved in another format like PDFs) using an included program called SureThing CD Labeler Primer Edition.

The CD version features two Plextor 52x CD-R drives, while the DVD version integrates two Plextor drives that record DVD±Rs at 16x and CD-Rs at 48x. The BravoPro also records Dual Layer DVD-Rs at 4x, allowing 8.5 GB of data onto a single side.

By increasing the speed of the robotics, tray in/tray out, printer (using Primer's exclusive Afterburner Print Technology, an all-new print head technology from Lexmark that doubles the width of the print swath), and DVD recording, the BravoPro has double the production rate of the Bravo II.

Up to 50 discs can be loaded into the input bin on the right side of the unit and finished discs are transported by the robotic arm to the output bin on the left. However in kiosk mode, both bins act as input and output is sent to the center (normally a "reject" bin) to a special output holder, thereby increasing the total burn capacity to 100.

As you can see in the picture, the entire burning and processing functions are enclosed under a protective, transparent hinged cover, which also protects the discs being burned from dust and other possible contaminants.

Options • Network software called PTBurn is included with every unit, allowing up to 5 users to send recording and print jobs to the BravoPro remotely from client PCs using Windows 2000/XP. Additional 5-user license blocks are available for \$299.95 each and there is no limit on the number of users that are able to send jobs over the network.

A business card adapter kit is available for \$199, which enables the burning and printing of 80mm mini-discs, "hockey rink" mini-discs and business card shaped CDs.

Support • There really wasn't any need for support during my review of the BravoPro, partly because I was already familiar with the process from the experience with our original Bravo, and because I had no problems with the operation of the unit. But when we upgraded to the Bravo II from our original Bravo, I ran into a problem with discs being rejected too frequently. The good news: Primer responded right away and after I provided a description of the problem, had me return the unit for testing and after finding a defective drive, replaced it and returned it to me quickly and efficiently. I have had no further problems with the unit. In addition, Primer's website offers a plethora of information, both for the prospective and established consumer.

Conclusion • Whether you need professional copies of your self-released CDs to sell at gigs and on websites, or need to duplicate previously recorded CDs like we do, the Primer Bravo duplicators are an excellent solution. At a suggested retail price of \$3,495 for the CD version and \$3,995 for the DVD version (street prices are, of course, lower), the BravoPro doesn't come cheap, but if you need the quantity and quality of replication that this unit produces, I highly recommend it. If your needs are a little less, then the Bravo II will do the job nicely for you, too, at the lower retail price point of \$2,195 for the CD version and \$2,695 for the DVD version. Either way, you'll be pumping out hundreds of discs in no time, with little fuss or muss.

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