Vinyl record manufacturing materials and tools suppliers

This is an attempt to document changes in the availability of new tools and materials from the time global vinyl record sales hit their peak (in the late 1970s) until December 2022 (following several years of increasing sales, colloquially known as the 'vinyl revival').

Depending on the specific technique used (e.g. mass manufacturing vs custom or small batch production), making vinyl records depends on the following specialized tools and materials:

- Disc cutting lathe
- Cutterhead
- Cutting/embossing stylus (e.g. sapphire, ruby, diamond, tungsten)
- Other cutting system elements (e.g. amplifier, pitch controller, etc.)
- Blank discs for cutting and subsequent electroplating (usually lacquer-coated aluminium)
- Galvanic baths
- Other electroplating equipment, chemicals and infrastructure
- Pressing machines
- Pressing machine moulds
- Other pressing equipment and infrastructure
- PVC granulate

Here we will focus on vinyl record manufacturing tools and materials identified as difficult to obtain at some point after global vinyl record sales declined substantially (from around 1980). For this purpose, we will list active manufacturers in 1977-1979 (when vinyl record production reached its peak) and the year they stopped production, as well as manufacturers active in December 2022 and the year they started production. December 2022 has been chosen as a fixed cut-off point to prevent this document from constantly needing to be updated as a consequence of documenting new developments. Any manufacturers that entered the industry after 1979 and stopped production before December 2022 are also listed, but in separate tables. Any manufacturers that halted production before 1977 are outside the scope of this documentation effort. Naturally, the volume of units produced will vary widely by year and manufacturer. While it would be useful to document such volumes, accurate figures are unlikely to be available for many manufacturers and per production year.

This documentation effort will initially focus on six types of tools and materials:

1. Disc cutting lathes
2. Cutterheads
3. Cutting styli (all types)
4. Lacquer-coated aluminium discs
5. Pressing machines
6. Pressing machine moulds

If you have any relevant information, please either insert it into the relevant tables below or send it to me (rene.wiedner [@] wbs.ac.uk) so I can include it. Please feel free to add your name if you would like to be credited for sharing this information. Also, please indicate the original source of the information, if available.

1. **Disc cutting lathes**

1.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources
Neumann	**1931**	**1985 (1989?)**	about 1,000 lathes produced across all models in total?	https://www.psaudio.com/copper/article/the-rise-fall-and-resurgence-of-the-vinyl-record/#:~:text=Scully%20stopped%20manufacturing%20lathes%20by,manufactured%20a%20new%20mastering%20lathe. https://www.floka.com/lathes.html
Scully	**1919 / 1921**		First lathe produced in 1919, first sold in 1921	https://www.namm.org/library/oral-history/jerry-scully
Lyrec		**1978**		http://pspatialaudio.com/lathes.htm
Cybersonics			Apparently only a handful ever made	

1.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes (e.g. estimated production volume)	Information sources

Flokason	2000 (Kingston Dubplate cutter) 2016 (AM44)	Kingston Dubplate cutter (mounted on Technics turntable), later AM44 (complete lathe)	https://www.flokason.ch/blog/ https://www.audioasylum.com/messages/vinyl/96394/too-cool-kingston-dubplate-cutter https://www.lathetrolls.com/viewtopic.php?f=15&t=6725&p=44587&hilit=am44#p44587
Souri's Automaten	2002	Vinyl Recorder T560 (mounted on Technics turntable)	https://www.womex.com/virtual/vinylrecorder_com

1.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	**First year of production**	**Final year of production**	**Notes**	**Information sources**
Vestax	**2001**		not commercially successful; only very limited number produced	https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/28071/chapter-abstract/212089956?redirectedFrom=fulltext

2. Cutterheads

2.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources
Neumann			about 1,000 cutterheads produced between 1968 and 1990	communication with Flo Kaufmann
Westrex			323 cutterheads produced	communication with Flo Kaufmann
Ortofon	1946			http://pspatialaudio.com/lathes.htm
Haeco				
JVC				

2.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources
Flokason (formerly Vinylium)	1999 (2011 - Flokason)	SC99, Caruso, LaCallas, Dialba, SX84c (between 150-200 in total produced to date)	communication with Flo Kaufmann
MyShank	2020		
Souri's Automaten		Cutterhead not sold separately from disc cutting device	https://www.lathetrolls.com/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=8740&p=55612&hilit=nightingale#p55612

2.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3. Disc cutting styli

3.1. Sapphire

3.1.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.1.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.1.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.2. Ruby

3.2.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.2.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.2.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.3. Diamond

3.3.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.3.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources
Indimant			
MyShank			
Souri's Automaten (using diamond grinder in Switzerland)			

3.3.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.4. Other types of styli

3.4.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.4.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources

3.4.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

4. Lacquer-coated aluminium discs

4.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources
Pyral	**1929**	**1987**		https://kennisbank.avanet.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Typology_guide_RTS_lacquer_discs.pdf
Capitol Records (Audiodiscs; Apollo)	**1937**	**2020**	Closed indefinitely due to fire in Feb 2020	https://obsoletemedia.org/audiodisc/ https://kennisbank.avanet.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Typology_guide_RTS_lacquer_discs.pdf
Transco	**1947**	**2007**	Acquired by Apollo	https://www.discogs.com/label/337785-Transco

4.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources
MDC	**1982**		https://www.pbr.co.jp/master-en

4.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources
JVC				

5. Pressing machines

5.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

5.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources

5.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

6. Pressing machine moulds

6.1. Manufacturers active in 1977-1979

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources

6.2. Manufacturers active in 2022

Company name	First year of production	Notes	Information sources

6.3. Manufacturers that started production after 1979 and halted production before December 2022

Company name	First year of production	Final year of production	Notes	Information sources