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# REVIEWS

## » RUPES BIGFOOT IBRID NANO POLISHER

Detailing a motorcycle is not considered a sane activity. Rather, rarely paying attention to the cosmetic condition of one's muddy mount can be a badge of honor. Alternatively, a slow, methodical bike cleaning method allows examining the bike, checking for loose fasteners. It's common to find something needing attention. I've never felt the need for anything beyond normal motorcycle cleaners, a few good rags and some wax, until now.

RUPES designs and manufactures high-end power tools in Italy. RUPES products introduced automation to many traditionally hand-only tasks, such as the first electric random orbital and palm sanders. RUPES USA, Inc. was founded in 2015, when it acquired Cyclo Toolmakers, a Colorado tool manufacturer known for the dual-headed Cyclo Polisher. They built a state-of-the-art 40,000 square foot facility and started manufacturing several RUPES tools in North America. Their BigFoot brand tools are stalwarts in most detailing shops.

Two years ago, RUPES introduced the BigFoot iBrid Nano. It's designed to work in smaller places and on smaller vehicles, such as motorcycles. It was clear they had a hit at the SEMA Show in 2018. At first, we were put off by the price, as this tool was designed for professional detailers. Later, we recognized that for certain groups of riders this product makes total sense. For instance, the restoration and custom bike crowd.

Most motorcyclists are impressed by outrageously mirror-finished, custom-built motorcycles. Historically, buffing out a motorcycle meant hours or days of effort, often by hand. The lightweight Nano changes all that. It weighs just over 1 pound, is 14 inches long and has a 1.875-inch diameter grip that fits easily



into one hand. With its 1.25-inch diameter buffing pad, it easily slips around curves and angles on every part of a bike. The Nano quickly switches between rotary to highly precise 3mm and 12mm random orbital actions. Random orbital action is far less likely to damage a

painted surface than rotary action.

It was ideal for restoring a brand-new luster to our plastic speedometer, tach and other gauges. It also restored glazed-over, dull plastic headlight covers to a like-new condition. It brought both paint and chrome on an ancient



The Bigfoot iBrid Nano polisher can reach into tight spaces, like a big electric toothbrush (left). Half of the gauge cluster was masked and polished. The difference can clearly be seen (above).

BSA gas tank to near-perfect shine in under an hour. It polishes panels as small as one-inch wide and removes grit, debris, and grease from recessed corners of a motorcycle.

We tested the long-neck HR81ML/DLX, which uses a li-ion rechargeable battery. It is also available with a shorter neck. Foregoing a cord is a simple, but remarkably useful upgrade from corded buffers, even without the revolutionary small size. We liked that the kit included a second rechargeable battery. The 20-minute recharge time nicely matched up with the continuous service time of 30 minutes. As we ran out of juice, the second battery was fully-charged and ready. However, it can just as easily be used as a powered tool by plugging an AC adapter into the bottom.

As a tool designed for professionals, it is perfect for achieving that final level of detail, but it is pricy. Budgeting for such a device makes more sense if it will be used to clean more than one vehicle, including cars. Modern vehicles boast an increasing number of shiny trim pieces, inside and outside. The Nano does a brilliant job of restoring such surfaces to their factory-fresh appearance. The Nano's small size also allows precision in a variety of hard-to-reach places.

Little pressure is needed to control the polisher. It works best to grip the Nano with one hand and steady the neck with one finger from your other hand, to control its direction. Five speed settings and a soft start feature provide confidence and exactness with the tool. Using pads this small allows access to tiny spaces, but if you are removing any measurable amount of oxidation, the pads quickly fill and need frequent changing.

Thankfully, RUPES includes six of the 1.25-inch pads, and you'll need them all to cover any significant area. With the smaller pad, an area the size of a cellphone was about right for a single pad. Double that with the larger 2-inch pads. Cleaning the pads is simple, with warm water and a small amount of dish soap. Rinse thoroughly and let them air

dry. Using compressed air to clean out the pads during use extends the time between full cleanings, but also requires reapplying the polishing compound.

The Nano comes in a well-provisioned kit. Local and online retailers can be found on the company website. While a bit of a stretch for the average home garage, it's an easy decision for professional detail shops. If you enjoy detailing or need to polish and restore multiple surfaces, and take pleasure in using exceptionally well-crafted tools, this could be for you.

The superb design, high-quality workmanship and pure delight at the results can make the price justifiable. Try hinting that it would make an awesome gift or split the cost with a friend or riding club.

## FEATURES

- » BigFoot iBrid Nano long neck dual-action polisher
- » Heavily padded case, with carrying strap
- » Charger and two li-ion power packs
- » A 120V AC-DC adapter
- » Wrench for changing orbit connectors
- » 3mm and 12mm orbit connector and a rotary connector
- » 10 pack of P2000 and P3000 adhesive sanding discs
- » One horsehair and one nylon brush for use on upholstery
- » Six 1.25-inch fine and 1.25-inch coarse foam buffing pads
- » Four 2-inch fine 2-inch coarse foam buffing pads
- » One 150ml bottle of ZEPHIR coarse polishing compound
- » One 150ml bottle of KERAMIK fine polishing compound
- » Hooked backing plates for each size and a sand disc
- » Four microfiber towels, BigFoot sticker and instruction

—Steve Larsen



\$600, RUPES, [rupesusa.com](http://rupesusa.com)