VS Archive Converter — User Manual

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1. What the app does

VS Archive Converter recovers the multitrack recordings stored on Roland VS-1680 backup CDs and turns them into WAV files, an AAF for Pro Tools and Logic, a Final Cut Pro XML for Logic, an Ableton Live session or a DAWproject file for Cubase, Studio One and Bitwig. It never writes to the CD or to the disc images: everything is read-only.

What it can do:

- Read a VS backup CD directly from a USB CD drive, or open images made with IsoBuster (CD.ibq + CD.ibp).
- Join backups that the VS split across several CDs.
- Decode the VS audio (RDAC formats MT1, MT2 and MTP; 32, 44.1 and 48 kHz).
- Group the V-Tracks that were recorded at the same time, show their waveforms and let you listen before exporting.
- Read the mixer scenes, the stereo links and the song tempo (BPM and time signature).
- Detect damaged parts of the CD and export them as silence, listing exactly where they are.

What it does not do (yet): it does not reproduce the VS effects, fader automation or fades — you get the raw recorded tracks.

Requirements:

Item	Needed
Mac	Apple Silicon (M1 or newer) or Intel
macOS	14 Sonoma or newer
To read CDs directly	A USB CD/DVD drive and your Mac password
Free disk space	About 650 MB per CD image, plus the WAVs you export

The app follows your Mac's language: English on an English Mac, Portuguese on a Portuguese Mac.

2. Installing and opening it the first time

The app is not from the App Store, so macOS asks you to approve it, and reading CDs needs one extra permission. Do these steps once, in this order. The most important rule: **a permission only takes effect after you quit the app with ⌘Q and open it again.** If something still says “not permitted”, quit and reopen before trying anything else.

1. **Unzip and move the app first.** Double-click the .zip, then drag **VS Archive Converter.app** into your **Applications** folder *before* opening it. Do not run it from Downloads or from inside the zip folder: macOS isolates apps started from there and permissions do not stick.
2. **Open it once.** Double-click the app in Applications. macOS says it cannot verify the developer — click **Done** (or **OK**).
3. **Allow it.** Right away, open **System Settings › Privacy & Security**, scroll to the bottom and click **Open Anyway** next to “VS Archive Converter”, then confirm with your password and click **Open**. The button only appears for a while after a blocked attempt; if it is not there, repeat step 2. (On older macOS: right-click the app › **Open**.)
4. **Give it Full Disk Access** (needed to read CDs). In **System Settings › Privacy & Security › Full Disk Access**, click **+**, choose **VS Archive Converter** in Applications and turn the switch **on**.
5. **Quit with ⌘Q and open it again.** Closing the window is not enough — use **VS Archive Converter › Quit** (⌘Q), then reopen it from Applications.
6. **Test.** Insert a VS CD, click **Ignore** on macOS’s “not readable” message, and use **Read CD…**. If it says “Operation not permitted”, check that the switch from step 4 is on and repeat step 5.

Permissions you may be asked for later — all of them are safe to allow:

When	macOS asks	Why
You open images from Downloads, Documents or the Desktop	Access to that folder	To read the disc images
You open images from an external drive	Access to removable volumes	Same reason
You click **Read CD**	Your Mac password	macOS only allows reading a raw CD with administrator rights

When	macOS asks	Why
Once, before reading CDs	Full Disk Access (you turn it on yourself — step 4)	Without it macOS blocks reading the CD directly, even with your password

When macOS asks for access to a folder or drive, click **Allow**. If you clicked **Don't Allow** by mistake, turn it on in **System Settings › Privacy & Security › Files and Folders** and quit and reopen the app.

After installing a new version of the app, macOS may treat it as a different app: repeat steps 3 to 5 (in Full Disk Access, select the old entry, remove it with **−** and add the new app with **+**).

3. Getting your backups into the app

There are two ways in: read the CD directly, or open a disc image someone already made. Either way, each CD becomes an image file on your Mac and the CD is never changed.

Reading a CD directly

Before the first read: the app needs **Full Disk Access**, and you must quit (⌘Q) and reopen it after turning it on — see section 2, steps 4 and 5. Without it, Read CD fails with "Operation not permitted".

1. Connect a USB CD drive and insert the VS backup CD.
2. macOS says "The disk you inserted was not readable by this computer". Click **Ignore** — not Eject. This is normal: the VS uses its own format, not one macOS understands.
3. In the app click **Read CD…** (the drive button in the toolbar, or File › Read CD from Drive, ⌘R).
4. Choose the disc in the list (click **Search Again** if it does not appear yet).
5. Give the image a name, for example "CD 3 - Sereia", and choose a folder for it. Prefer an external drive: each image is about 650 MB.
6. **Attempts on each difficult sector** (default 3): raise it for scratched CDs. More attempts recover more, but take longer.
7. Click **Read CD** and type your Mac password when asked.
8. A bar shows how many MB were read, the speed, the time left and how many sectors could not be read. When it finishes, the image opens in the song list and you can click **Eject CD**.

Sectors that still cannot be read after all attempts are filled with silence and marked; the app shows exactly which tracks and seconds are affected (see Damaged discs). The image is saved as **CD.vsimg** plus a small **CD.vsmap** file with the list of bad sectors — keep both together.

It is normal for the very last sector of a VS CD-R to be unreadable: it is a link block written by the CD recorder and holds no audio. If the Report shows no affected V-Tracks, nothing was lost.

Opening disc images (IsoBuster)

If the CDs were copied on a Windows PC with IsoBuster, you get a **CD.ibq** file (the data) and a **CD.ibp** file (IsoBuster's map of the disc). Keep each pair in the same folder, then either:

- drag the CD.ibq files (or their folders' files) into the app window, or
- click **Add Images…** and select them — you can select many at once.

IsoBuster sometimes also creates "Recovered file 1.mp3", ".jpg", ".exe" and similar files. They are not real files — IsoBuster guessed wrong while scanning the VS data — and can be ignored or deleted. Only CD.ibq + CD.ibp matter.

Backups that span several CDs

When a song did not fit on one CD, the VS asked for another disc and continued on it. Just add the images of **all** the discs of that backup, in any order: the app recognises that they belong together (each CD carries a backup code and "disc 1 of 2", "disc 2 of 2"… in its header), joins them and shows the song once, complete. The song list then shows the first CD's folder followed by "(+1 disc)".

If a disc is missing, the app tells you which one in the Report and shows what it can from disc 1; as soon as you add the missing image it replaces it with the complete backup.

Reopening later

Reopen Recent (toolbar or File menu) opens again the images you used last time. To keep names, groups and folders between sessions, see Sessions.

4. A tour of the window

The window has three columns: your songs on the left, the open song in the middle, and the details of whatever you click on the right.

Area	Where	What it does
Song list	Left column	Every song found in the images you opened. Click one to open it. A ⚠ means the song has damaged or missing parts. Right-click to rename, show the image in Finder or remove it from the list. At the bottom: **+** add images, **−** remove the selected song, **Duplicates** removes songs that appear twice (the same content on two CDs), **Clear** empties the list (nothing is deleted from disk).
Toolbar buttons	Top left	Add Images, Read CD, Reopen Recent.
Transport and display	Top centre	▶ / ❚❚ and ■ play what is selected. The green display, styled after the VS screen, shows the position (00h00m00s00), the song's BPM and time signature, and what is playing.
Export…	Top right	Opens the export window (see Exporting).
Inspector button	Top right corner	Shows or hides the right-hand panel (also ⌥⌘I).
Song header	Top of the middle area	Song name (pencil to rename), mode (MT1/MT2/MTP), sample rate, BPM and time signature, number of V-Tracks and an integrity badge: green "Backup intact" or orange "N warning(s)" — click it to see the Report.
Tabs	Top right of the middle area	**Tracks**, **Scenes** and **Report** (⌘1, ⌘2, ⌘3).
Inspector	Right column	Details of the selected song, group or V-Track, where you also type names.
Status bar	Bottom	What the app is doing, progress bars, **Cancel**, and buttons to show the result of the last export.

A note on VS terms: the VS-1680 has 16 tracks, and each track has 16 **V-Tracks** (virtual tracks, like alternate takes or extra parts). Only one V-Track per track could play at a time on the VS. This app shows every V-Track that has audio, so you can recover all of them —

including takes the VS was not playing.

5. The Tracks tab

The Tracks tab works like a small DAW arrangement: one row per V-Track, with its clips placed where they were on the VS and the waveform drawn inside, coloured by group.

Groups of simultaneous recordings

The app groups V-Tracks that were recorded together — for example 8 drum mics recorded in one pass end up in one group such as “Tracks 1–8 · V-Track 3”. A 🔗 link icon means the group contains passes recorded at the same time on several tracks; a 📄 copy icon marks tracks that use exactly the same audio as another (a VS Track Copy).

- Click the arrow on a group row to open or close it; the two buttons at the top open or close all groups.
- Click a row to select it and see its details in the inspector.
- Right-click a group to play it, rename it, **Merge with** another group or **Split all tracks**.
- Right-click a V-Track to play it, name it or **Move to** another group (or to a new group on its own).
- The arrow-circle button at the top redoes the automatic grouping and discards your group changes.

The first time you open a song, the waveforms are drawn in the background (a small progress bar at the bottom); after that they appear instantly.

Listening

- ▶ on a V-Track row plays that V-Track alone; ▶ on a group row plays the whole group mixed.
- The ▶ in the toolbar plays whatever is selected; with nothing selected it plays the song’s mix as it was saved.
- A red line follows playback. Click the time ruler to jump the playing preview to that point.
- Previews start at the first audio of what you play, so the counter shows the real position in the song.

Seeing more

- **Hide < 1 s**: hides V-Tracks with less than one second of audio (usually punch-in leftovers).

- **Zoom**: the slider at the top right; when zoomed in, a **Position** slider appears at the bottom to move along the song.
- **Highlight Scene**: pick a mixer scene to see which V-Tracks it used; the others are dimmed.
- **L / R** badges mark tracks that were stereo-linked on the VS (for example 15/16).
- Red marks on a waveform and a red ⚠ mean damaged parts of the CD (exported as silence).

Checking tracks for export

The checkbox on each row marks that V-Track for export; the box on a group row checks or unchecks the whole group. The two buttons at the top check all or uncheck all. You only need to check tracks if you want to export some of them — the export window can also export everything.

6. Naming songs, groups and V-Tracks

The VS often left songs called “InitSong 001” and never stored track names, so the app lets you name everything; the names go straight into your exported files and DAW tracks.

What	How to rename	Where the name appears
Song	Pencil next to the song title, right-click in the song list › Rename, or type in the inspector with nothing selected	Song list (the VS name stays visible as “VS: …”), export folder and session names
Group	Select the group row and type in the inspector, or right-click › Rename the group	Group row, the export folder for that group
V-Track	Select the V-Track row and type in the inspector (e.g. “Kick”, “Guide vocal”)	Track row, WAV file name, Ableton / DAWproject track name

Press Return (or click elsewhere) to save a name. **Restore original** brings back the VS name. Names are remembered by the app even after you quit, and they are tied to the content of the backup — so they come back when you open the same CD image again, wherever it is stored.

7. The Scenes and Report tabs

Scenes

On the VS, a scene stored which V-Track each of the 16 tracks was playing. The Scenes tab shows one card per scene, plus **Mix when saved** (how the mixer was when the song was last saved).

- Each card has 16 small boxes, one per VS track, coloured with the group of the V-Track that scene used; grey means the scene pointed to an empty V-Track.
- A ⭐ marks the last scene used on the VS. A faded card with ⚠ is almost empty — usually a scene inherited from another song.
- Click a card to see its V-Tracks, then: **Play Scene**, **Show in Tracks** (dims the tracks the scene did not use), **Check These Tracks** (marks them for export) or **Export This Scene** (WAVs of exactly that scene).
- The Export window can also export every scene at once, one folder per scene.

Report

Everything the app found about the backup, in one place:

- **Integrity**: whether the CD was read without errors. If not, it lists each damaged V-Track with the exact time ranges that will be silent, plus any missing or truncated takes.
- **Tempo**: BPM and time signature read from the VS, including tempo changes. Treat it as a good guide — it is read from the backup, not measured from the audio.
- **CD image**: the file(s) the song came from (several when a backup spans CDs), with **Show Image in Finder** and **Save Project Information…** (exports the raw metadata as JSON/CSV).
- **Log**: a record of everything the app did (images read, exports, errors). **Clear Log** empties it.

8. Exporting

Click **Export…** (top right, or ⌘E), pick a format, choose what to export and a folder, then click **Export**. Progress shows in the status bar, and when it finishes a button there opens the result.

The formats

Format	What you get	Use it for
WAVs	One WAV per V-Track, in one folder per group, named with your names. Each WAV carries its original position (BWF time stamp) and the song tempo (ACID chunk), which many DAWs read	Any DAW, archiving, sending to someone
Ableton Live	A ready Live Set: one track per V-Track, clips at their VS positions, group colours, the song's BPM and time signature; the WAVs are inside the project folder	Opening the song straight in Ableton Live
DAWproject	A .dawproject file with the same tracks, positions, colours and tempo	Cubase Pro/Artist 14.0.20+ or any Cubase 15 (File › Import › DAWproject), Studio One, Bitwig
AAF (Logic / Pro Tools)	An .aaf session: one track per V-Track at its VS position, named with your names. Stereo pairs arrive as two mono tracks (L/R), which Pro Tools requires. With "Put the audio inside the AAF" (on by default) it is a single self-contained file; turn it off to keep the WAVs in an "Audio Files" folder next to it (smaller file)	Pro Tools (File › Open Session, choose the .aaf) and Logic Pro (File › Import › AAF). Recommended for both
Logic Pro (XML)	A Final Cut Pro XML file plus an "Audio Files" folder, one track per V-Track	Logic Pro (File › Import › Final Cut Pro XML) — an alternative to AAF

In the Ableton and DAWproject sessions, V-Tracks that were not playing in the song's saved mix come in muted, so the session starts sounding like the VS did.

AAF and XML do not carry the tempo, and they do not carry track colours either: Logic and Pro Tools start at 120 BPM. Turn on **Include tempo map MIDI** (see Options) and drag the .mid file into your session, or type the BPM shown in the app.

What to export

- **All V-Tracks** — everything with audio.
- **Only the checked ones** — the V-Tracks you checked in the Tracks tab.
- **Scenes** (WAVs only) — one folder per mixer scene, with the V-Track each track used in that scene.

Options

- **Linked pairs as stereo**: tracks that were stereo-linked on the VS (e.g. 15/16) and use the same V-Track become one stereo WAV (odd track = left, even = right). Turn it off to get two mono files.
- **Align from the start of the project** (WAVs): every WAV starts at the beginning of the song, with silence before the first note, so all files line up when you drop them into a DAW at bar 1. Turn it off to get WAVs that start at the first sound.
- **Include tempo map MIDI** (sessions): adds a small “Tempo - Song (BPM).mid” file with the song’s BPM, time signature and tempo changes. Import it into any DAW to set the tempo.
- **Put the audio inside the AAF** (AAF only, on by default): one file that opens directly. Off = the AAF links to WAVs in “Audio Files”; Pro Tools then shows an import window — the default choices work.

Folders

WAVs go to the **WAV folder**; Ableton, DAWproject, AAF and Logic sessions go to the **Projects folder** (each export makes its own sub-folder such as “InitSong 005 - 75 BPM (AAF)”, so nothing is overwritten). Inside it, a “VS-1680 Info” folder holds a report (Relatorio.txt) and info.json with the technical details. The app warns you when a folder is on the system disk — prefer an external drive for big projects. Both folders are remembered.

Combining several songs into one session

Sometimes one piece of music was recorded as several VS songs (for example a song continued in “InitSong 005” and “InitSong 006”). In the export window choose Ableton or DAWproject and turn on **Combine with other songs in this list**:

1. Check the VS songs that belong together and type a name for the session.
2. They are placed from the start; use **offset** (seconds) if one should begin later.
3. Tracks with identical audio (such as the same guide copied into each song) are included only once.
4. The tempo comes from the first checked song.

9. Saving your work (sessions)

A session file (.vssession) saves your whole workspace so you can pick it up later or on another day: which disc images are open, your groups, all the names you typed, and the WAV and project folders.

- **File › Save Session** (⌘S) — the first time it asks where to save; the window title then shows the session name ("— edited" when there are unsaved changes).
- **File › Save Session As…** (⇧⌘S) — save a copy under a new name.
- **File › Open Session…** (⇧⌘O) — reopens everything. The disc images must still be where they were; if a drive is disconnected, the Log says which images were not found.

The session only points to the images — it does not contain the audio. If you move the image folders, add the images again from their new place (names and groups come back automatically) and save the session again.

10. Damaged discs, troubleshooting and shortcuts

Damaged or old CDs

Old CD-Rs can have spots that no drive can read. The app never stops because of them: the unreadable parts become silence in the exported files, and the Report tells you exactly which V-Track and which seconds were affected, so you know what to check. To recover more:

1. Clean the CD with a soft cloth, wiping from the centre outwards.
2. Read it again with **Read CD**, with more **attempts** per difficult sector.
3. If possible, try another CD drive — different drives often read different spots.

Some VS units also wrote faulty backups. If the Report mentions samples out of range during decoding, the backup itself may be corrupted at that point.

Troubleshooting

Problem	What to do
macOS won't open the app	System Settings › Privacy & Security › **Open Anyway** (section 2).
The CD does not appear in Read CD	Wait a few seconds after inserting, click **Search Again**. Make sure you clicked **Ignore**, not Eject, on macOS's message.

Problem	What to do
Read CD says “Operation not permitted”	Give the app Full Disk Access (section 2, step 4), then quit with ⌘Q and reopen it — the permission only works after a restart of the app. After an app update, remove it from the Full Disk Access list and add it again.
“The disc uses sectors of N bytes”	It is probably an audio CD or not a VS backup; the app only reads VS-1680 data backups.
“Roland VS-1680 signature missing”	The image is not a VS-1680 backup (for example a sampler or computer CD).
“Backup on N CDs incomplete”	Add the images of the other discs of that backup.
A song appears twice / “repeated song ignored”	The same backup is on two CDs; the app keeps one. **Duplicates** cleans the list.
Cubase does not offer DAWproject import	You need Cubase Pro or Artist 14.0.20 or newer, or Cubase 15; Elements cannot import it. Export WAVs instead.
Pro Tools seems not to open the AAF	It may have opened the Edit and Mix windows on another Desktop: use Mission Control (⌃↑) or ⌃← / ⌃→. Large AAFs with the audio inside also take a while to load.
Pro Tools says files are missing (linked AAF)	Keep the “Audio Files” folder next to the .aaf and don’t rename it, or export with the audio inside the AAF.
Export is slow	Exporting from and to slow external drives takes time; large songs can be several GB.

Keyboard shortcuts

Shortcut	Action
⌘O	Add images
⌘R	Read CD from drive
⌘S / ⇧⌘S	Save session / Save session as
⇧⌘O	Open session

Shortcut	Action
⌘E	Export
⇧⌘M	Export to Ableton
⇧⌘D	Export to DAWproject
⇧⌘A	Export to AAF (Logic / Pro Tools)
⇧⌘L	Export to Logic Pro (XML)
⌘1 / ⌘2 / ⌘3	Tracks / Scenes / Report tab
⌥⌘I	Show or hide the inspector

Credits

VS Archive Converter uses the RDAC decoder by Randy Gordon (LGPL-3.0-or-later). Its source code and licence are included inside the app.