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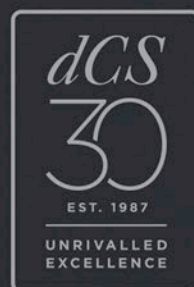


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no.90

upscale analog

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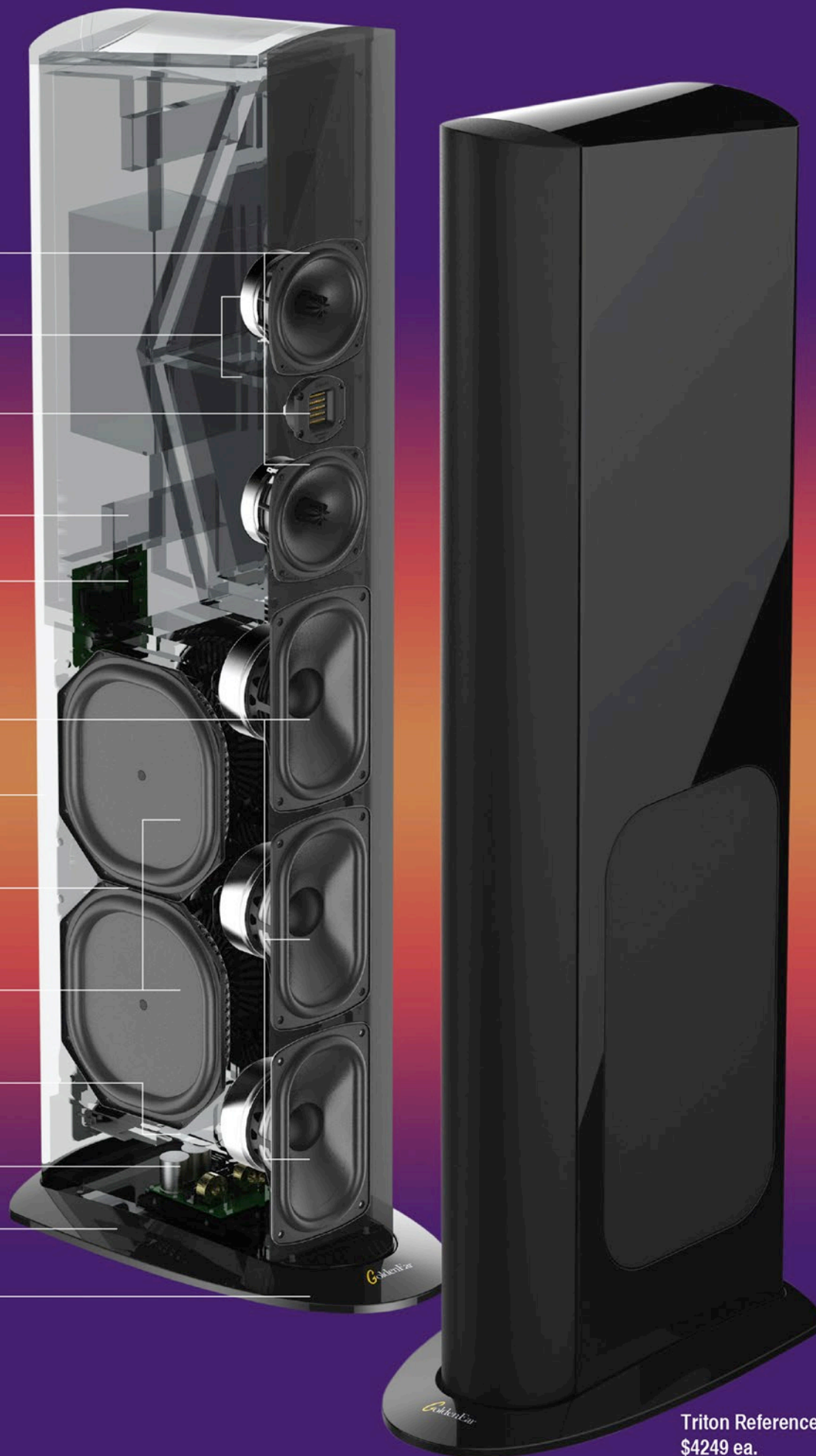
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– Jeff Dorgay, *Tone Audio*

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GoldenEar’s Triton One is one of the best selling high-end loudspeakers ever, consistently thrilling listeners and reviewers alike and winning an enviable and unmatched collection of the industry’s most prestigious awards, including “Loudspeaker-of-the-Year” and “Product-of-the-Year” from key publications all around the world.

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*“Undeniably stellar ... Yes, it does deliver the sort of performance previously delivered only by cost-no-object speakers.”* – Dennis Burger, *Home Theater Review*

The Triton Reference is an evolution of everything that we have achieved with the Triton One, but taken to a stunning new level of sonic performance and sophisticated visual design. All the components in the T Ref: including larger, more powerful, active sub-bass drivers with huge “Focused Field” magnet structures, upper-bass/midrange drivers with “Focused Field” magnet structures, and High-Velocity Folded Ribbon tweeter with 50% more rare earth neodymium magnet material, are brand new, and have been specifically developed for use in the Reference. The powerful 1800 watt subwoofer amplifier, with level control to fine tune the bass to your room, and 56-bit DSP control unit are a significant evolution of those in the Triton One and our SuperSubs.

There are a myriad of other significant upgrades and refinements, including: new internal wiring with a specially developed twist, further development of our signature balanced crossover including

film capacitors bridged across the high-pass section on the upper-bass/midrange drivers, a unique proprietary mix of long-fiber lamb’s wool and Dacron for more effective internal damping, intensive work with a high-resolution accelerometer to determine the most effective implementation of complex internal bracing, a 3/32”-thick steel plate built into the mediate base to further stiffen it for increased stability, new stainless steel floor spikes and cups, all of which results in higher resolution of subtle details ... and the list goes on and on.

*“The Triton Reference presents a serious challenge to speakers in the multi \$10K range”*

– Robert Deutsch, *Stereophile*

Visually, the Reference offers a strikingly beautiful upgrade to the classic Triton styling, with a gorgeous hand-rubbed piano gloss-black lacquer finished one-piece monocoque cabinet. Sleek, statuesque and refined, the Reference is simply an elegantly gorgeous statement piece that will excite listeners with its dynamic visual presence, as well as its extraordinary sonic performance.

Sonically, the Reference has been engineered to perform with a dramatic and authoritative voice, comparable to speakers that sell for ten and more times its surprisingly affordable price. T Refs completely disappear, with superb three-dimensional imaging that will open up your room, stretching from wall to wall and beyond, and depth that makes the wall behind them seem to vanish. The astonishing bass is rock-solid, with low-frequency performance that is tight, quick, highly impactful and musical with extension flat to 20Hz and below. Another GoldenEar signature is a silky smooth high end that extends to 35 kHz with a lifelike sheen but no trace of fatiguing hardness, sibilance or stridency so common with lesser tweeters. Tremendous time and energy has been put into the voicing of the speaker and the seamless blending of the drivers, for unmatched musicality with all types of music, and home theater perfection. Rarely do speakers excel at both, but with their world-class neutrality, the Reference absolutely does. A special bonus is the Reference’s extremely high 93.25 dB sensitivity, which gives them tremendous dynamic range and allows use with almost any high-quality amplifier. You must experience T Ref for yourself!

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# TONE2.0

Audio

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# In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

## Weather Report

Somehow, each issue seems to start, perusing a major box set. That always sets the groove for the issue. Scoring a Japanese box of the full Weather Report catalog is as good a place as any to begin.



## STORIED SOUND FOR EVERY MOMENT.

THE NEW 600 SERIES

Bowers & Wilkins

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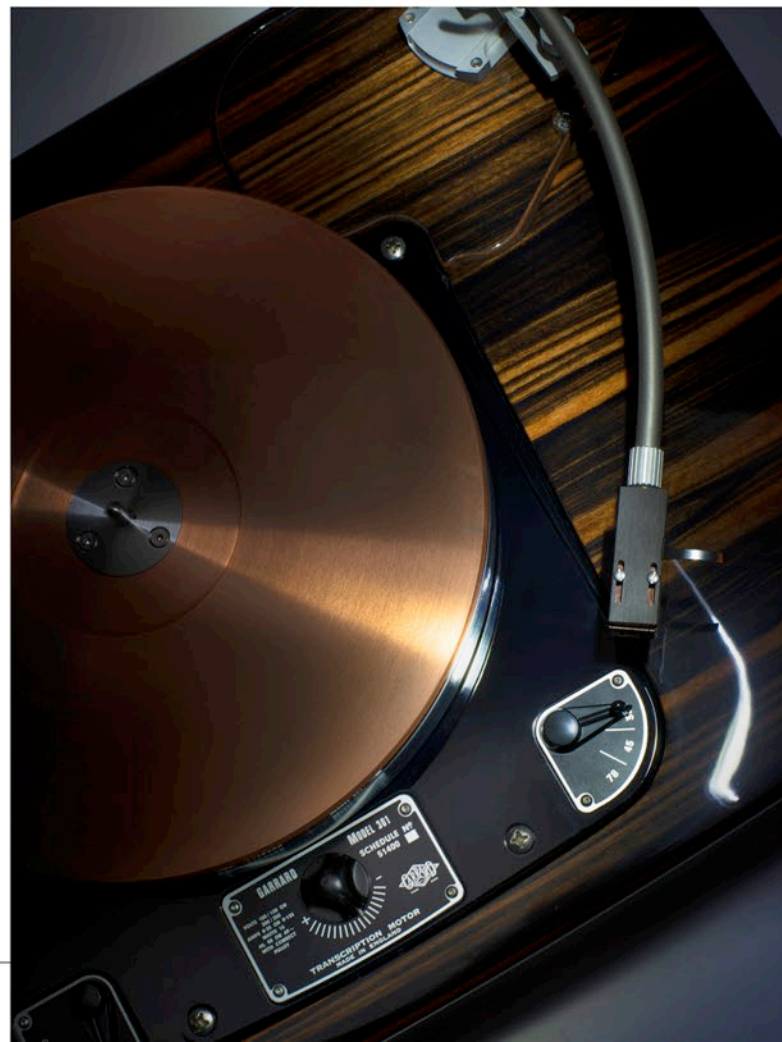
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### Cover:

This issue we are still on the analog trip, however this time, it's a little bit more upmarket. But don't forget, if it spins records, we love it!

The Artisan Fidelity Garrard 301 graces issue 90s cover, and try as we might, the pictures don't even come close! - P100



# AudioTONE2.0



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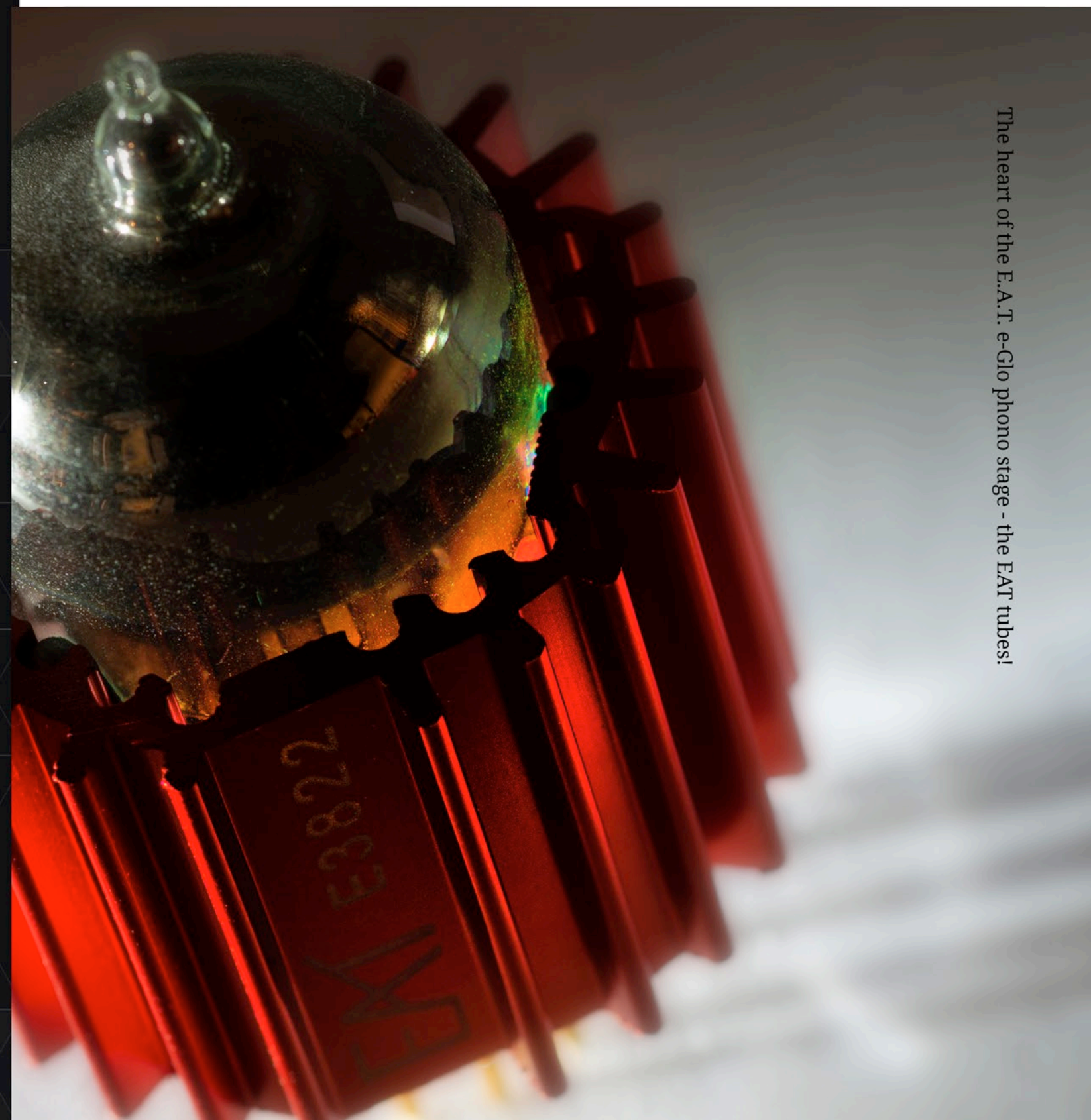
### CNET

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Darryl Wilkinson, *Sound & Vision*



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Persona 9H



## no.90

## P u b l i s h e r s   L e t t e r

We had rounded up so much gear for our last analog issue, that we decided to make number 89 our "approachable" analog issue, and segregate the items in issue 90 to be a bit more upmarket. So this issue is primarily bigger ticket items.

First, I have to take a minute to pay tribute to yet another fallen colleague. Cai Brockmann (pictured above) from Germany's *Fidelity* magazine passed away last month on the 27th. He was only 53 years old. Any of you that had the pleasure of meeting him at a hifi show or event, knew what a great guy he was. Always full of personality, and love for everything, not just hifi. We've always had great chats about music, cars, life, you name it, Cai had an interesting perspective.

He and I sat next to each other at this year's Munich hifi show, at the latest Dynaudio introduction and had a great time catching up. As usual at Munich, our paths crossed more than once during the event, and he was his jovial self. I was shocked to hear the news on the 29th, when his partner at Fidelity, Ingo Schultz announced the news. I mirror his sentiment, "we are all in shock." Merely saying how much he will be missed by everyone is such an understatement.

Which leads me to ponder the tremendous amount of bickering I've been seeing on the web and on social media channels. The level of snarkiness is alarming, because it's just hifi. If you don't like MQA, don't buy it. If you think cables are bullshit, don't write a check. If you think all amplifiers sound the same, great – buy the cheapest thing you can find and forget about it.

Seriously, I love this stuff, and to a certain extent, I think it all matters. I'm not as OCD about hifi as some of my friends, or some of you, but I get it. And it's all in the name of fun for me. My hifi system helps me to do my job, but when the reviewer thinking cap comes off, I'm still engaged in the sound. Music is truly a relaxing thing for me, and I'm tired of arguing about it.

So I encourage you all, before you push the return key on that snarky message you are about to send to someone on the internet, I ask you: would you talk to this person the same way if you were standing in the same room? If not, maybe it's time to chill it all back a little bit. I think a little understanding would go a long way right now. Treasure the moments you all have, instead of being so cranky. Not just the hifi world will benefit, the entire world will.

Peace,

# Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Budd/Eno -  
Plateaux of Mirror

Eno - Thursday Afternoon

Sentimental Walk -  
From the "Diva" Soundtrack

Art of Noise -  
Camilla, the old, old Story

Jean-Michel Jarre  
Technicolor

Tangerine Dream -  
Stratosfear

Synergy -  
Phobos and Deimos Go to Mars

Gas -  
Konigsforst 1

Neu! -  
Hallogallo

Van Halen -  
316

There's just something really  
relaxing about ambient music.

Whether editing copy, or just  
sitting back and contemplating  
the universe, a handful of sparse  
tracks do wonders for your spirit.

Here's a few I enjoy...

no. 1 Washington

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# 995

Great sound for less than a G!

## Rega's FONO MC

By Jerold O'Brien

Stepping up to the (more often than not) delicacy of a moving coil cartridge, not only requires a new cartridge, but a phono stage capable of amplifying the more faint signal of an MC. Typical moving magnet cartridges have an output of 4-7mv, and nearly every integrated or receiver featuring a phono input, usually only have a MM input. MC cartridges usually have about one-tenth of that output, so they require a more complex phono stage with more gain. As you might have guessed, this usually requires a larger cash outlay to get the job done.

Much like Boulder has done with their 508, which graces the next few pages, Rega has taken their usual less is more approach and solved this problem quite handily. Rather than combine two mediocre phono inputs, they offer their aptly named FONO phono stage in two flavors; one optimized for MM cartridges and one for MC. The MM has an MSRP of \$395 and the MC, \$495.

This issue, we are concentrating on the FONO MC, because there are a number of great MC cartridges in the \$400 - \$1,000 range, including Rega's own Ania, which we just reviewed along with the recent P6 to excellent result. The small enclosure uses a 24VAC wall wart, so don't lose it. You can't just go to your favorite big box retailer and get a generic one if you do.

As with all Rega electronics, single ended RCA inputs and outputs are the rule. Rega has stripped this down to the absolute minimum, with nothing more than a power switch on the front panel, a pair of DIP switches on the back to set gain and loading. The low output setting offers up 63.5db of gain, which will work well with MC carts in the .4mv - .6mv range, and the high gain setting, with 69.5 db, is perfect for carts like the Denon 103, with it's .25mv output, or the Dynavector 17D series at .3mv.



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We had fantastic luck with both of these cartridges, and the Denon 103dl is a perennial favorite at \$379. Mated to FONO, this has to be the all time best buy in analog. If you want maximum sound on a minimum budget and the 103 is compatible with your tonearm, you can't go wrong.

The FONO is incredibly quiet, and it stabilizes slightly after 24 hours of being continuously powered, so if you're comfortable with the pittance of AC power it draws affecting your carbon footprint, (about as much as two LED lightbulbs) just leave it on.

Without fanfare, the FONO does its job tremendously well. Tonal balance is very natural and it is incredibly engaging, offering a decent three dimensional musical experience and excellent dynamics. In the scheme of cost no object phonostages, you can quickly hear where its shortcomings are, but that's an unfair comparison. Used with a handful of \$1,000 - \$3,000 turntable/cartridge setups, it is fantastic, and for many, may be all you ever need. Every REGA component we've ever used has always delivered performance well beyond the asking price and the FONO continues that tradition. REGAs engineers put nearly every penny into the circuit.

If you are stepping up to an MC for the first time, this is an excellent place to begin.

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# The Journeyman Audiophile

Sound for a bit more than a G...

**Boulder**  
508 PHONO PREAMPLIFIER

**Don't Let The Small Size Fool You...**

**Boulder 508**

By Jeff Dorgay

I know it's cheesy to fall back on classic rock warhorses. But when the Boulder 508 and a 45rpm copy of Dire Straits *Brothers in Arms* both arrived on the same day, I took it as a sign from the audio gods to go for it. Much as the tune "Money for Nothing" has worn itself out, I remembered the advice of Lew Johnson (from conrad-johnson) who once told me, "use music you hate to demo components because you'll hate it by the time you're through." Yet I was totally digging this track that I've heard a million times before. When a tune that you don't even like anymore grabs you like this, you know something amazing is in store.

## Brinkmann Audio Nyquist Mk II

*One Step Closer*



Photo © MichaelRasche.com 2018

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- Jeff Dorgay, Tone Publications  
Review of the original Nyquist

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- Robert Harley, The Absolute Sound, December 2017  
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# The Journeyman Audiophile

Sound for a bit more than a G...

Gently lowering the stylus from the Kiseki Purple heart/Luxman PD-171 combination (also featured in this issue), I was immediately thrown back in the listening seat Maxell man style. This moderately sized phono stage delivers world-class performance. For only \$5,000. No really, this one hangs with the \$10k - \$20k boxes. It's that good.

As you get more involved in your analog journey, the upgrade bug is going to hit you. Sooner or later, analog enthusiasts start talking about some of the world's finest phono stages, and in the middle of that discussion, the word Boulder always comes up. Their legendary 2008 phono stage is well known for its wide dynamic swings and incredible tonal accuracy. That pretty much sums up everything Boulder makes, but as you go up the line, the sound gets bigger, broader, and more involving.

About eight years ago, Boulder introduced their 1008, offering quite a bit of the sheer sound quality of the \$34,000 2008 for a mere \$12,000. That might seem like first world issues to some of you, but if you are a hardcore analog enthusiast, you may be able to stretch to \$12k for a phono stage, but \$34k remains out of reach - no shame in that. But you still want that level of performance. Don't we all? The 1008 was an incredible success on so many levels, yet that's still a high price tag for some.

Roaming the halls of the Munich HiFi show, I bumped into Rich Maez, head of sales for Boulder and old pal Steve Huntley, who now also works for Boulder, and they both had big smiles on their faces.

At first glance, I thought the 508 was a power supply for some new Boulder creation. For those of you not familiar, most of the stuff these guys make weighs a hundred pounds or more. They build the 3000 series power amplifiers on V8 engine stands.

Then Maez hands me the 508. Wow, a Boulder product you can hold in your hand! Crazy! But it's density still fools you. It looks like it weighs about 2 pounds, but it weighs 11.5 pounds.

## Incredible

That's really the only word that fits the 508. Ok, there are other words. I'll do my best. However, Boulder sums it up on their website, saying, "Where the 2008 was pure excess, the 508 is pure efficiency." If you could go to the Porsche dealer and just buy a 911 with the engine, the body, suspension and one seat, that's what you're looking at here. Nothing to take away from the analog experience. Just high performance.

Where other Boulder phono preamplifiers are one or two large chassis components, with multiple inputs (and the switching circuitry that goes along with) the 508 features one single, mega quality input with minimal loading and gain options. But it's damn good. Finally, it's machined out of the same high-grade aluminum, bead blasted and anodized with the same tools and process as every other Boulder component. No corners have been cut in execution.



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# The Journeyman Audiophile

Sound for a bit more than a G...

Looking inside the 508 reveals a complete lack of wiring, anywhere. Again, taking advantage of the surface mount technology used in all other Boulder components, no wiring is left to chance, and the PC board drops right in the billet aluminum case snugly. Not a millimeter of space is squandered, cutting down on the labor required to build the 508 tremendously.

The key to success with the 508 is knowing your system and your needs. If you want a massive remote control, multiple inputs and outputs, yada, yada, this will not be for you. But if what you want is sheer, no-frills performance, you've come to the right place.

Five figure phono stages appropriately executed offer a level of resolution and paint a massive three-dimensional picture in a way that you can't achieve with lesser models. Attention to circuit design, power supply technology and vibration limiting casework all cost money. Keeping the options list short and the case compact, Boulder has worked a small miracle here.

The 508 allows MM and MC loading options, with the MC input fixed at 100 ohms. It can be adjusted up to 1000 ohms, but because of the densely packed casework, Boulder suggests bringing it back to your authorized dealer for an adjustment. It is worth noting, a number of cartridges that we've used in the past, requiring loading at 500 or even 1000 ohms work just fine with the factory setting.

Tracking through album after album, the 508s strengths continue to assert themselves. Having spent a considerable amount of time with the top players from ARC, Pass, C-J, BAT, and even Boulder, the 508 has the heart and soul of a much, much more expensive phonostage. Keep in mind you are sacrificing a fair amount of functionality with the 508, and there is only one input. If you can live within those parameters, this is the way to cheat your way to a world-class analog front end without breaking the bank, and without buying a no-name product. This is a Boulder, and their stuff is built to last.

Listening to more reference material, tracks used for decades cements my impression of the 508. There's so much low-level detail present, and the soundscapes rendered, so large, I can't help but think I am listening to a much more expensive component during the audition of the 508. And the rock-solid pace that this preamp delivers, keeping everything in the mix sorted with its unique space is breathtaking. Run of the mill LPs sound like limited edition pressings, and the delicious records are beyond.

## Minimal adjustment

Moving magnet mode offers standard 47k loading with 44db of gain, and moving coil mode is preset at 100 ohms with 70db of gain on tap. The 508 is so quiet that even in our system with highly sensitive



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**Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio**

"Well, I have just stumbled upon a speaker cable that I'm very tempted to put in a class of its own"

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"Tellurium Q have surpassed themselves here. It is often said that all cables colour the sound of a system to some extent, but the Silver Diamonds do it to a lesser extent than any other product I've heard so far."

**John Myles, HiFi World**

The effect of phase distortion can be likened to smearing a beautiful picture or looking at it through frosted glass. All signal cables do this to some degree and the better you tackle the engineering challenges to combat phase distortion the more natural the sound you get.



== TQ ==

# The Journeyman Audiophile

Sound for a bit more than a G...

horn speakers there isn't a hint of noise coming through the tweeters, assuring that even cartridges with the lowest of output will perform at their maximum.

Inputs and outputs are fully balanced, assuring the most bandwidth and the least noise, as with all Boulder components. They suggest a balanced tonearm cable, if you don't already have one, and also supply a pair of their own high quality balanced input adaptors if you feel the need to stay RCA on the turntable. Thanks to a pair of Cardas Clear tonearm cables, one balanced and one not, there is still a benefit to be had by going balanced in, but if you do have to stick with the factory supplied adaptors, the 508 still gives up little quarter when playing back even the quietest LPs. The balanced output offers another benefit; it will drive a very long run of cable, so if you'd like to place your 508 and turntable in a more convenient and picturesque spot, it's easy to do so. We did just this, putting it way across the main listening room, through a 35-foot pair of Cardas Clear interconnects - the 508 had no problem driving our reference system whatsoever.

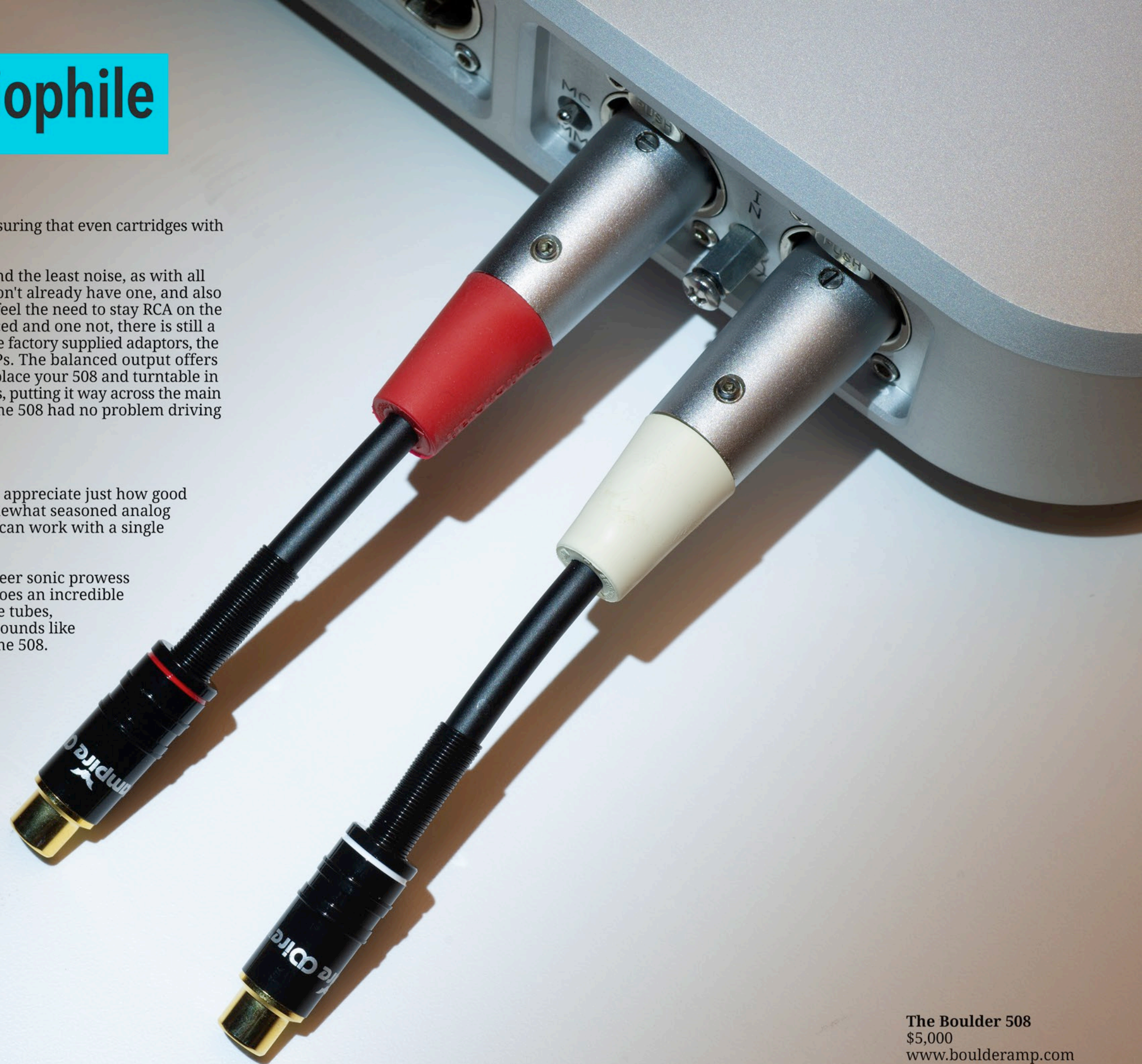
## This might be your last

If the Boulder 508 phono stage is your first phono stage, you might not appreciate just how good it indeed is, and what an incredible value it represents. If you're a somewhat seasoned analog enthusiast, who thought this level of sound was out of your reach and can work with a single input and limited adjustability, raise your fist in the air.

Nothing else we've ever reviewed comes close to the Boulder 508 in sheer sonic prowess for \$5,000. Like every other Boulder product I've ever heard, the 508 does an incredible job of achieving what I consider perfect neutrality. It doesn't sound like tubes, transistors, JFETs, anything. It just lets the music pass through. If this sounds like your little slice of heaven, get down to a Boulder dealer and audition the 508. I suspect you will be as smitten as I am.

Though the bulk of the review listening was done in system two (listed below) putting the 508 in my main reference system proves equally enthralling. Stepping up from the Luxman/Kiseki combination to the Brinkmann Bardo/RoNT/Koetsu Jade Platinum and the Grand Prix Audio Parabolica/TriPlanar/Atlas tables still has the 508 delivering class-leading performance.

In addition to giving the Boulder 508 one of our Exceptional Value Awards for 2018, and thinking it's quite possibly the best value in money no object phono stages ever, I have purchased the review sample and plan on living with this for years to come, maybe decades. Only a company like Boulder that handles every aspect of production from start to finish in-house (and they are one of a very short list of companies in the world that do) could make something this incredible for this price. Highly recommended.



**The Boulder 508**  
\$5,000  
[www.boulderamp.com](http://www.boulderamp.com)

aqua  
acoustic quality

## Formula xHD

The Optologic DAC

Our pure FPGA-based R2R Ladder fully-floating (isolated) D/A converter system



— The Art of the digital domain —

aqua acoustic quality • Milano • Italy

[www.aquahifi.com](http://www.aquahifi.com)

## Old School

Respecting HiFi's Past...

by Jerold O'Brien

### Shure thing

Wow, have you looked at the prices for old, and I mean old moving magnet cartridges? Crazy. Carts that you could pick up on the cheap a few years ago are now fetching big dough on eBay, Audiogon and other online sources.

Curiosity got the best of me when a recent vintage SME 3000 tonearm arrived via Ebay. The arm was very well wrapped in multiple layers of bubbles, and when fully unpacked, revealed a Shure V15III, with the stylus guard down for protection.

Though the tonearm wires crumbled to black dust, I had to see how the cartridge sounded, with so much attention being paid to these cartridges, especially with aftermarket styli, like the Jico affixed. Today, you can even find the Jico styli at Amazon for about 120 bucks, taking the guesswork and sleuth work out of the equation. If you're lucky enough to find an original or

NOS Vn35he Genuine Shure stylus for this cartridge under \$100, snap it up. Knockoffs abound for \$35 to \$50, but they suck, and you'll regret it. I highly suggest going Jico or original if you can find one.

The Jico has a better stylus profile, and for all the Shure verbiage about "trackability," the aftermarket stylus assembly does out track the original, even when using one of my rare Shure test records.

Whether you are sporting a new or vintage table, these cartridges are an alternative to spending major cash on a new cartridge, but don't wait long.

A cursory Ebay search reveals that these are now rapidly approaching the \$400 mark with stylus, body only versions still command close to \$200.



# Old School

Respecting Audio's Past!

So, how does this relic sound? Way better than I expected. Good enough that I brought it over to our publishers audio den, to mount it up on the new Artisan Fidelity Garrard that he's incredibly excited about. Somehow, it just seems right to put a vintage SME arm and Shure cartridge on a Garrard 301 and take it all for a spin. Though calling the Artisan Fidelity table a Garrard would be like calling a \$100,000 rotisserie restoration of a 73 2002Tii a "car." Yeah.

Reingorcing our thoughts that the arm and table make the cartridge, much more so than the other way around, the Shure performs respectably in the context of the Garrard. Bass is big and beefy, with exciting transients and a super solid bottom end.

Of course, as you may have guessed, resolution leaves a bit to be desired, especially in terms of the Grado moving iron cartridge (Statement 2 - \$3,500) that was just unscrewed from the 12" Groovemaster II tonearm. Yet the combo delivers a lot of dynamic range, the kind the old Shure's are famous for, with great tracking skills.



Much like classic cars and vintage vinyl, these older moving magnet cartridges are starting to get quite a following and are starting to reach cult-like status. Don't even think about touching the final Shure V15vmxR for less than a thousand bucks now. Similar vintage Audio-Technica and Ortofon MM carts are equally spendy, so if you find one you really like, grab a second one while you still can, and a spare stylus too.

Whether you have a new or current turntable, vintage moving magnet cartridges are somewhat like tube rolling, they not only offer a different sound, but a further look into audio's past. Who would have ever guessed back in the early 70s that a phono cartridge would cost \$15,000? Holy inflation Batman, that's what a house cost back then.

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PRODUCT OF THE YEAR 2017

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Jeff Dorgay, TONEAudio



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# Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Day Tripper

Strawberry Fields  
Forever

Savoy Truffle

You Never Give  
Me Your Money

Fool on The Hill

Love me Do

Ticket to Ride

Hard Day's Night

Taxman

And Your Bird Can Sing

Get Back

Long time TONE contributor  
Jerold O'Brien for better or  
worse, still loves The Beatles.

What could be more controversial  
than picking out eleven favorite  
Beatles tracks?

THE  
BEATLES  
IN MONO

no. 2 Oregon

TONE Playlists are sponsored by:

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## THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: THIN FILM ACCURACY, DEEP BASS THRILLS.

Cone speakers can't reproduce mid-range and high frequency audio with the lifelike detail and three dimensional effect of an electrostatic loudspeaker. Nothing delivers bass like woofers in a box.

MartinLogan combines these elements in the most advanced electrostatic hybrid loudspeaker ever, **Renaissance ESL 15A**, flagship of the Masterpiece collection.

With a unique suite of innovative tech and proprietary design elements, these loudspeakers deliver detailed imaging and dynamic soundstage, even in the most challenging listening spaces.

No other loudspeaker features the controlled dispersion radiation pattern of a curvilinear electrostatic transducer combined with our reflection-defeating PoweredForce Forward woofer alignment. The result is breathtakingly accurate and seamlessly integrated full-range performance. On-board Anthem Room Correction (ARC®) technology instantly optimizes response for the best sound in any room.

Renaissance ESL 15A is a revolutionary melding of form and function. This is exactly what we mean by *Truth in Sound*.

The reviews are in. This is our Masterpiece

[martinlogan.com/truth](http://martinlogan.com/truth)

*"Yes, I've drunk the Kool-Aid for years. But even though I'm pre-primed to like electrostatic-panel speakers, I'd never found a one-stop solution I could live with. Now that a MartinLogan active subwoofer endowed with ARC-2 has been successfully mated to an XStat panel, anyone serious about big, full, accurate sound reproduction can start here. Unconditionally recommended."*

*Renaissance ESL 15A*  
Jon Iverson, Stereophile

*"...the best bass response I've ever heard in my room in the areas of overall smoothness of response and of clarity, definition, and pitch differentiation."*

*Impression ESL 11A*  
Paul Seydor, The Absolute Sound

*"It's a powerful, dynamic, musical fun maker with the usual MartinLogan characteristics of good imagery and great detail... and terrific integration between cones and panel. Factor in the benefit of subtle DSP room compensation and this electrostatic hybrid design comes extremely highly recommended!"*

*Impression ESL 11A*  
Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi+

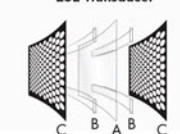
*"MartinLogan has hit a home run... This speaker improves upon the traditional MartinLogan strong points of transparency and detail and adds a much improved bass section to create a well-rounded, great-sounding speaker."*

*Expression ESL 13A*  
Brian Kahn, HomeTheaterReview.com

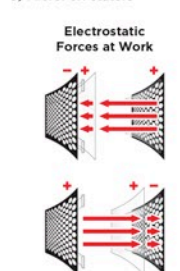
*"...a world-class speaker. It is revealing, accurate and has the huge soundstage one expects of a dipole radiator."*

*Impression ESL 11A*  
Glenn Young, Secrets of Home Theater & High Fidelity

Parts of a MartinLogan  
ESL Transducer



Electrostatic  
Forces at Work



Opposite charges attract.  
Like charges repel.  
The diaphragm holds a  
constant positive charge.



Renaissance  
ESL 15A  
by MARTINLOGAN

35  
YEARS

1983 - 2018



**EAT  
E Glo Phono**

\$6,995

[www.vanaltd.com](http://www.vanaltd.com)



If you've always wanted a cost no object, two-input, tube phonostage, but don't really want the five-figure price tag, consider the new E-Glo from EAT.

This work of sonic and visual fine art features an outboard power supply with substantial power reserve, giving the E-Glo incredible dynamic range and a low noise floor.

There is one MM input and a second for MC, with a wide range of gain and loading options, all accessible from the front panel, along with separate mute and subsonic filter functions. We found the subsonic filter incredibly handy on more warped records, and having no sonic degradation.

Sonically, the E-Glo is big and bold, yet not having an overly tube-like sound, if you equate that with being warm, and slow. This is a contemporary tube component, with lightening fast transient response, spot-on tonality, and that extra bit of soundstage depth it seems that only vacuum tubes and ridiculously expensive solid-state gear can offer.

Living with the E-Glo couldn't be easier. If you might be a little gun shy at the thought of tubes, put your worries to rest, this phono stage comes right from EAT with premium tubes installed.

Considering their reputation for long tube life, weekend listeners, or those only listening a few hours a day may never have to replace the tubes in their lifetime.

EAT chose to forgo the remote and features that you really don't need, putting the bulk of the investment in the sound, and we feel that this was indeed wise.

For a full review, please click here to visit the TONEAudio website.

The EAT Glo-S  
\$6,995  
[www.vanaltd.com](http://www.vanaltd.com)

# T H E F I N E A R T S

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IS OUR** *Forte*

**Klipsch**  
**HERITAGE**  
*Classic*

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# EAT E-Glo Phono

## *The Good:*

Space age looks  
Premium Vacuum Tubes  
Two inputs  
Wide range of adjustability  
Sounds like it cost twice as much

## *Not so much:*

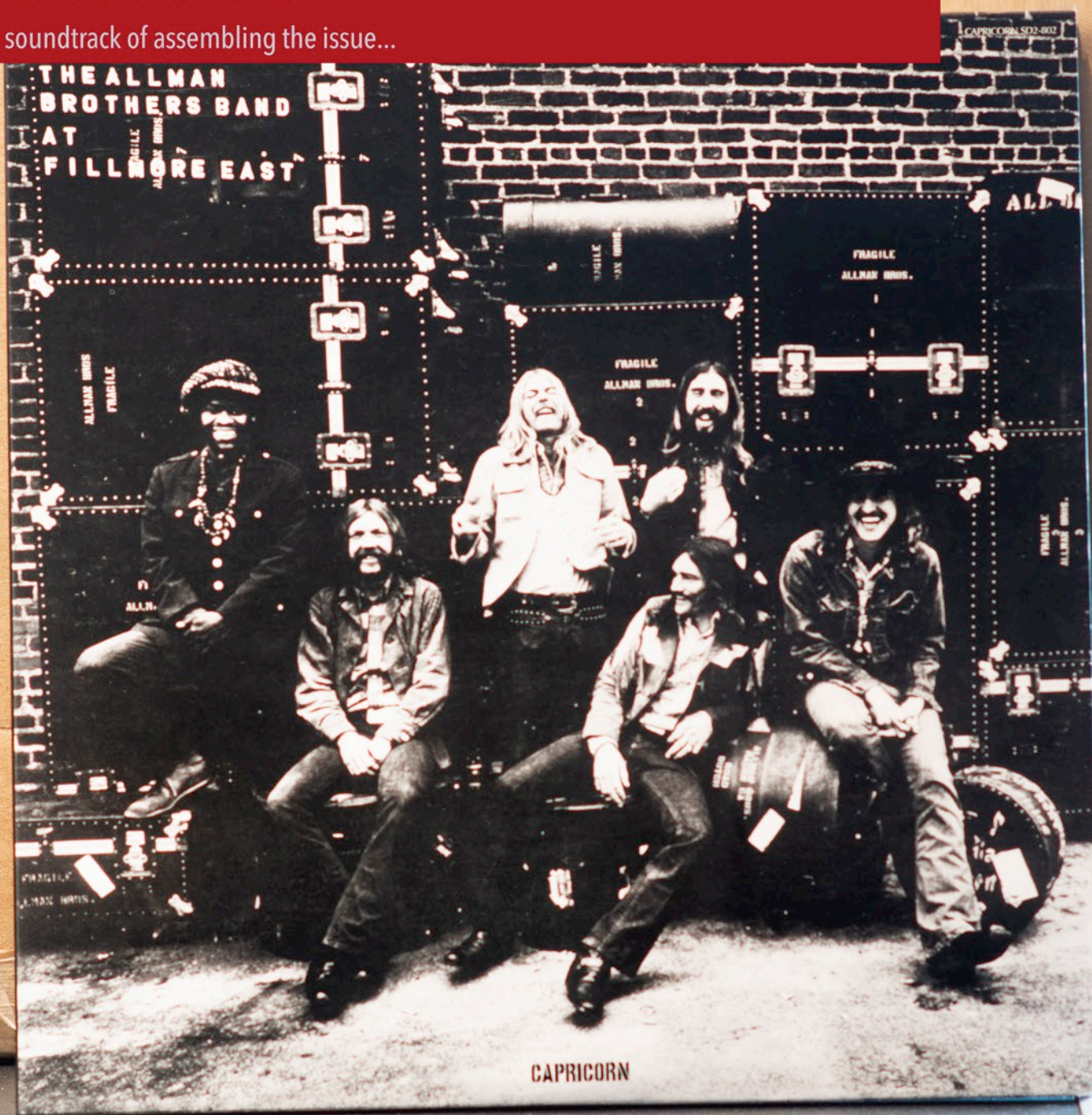
Two box design will require more  
rack space.

## *The Verdict:*

A class leader. We bought one!

# In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...



## *The Allman Brothers Band At Fillmore East*

A great memory from start to finish. In honor of departed friend, Jim Marshall.

# EAT European Audio Team's C-Major

Exceptionally engaging, endearing sound.\*

"It looks stunning...  
Best of all it sounds fantastic."

Highly recommended.

Exceptional Value Award Winner

Jeff Dorgay  
Tone Audio

"...screams sophistication,  
obviously a luxury product...  
a winner and a wonderful  
component. Combine such  
elegance with high-tech  
materials and exemplary  
finishing -- as EAT has in  
the C-Major -- and you've  
got a winner. "

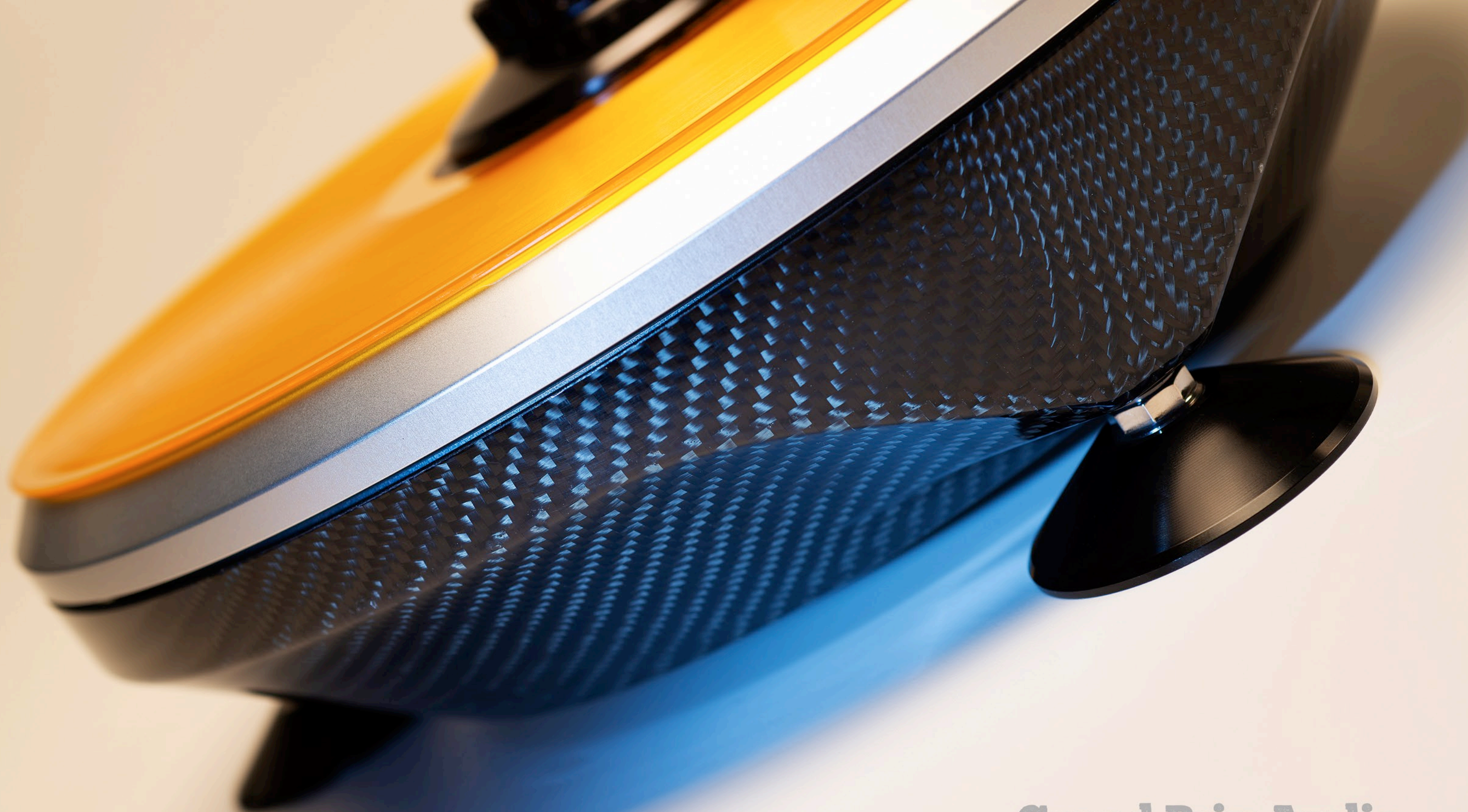
Highly recommended.

\*Jason Thorpe  
SoundStage Hi-Fi!



VANA LTD

VANA is proud to represent EAT in the USA [vanaltd.com](http://vanaltd.com)



**Grand Prix Audio  
Parabolica**

\$17,000 (without tonearm).

[www.grandprixaudio.com](http://www.grandprixaudio.com)



## UTOPIA III EVO

THE LEGEND  
IS GROWING...



Scala Utopia Evo  
Ash Grey



Grande Utopia EM Evo  
British Racing Green



Stella Utopia EM Evo  
Metallic Blue



Maestro Utopia Evo  
Black Lacquer



If you happen to have a record collection that is chock full of first stamper British this and first stamper Japanese that, (and you had about \$45k to part with) we'd tell you to buy the Grand Prix Audio Monaco 2.0 turntable. It does the best job of extracting musical detail from a vinyl disc that we've ever heard.

But if you're one click down on the analog food chain, with a lot of "really good" records that doesn't include the unobtainum stuff, or you just wanted to get a fabulous analog front end that will only set you back used BMW money, the Parabolica is on the top of our list.

There are a couple of great belt-drives and some intriguing idler stuff in this price range too, and we're investigating them. However, if you want the table in this category that delivers just the facts, the Parabolica is untouchable.



**The Parabolica is almost too good to be true.**

Alvin Lloyd, Grand Prix Audio's founder is not a man who does anything halfway. A former race car engineer, where mistakes can be extremely costly - precision is everything.

The Parabolica combines future proof execution with fashion forward aesthetics in a compact package.

And the minute you lower the tonearm and hear the first track, you know you've won the analog race.

Please [click here](#) to read our full review.

# PH-10

the most awarded phonostage ever



**TONE**Audio



## CONNECT 2 ARMS & CARTRIDGES

With two separate RCA inputs you can connect two different tonearms and adjust settings independently for each single cartridge.

## SELECT THE GAIN

PH-10 offers 4 different GAIN levels -3dB, 0dB, +3dB, +6dB to find the best output level for MM and MC cartridges.

## TFT DISPLAY & SKC - SINGLE KNOB CONTROL

SKC is a unique technology that matched with TFT display allows quick control of the unit's functions through the single knob joggle.

## 3 EQUALIZATION CURVES

To get the best out of any record it's crucial to use correct EQ curve: PH-10 offers the RIAA, the DECCA-LONDON and the AMERICAN-COLUMBIA, as well as the "enhanced" curves to enjoy the best vinyl experience ever.

## CHOOSE BETWEEN 9 LOADS

Perfect matching is easy and quick with 9 different loads: 10 $\Omega$ , 22 $\Omega$ , 47 $\Omega$ , 100 $\Omega$ , 220 $\Omega$ , 470 $\Omega$ , 1000 $\Omega$ , 22K $\Omega$ , 47K $\Omega$ .

## ELEGANTLY FUNCTIONAL

Made of solid machined aluminium, the shell body guarantees low frequency resonance, feedback vibrational control and low magnetic inertial field.

**GOLD NOTE**  
Italian Music Experience



# Grand Prix Audio Parabolica

### *The Good:*

Compact  
Easy setup  
Unbelievable resolution  
Amazing speed accuracy  
F1 car build quality  
(and that means lots of carbon fiber)

### *Not so much:*

It would be great if the cool clamping system from the Monaco 2.0 was available as an option

### *The Verdict:*

Though a few less features, scarily close to the top range Monaco 2.0

One of the best tables we've ever heard

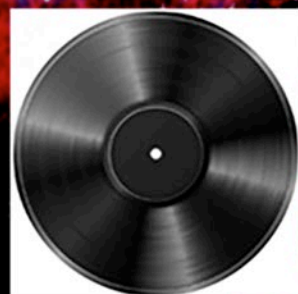


**Band-WIDTH Audio**  
**Kaskode 1**

\$6,500

[www.bandwidthaudio.com](http://www.bandwidthaudio.com)

# EVERYTHING CHANGES...



**EXO GAL's Digital Audio Rendering Technology makes existing DACs and Amplifiers obsolete. By keeping digital music in the digital domain, we eliminate the artifacts, distortion, noise, and time-smearing that are by-products of the Digital to Analog conversion process.**

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The Kaskode One is a very special phonostage, and it fills an important niche for analog lovers that are truly committed to the medium, wanting top performance, yet not ready to drop five figures to get it.

With separate inputs for MM and MC, it's easy to integrate multiple sources into your system.

And, the all tube design is silky smooth, taking advantage of NOS tubes.



# Band-WIDTH Kaskode One

## *The Good:*

- All Tubes
- Inexpensive re-tube cost
- Balanced MC input option
- Can drive long cables
- Very user friendly

## *Not so much:*

- Need to remove cover for MC settings
- Flimsy switches

## *The Verdict:*

Be careful around the MM/MC switch and you've got one of the best values in high end phonostages going!

# In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

## Candy - Iggy Pop

Today Iggy Pop hates his job, but back in 1990, he was an MTV darling, doing this duet with Kate Pierson.

Extra credit points if you recognize the cover art!



## Where Have all the Good Stereos Gone?



We know. Sorting through the jungle that is pre-owned hi-fi gear can be tough. Myriad Internet forums and online shopping sites just don't offer the expertise required to make sound decisions.

That's where Echo Audio comes in. We have more than 20 years of retail experience in selling hi-fi equipment the way it should be sold: In a brick-and-mortar environment that provides you with personalized attention.

While we will certainly ship any of our gently used classics directly to your door, we invite you to stop by our shop in beautiful downtown Portland, Oregon to browse our inventory in person. Thanks to an in-house service department, we not only service everything we sell, but every piece of used gear is thoroughly checked before being put on display. Consider our white-gloves treatment your guarantee against potential problems.

So, when you are looking for high-quality, lightly used hi-fi gear, look no further than Echo Audio. Be sure to check out our Web site for current products and new arrivals.

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audio

[www.echohifi.com](http://www.echohifi.com) 888.248.echo

## Welcome to MINE:

We're not just crazy about music and hi-fi here at TONE. While we can put many labels on our ethos, claiming to be music lovers, audiophiles, or perhaps even qualityphiles, that doesn't even cover it. Having me so many of our readers from all over the globe, as we are well into our 13th year, I'd say our readers are playful and inquisitive to say the least.

You've told us you like automobiles, motorcycles, fine art, bicycles, toys, cameras... Well, you get the picture. Lumping this all under a banner labeled "Style" seems too limiting. Let's face it, we're all a little selfish when it comes to our stuff.

So, let's call it what it is - MINE! And we'll be sharing more of our favorite stuff as we go.

## The PS Audio Sprout

\$599

[www.psaudio.com](http://www.psaudio.com)

While we decide just where to put this mighty audio midget in our review cycle process, we feel the need to get the word out right now. We've been living with, or perhaps fighting over the PS Audio Sprout for a few months. Who gets to play with it, who writes what. We've never had a piece of audio gear generate this much sheer excitement. So if you get one, get two, or even three. We guarantee that even the least likely audiophile in your family is going to fall in love with the Sprout 100.



The PS Audio Sprout 100 plays nearly everything, but in this all analog issue, we're the most excited about it's built in MM phono stage. It's good enough that you'd probably pay that much for the phono stage alone. You can start streaming, and graduate to vinyl or vice versa. And with 100 watts per channel on tap, there are precious few speakers the Sprout 100 won't drive.

If you're new audio, there's no better place to start your journey. If you're a seasoned vet, you'll be just as excited. Watch for a more in-depth coverage soon.



## G-1 MkII



### A Classic Reborn.

Visibly unchanged, yet beneath the dignified beauty of its classic curvilinear cabinet, our best-selling reference subwoofer has been remade, performance expanded in every way. More power, yet greater control, clarity and superior dynamics. Evolved, artful in its appearance and savage in its output.

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rel.net



**MINE: it should be yours**

Retiring from his full time job as an educator, Positive Feedback's Dave Clark has returned to his roots: making cool furniture. Years ago, his tables were being sold in Miami and Laguna Beach.

Clark sees his work as more "dysfunctional than functional, though many are, well functional."

His use of dissimilar materials is interesting, working together to create timeless shapes.

Perhaps you need one.

### The Model Thirty Two

\$800, plus shipping  
www.daverclark designs.com

## E.A.T. Stylus Eau de Parfum

\$81

[www.europeanaudioteam.com](http://www.europeanaudioteam.com)

In addition to creating some of the world's most excellent analog gear and vacuum tubes, Jozefina Lictenegger, the owner and C.E.O. of European Audio Team, has created a fragrance called "Stylus" Eau de Parfum for men (Homme). Like the stylus on a cartridge, this fragrance has all the components present in music. Pink Pepper (spicy) with grapefruit and water provide the high notes, with magnolia, cedarwood, and jasmine bringing in the midrange, leaving the bass notes to amber, moss, and vetiver. The result is a smooth mixture of jazz (the woodsy notes), Blues (the flowers and grapefruit), and Rock and Roll with the pink pepper cranking up the volume.

Music connects us with our inner being, and so does a fragrance. Lictenegger states, "Music transcends the boundaries of language and culture. It is communication with one's soul." Without saying a word, or uttering a sound, the sense of smell can transform you.

Lictenegger also offers a woman's Eau de Parfum called Fina (Femme) and a line of scented candles, no doubt to heighten your listening experience.

Besides designing analog products at E.A.T., she finds time to venture off into the sense of smell. You can purchase these items directly from her here. From cartridge to candle, all of her creations mirror her fresh and innovative personality.



MINE: it should be yours

## Grouchy Cat Magnetic Poetry

\$12

[www.magneticpoetry.com](http://www.magneticpoetry.com)

Wanna be passive aggressive about  
your hi-fi setup, or just plain aggressive?

Or, perhaps complimentary, depending on  
how the mood strikes. Either way, you should  
be able to have a lot of fun with this little box  
of words.

don't  
touch  
the  
turntable



Setting the record straight since 1978.  
40 years of American craftsmanship  
from our family to yours!



VPI  
made in usa

# MINE: it should be yours

## Goldenberg's Peanut Chews

\$2.00ea  
www.OLDTIMECANDY.COM

If you live in New York City, chances are high you can just walk in any corner market and grab one if these when the urge strikes.

But for the rest of us that only have peanuty memories, there's oldtimecandy.com. They've got both flavors of Goldenberg's Peanut Chews and much, much more.

So go on. You know you want one.



**Telefunken 6922/E88CC**  
Made in Ulm, Germany in 1968, these are the most sought after and rarest 6922 type ever. An incredible upgrade to your gear. Find a HUGE inventory of vintage tubes only at:  
[www.upscaleaudio.com](http://www.upscaleaudio.com)

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**Upscale Audio**  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
HIGH-FIDELITY MUSIC SYSTEMS

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All models in stock now.

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Chinook SE MKII PhonoStage  
Now w/ Four Gain Settings  
45dB 50dB 60dB 65dB — ~~\$2599~~

**VPI Classic 4 Package**  
\$1000 Periphery Ring & 12" 3D Tonearm - ~~\$11700~~, \$5999

**FOCAL**  
All Models in Stock

**PrimaLuna HP**  
The World's Finest Tube Integrated  
~~\$4399~~

**KISEKI**  
Purple Heart N.S.  
~~\$3499~~ \$3199

**FOCAL**  
Scala Utopia V2  
We bought them all to offer you this deal.  
~~\$33,999~~ \$19,999

Upgrade to Focal Headphones. We pay top dollar on all trades. Exciting bundles available!

All cartridges in stock. No waiting.

View a huge selection of used items on our website! We take trade-ins!

**IN STOCK:** ACOUSTIC ZEN, ANTHEM, AUDEZE, AUDIOQUEST, AURALIC, BALANCED AUDIO TECHNOLOGY, BELLARI, BENZ MICRO, BLUESOUND, BOWERS & WILKINS, BURSON AUDIO, CARY, CLEARAUDIO, DH LABS, DR. FEICKERT ANALOGUE, DYNAVECTOR, EAT, FOCAL, GRAHAM, HANA, HIFIMAN, ISOACOUSTICS, ISOTEK, JI AUDIO, KEF, KIMBER KABLE, KISEKI, KLIPSCH, KOETSU, LEHMANN, LUMIN, LYRA, MANLEY, MARTIN LOGAN, MONITOR AUDIO, MUSICAL FIDELITY, MUSIC HALL, MYSTÈRE, MYTEK, NAD, NOLA, NORDOST, ORTOFON, PANGAEA, PEACHTREE, PRIMALUNA, PRO-JECT, PS AUDIO, REGA, REL, ROTEL, SHELTER, SONUS FABER, SOUNDSMITH, SUMIKO, SUTHERLAND, TANNY, VPI, VINCENT, AND ZESTO AUDIO

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\$249  
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Whether your doing a bit of podcasting, or on site location recording, and want high quality capture for a reasonable budget, consider the company the pros use - Apogee.

Well known for their studio converters and various interfaces, the MiC+ offers an on-board mic preamp and up to 24/96 quality with an internal ADC. It also features up to 46db of gain for use in tougher environments.

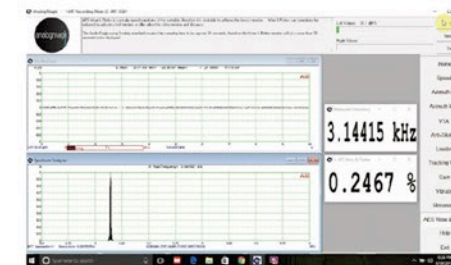
Compatible with Mac or Windows, the MiC+ is able to connect via Thunderbolt, USB A or USB C interfaces. It even has it's own headphone output for quick, on-site monitoring!



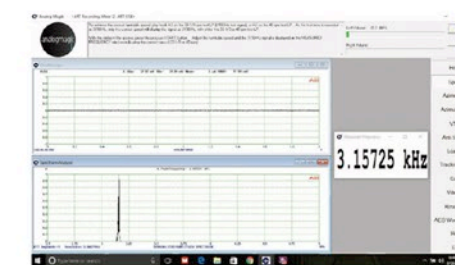
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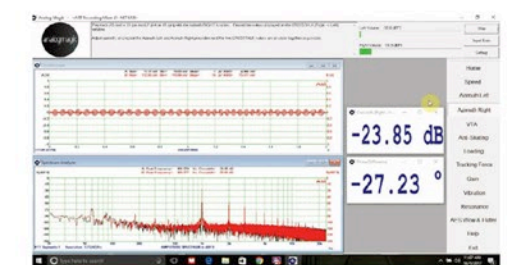
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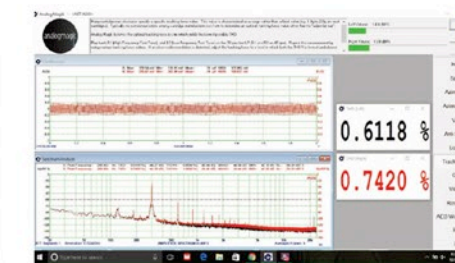
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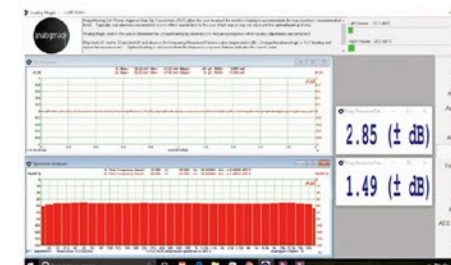
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VTF



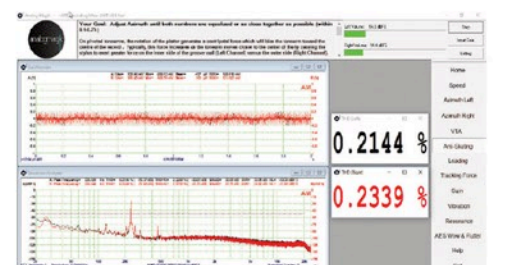
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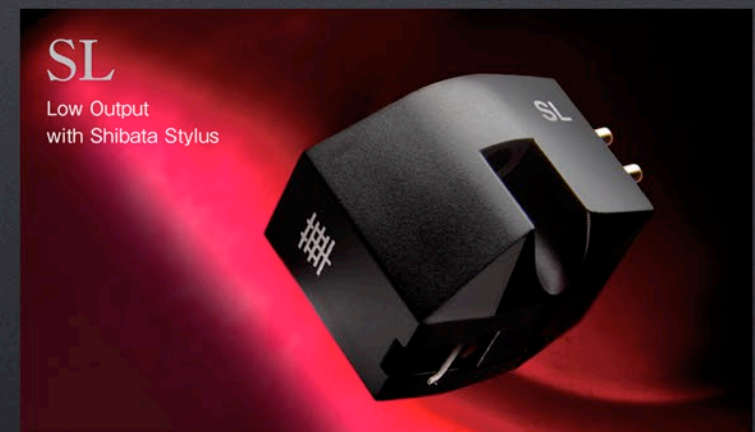
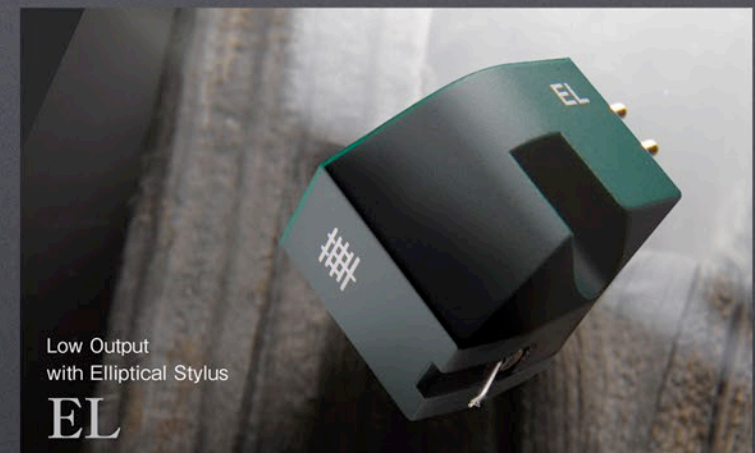
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- The Absolute Sound Issue 279 January 2018

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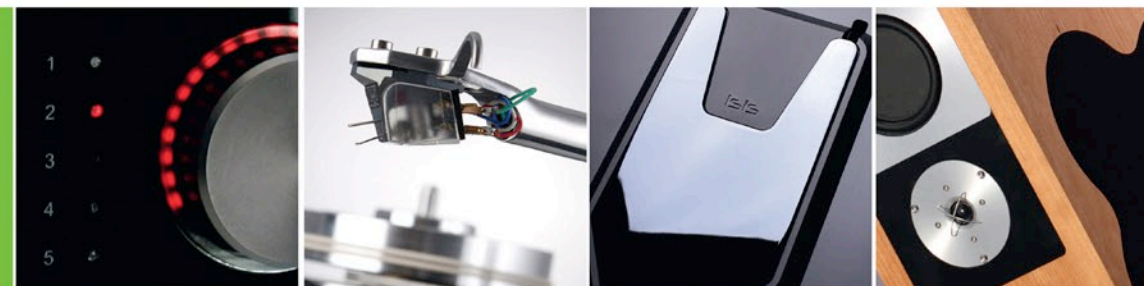
Based on 40 years of continuous research and unwavering commitment to UK manufacturing, everything Rega does is there for one reason alone.

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# In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

## *Nashville Skyline* - Bob Dylan

Slightly mid way through the issue, serious introspection always takes over. Who better to contemplate with, than Bob Dylan? And what better way to experience it, than the 2-45 rpm vinyl edition from Mobile Fidelity?



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**MINE: it should be yours**

# MINE: it should be yours

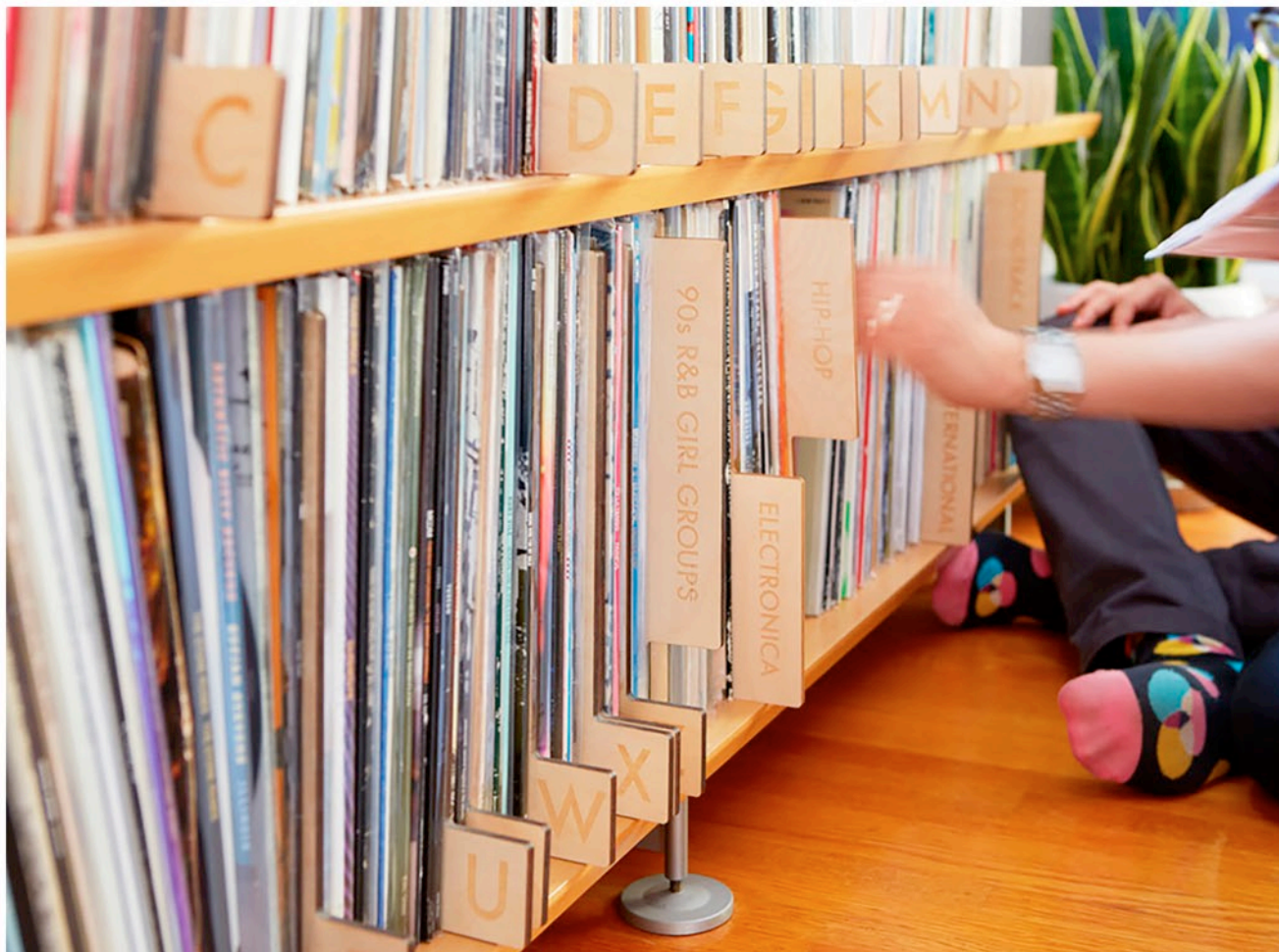
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At the top of the Koeppel Design site, it says "we make record hoarding look damn good." I couldn't agree more. Kate Koeppel does a better job at paying homage to your vinyl collection, large or small, than anyone. If you truly love the tactile feel your vinyl collection brings you, her laser-engraved wood divider panels are cooler than cool.

You can still get the standard alphabetized editions, but now with these gender, artist, (or custom) specific dividers, finding your favorite music has never been easier.

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# Bellissimo!



Strumento n° 4

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# The Analog Master

by Richard Mak

**R**ichard Mak is quite possibly the most obsessed analog guy I've ever met. He's got more turntables than I've got cars, and he's got more cartridges than you've got Pokemon.

However, where so many crazed analog enthusiasts I've met fall victim to the dark side, and tend to be fairly pendent, Mak is one of the most affable guys you'll ever meet. Best of all, he's always willing to share what he knows, to help you find a better way to enjoy your turntable.

His new software suite, Analog Magik, is an incredible tool and we use it here at TONE to set every cartridge we review to perfection. But we're not talking about that today.

Going forward, Richard's column will concentrate on the top of the analog range, as only he is qualified to do. And what better place to start than this?

We usually start a review with a sexy shot of the front panel, but the P1 is just so tidy and so comprehensive, this really gives you an idea of what lurks inside. *And this is only one of the four boxes!*

## CH Precision P1 Phono Equalizer - (4 BOX: \$90,000)

CH Precision's P1 Phono Preamplifier is a cost no object solution to analog, however it is one that you can attack a step at a time if you prefer. The stand alone P1 Single Chassis MM/MC phono preamplifier starts at \$31,000. Their approach is a "precision" based design philosophy, with heavy emphasis on signal accuracy and the lowest possible distortion. Subjective sonic preferences do not figure into the equation here. Swiss precision and elegance is also part of the products fit and finish – all CH components are exquisitely finished.

The slick 3.5-inch multi color, high resolution AMOLED screen gracing the front panel is flanked by five tiny buttons on the right side, allowing navigation through a labyrinth of settings driven by internal firmware. Buried within its deep menu structure are highly configurable user settings which can be difficult to decipher unless you read through the P1's 35-page owner's manual. Everything from input choices, subsonic filters, loading, gain, and right down to the nitty-gritties such as the color of the screen is at your command.



# The Gamut Hi-Fi Lobster Chair

The Gamut HI-FI Lobster Chair, designed by Eva Paarmann & Oluf Lund is available to all Gamut, Raidho and Scansonic distributors and dealers.



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# The Analog Master

The CH Precision P1/X1

The P1 can be connected to a router via Cat5 Cable, allowing operation of the P1 with the CH App on a notebook or tablet with a Wi Fi connection. Operation of the P1 is a breeze with the CH App and is highly recommended.

## Voltage Inputs vs Current Inputs

The P1 houses two distinctly different circuits inside. The input labeled MM/MC is a traditional voltage amplification circuit which the vast majority of phono preamplifiers are based on. Voltage circuits amplify the signal generated by the cartridge by 1,000 to 10,000x, with performance highly dependent on the cartridge's output level and the amount of amplification required. High output cartridges requires less of a boost, but their large internal coils reduce the agility of the cantilever, reducing transient response and low level detail. Low output cartridges offer more cantilever mobility, but amplifying the faint signal is difficult as they are easily subject to distortion and hum. Generally speaking, cartridges below 0.2mV are considered ultra-low output and will often require step-up transformers.

The P1 comes with a CH Test LP which will work with its build in wizard, at the push of a button, will determine the optimal loading and optimal gain on its current input.



The P1's second and third inputs employs current amplification circuitry, as opposed to the standard inputs. Output gain on current amplification is dependent on the internal resistance of the cartridge rather than on the output. The smaller the internal coil windings, the lower the internal resistance and the higher the gain; so a low output cartridge will actually have higher gain!

The voltage and current inputs each offer a distinctly different sonic flavor and the optimal choice will depend largely on the output and the impedance of the cartridge used. With the Clearaudio Goldfinger Statement cartridge, the sound of the voltage input is unmistakably solid state, exhibiting all the typical traits you might expect: fast, clean, dynamic, and an

extremely low noise floor, with excellent frequency extension at both ends of the frequency spectrum.

Yet the sound of the P1's current inputs are highly impressive. Using two low impedance cartridges from my collection, the Sonic Lab Ultra Eminent BC (0.6 Ohm, 0.2 mV) into the first input, and a Kondo IO-M into the second (1 ohm, 0.1mV) magic was found. On the legendary Philips "Hi Fi Stereo" recording with Oistrakh and Oborin performing Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata (Philips 835153 AY), the difference between the two circuits is both compelling and startling. Via the current input, a distinct veil has been lifted from the sound, rendering details of Oistrakh's violin absent through the voltage input. The unmistakable advantage of the low output cartridge's better cantilever mobility is instantly obvious. Transient response is much faster making the violin sound livelier—as a result, Oistrakh's performance is much more lifelike. The minute details, down to the very texture of the bow as it glides and bounces on the strings takes on a new clarity.

On the song "Wicked Game," from Chris Issak's *Heart Shaped World*, the current input grabs more of the essence and atmosphere of the song, again revealing much more vocal nuance. The sound of the voltage input is more rounded and smoothed out by comparison. The extra level of emotion conveyed

by the current input is enough to make me fall in love with the P1. It has brought my appreciation of low-output low-impedance cartridges into a whole new level. Removing the issues of noise, lack of gain, and the need for step up transformers, the current amplification circuit allows ultra-low output cartridges to shine on a level which I have never experienced before.

## That's only the beginning

The \$17,000 X1 power supply adds still more of this effect, but there is still more performance to be had for the truly obsessed. The P1 can be separated into individual mono chassis, each with their own X1 power supply, making this potentially a two, three,

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## The Analog Master

The CH Precision P1/X1

or even four box solution with five possible configurations. For those curious, I assure you that the results are quite a dramatic improvement.

The addition of the X1 power supply minimizes the solid-state character of the P1, adding an even more organic feel to both vocals and acoustic instruments. The size of the three dimensional soundstage increases, with additional subtlety and shading of dynamic contrasts. As you've probably guessed, the ultimate solution is the 4-box dual mono P1/X1 configuration. At over \$91,000, this is the extreme deep end of analog which very few will venture into. The 4-box version is breath takingly good, and where going from one to two to three boxes all represent incremental gains, the synergy of all four offers the biggest improvement.

***"If there has ever been a piece of equipment worthy of my most prized records, the 4 Box CH is it."***

I pulled out the famed Decca recording with István Kertész conducting the VPO, on Dvorak's "From the New World" Symphony No. 5 (DECCA SXL 2289 ED1) next. This recording is considered by many to be one of the most definitive performances in sound quality and interpretation. It carries one of the widest dynamic range of any recording and represents the best sound of the DECCA golden age.

Through the 4 box P1/X1, the entire orchestra is rendered with the utmost dynamics combined with lifelike textual contrast, reaching a level which has never been achieved before in my system. The tonal balance is almost perfect; even with the most abrasive of instruments it never veers away from neutrality. Instruments are holographic and life sized, projected in a massive soundstage reaching far beyond my listening space. It is the most realistic I have ever heard produced from this masterpiece, leaving fellow listeners in my room awestruck.

The same caliber of performance was repeated on Julius Katchen's riveting performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3, with Pierino Gambo directing the LSO. (DECCA SXL 2106 ED1) This musical tour de force is a rhythmically fast paced demonstration of the full-range dynamics of a concert grand piano. I also suggest Michael Rabin's pungently colorful performance of Sarasate's Meditation from Thais on Capitol's elusive Magic Bow records. (Capitol SP 8510) It features lightening-fast transient response and rendering of minute details, without any hint of abrasiveness or sibilance, maintaining perfect harmony between a sharp focused image and a velvety smooth visual texture.

Yes, it's that good

Think of every aspect of the audiophile vocabulary redefined. The CH combo rendered every record played to perfection, resulting in a new level of appreciation for my record collection, and analog in general. Good as it is, the single box P1 is but a glimpse of the true potential of the majesty of the 4-box model.

If you are thinking of demoing the CH P1 phono preamplifier, I would recommend listening only to the combination which you can afford, because once you have listened to the 4-box CH combo, you will never un-hear it, and it may drive you to madness until it is yours.

CH Precision Sàrl

Web: [www.ch-precision.com](http://www.ch-precision.com)

# Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into



Richard Mak is our senior analog writer, so you may not find all of these selections on your favorite streaming service.

He's a vinyl guy through and through. You can find him at [www.analogmagik.com](http://www.analogmagik.com)

Of Monsters and Men -  
Organ

Cigarettes After Sex -  
I'm a Firefighter

Santana -  
Supernatural

Clifford Curzon -  
Brahms Piano Concerto no. 1  
(Decca ED1)

Maazel/Cleveland Orchestra -  
Romeo and Juliet  
(Decca)

Johnny Cash - Hurt

Rhymoi Music's Song of Songs -  
The Whole River Red

Hanz Zimmer - Interstellar  
Original Movie Soundtrack

Andre Previn & LSO -  
Shostakovich, Symph. no. 8 -  
Allegro Von Troppo

Torsten Nillson, Marianne Mellnas,  
Alf Linder - Cantate Domino  
(Proprius LP)

no. 3 Canada

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Mel Martin  
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Jeff Dorgay Tone Audio

 VANA LTD  
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# In Praise of The Party Turntable

by Jeff Dorgay

Over at my latest venture, MYBMWhabit.com, our newest writer, Rob Siegel loves to drive old BMW 2002s, and has one in particular that is not pristine. He calls it Bertha. Reading Rob's posts, you can tell he gets as much if not more enjoyment from Bertha as he would driving a brand new BMW. Because on one level it's not as fiddly, and he certainly doesn't fret about a door ding.

I submit the same concept for consideration in the analog world with my Dual changer. Purchased on E-Bay after being inspired at Echo Audio, complete with a vintage Audio Technica MM cartridge, this old workhorse is a fairly beefy table with a somewhat wacky looking arm. But the damn thing works great.



It may not have the same level of speed accuracy of its more current counterparts, but it's still way better than a Crosley. I picked up the Dual for \$179 with the A-T installed and setup. It's the audio bargain of the year.

You probably wouldn't hand just anyone the keys to your Lamborghini (especially after they've had a beer or two) and you probably don't want just anyone to queue up your Lyra Atlas either, even stone cold sober. Too much anxiety and potential for the evening to end in tears.

One of the most fun aspects of streaming is handing your dinner guests the iPad and letting them add a few tunes to the evenings playlist. Want to see them really light up? Have em queue up a record. Everyone's talking about vinyl, but who lets their party guests play records? Keep a crate of some known party favorites in a bin next to your beater table and let the crowd go nuts at your next get together. It's too bad Shure has gone under, because the M44 was a DJ favorite for good reason; they track anything and stand up to a lot of abuse. Not to mention inexpensive replacement styli. Easy to keep a few as spares for when the unthinkable happens. A table like this can serve dual duty when not being the life of the party.

Those perusing estate sales or other avenues for truly budget LPs, can now play them without worry. No need to abandon music you really love because you don't want to put the miles on the main table. Add a pair of vintage speakers, and sometimes those old records really reveal some magic.

Whether for the first time, or reliving great memories. Give it a try.

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## Can't Get it Out of my Head...

“Hey Mr. DJ play another song like the one you just played. Crank the drums, crank the bass, crank that shit all over the place.....” is an opening line I can repeat in my head all day long. When I’m driving in my car, when I’m pushing the trolley in the grocery store, when I’m waiting at a bar to get the bartender’s attention or when I’m out walking the dog in the pouring rain. Eric Ambel’s Lakeside (2016) is full of gems I can’t get out of my head. “Don’t Make me Break you Down” (featuring Jimbo Mathus) blues-blenders Zeppelin and Crazy Horse with added snare sex appeal and overall drum imaging that makes you feel like your squirming on that throne to save your life. The track that gets me pulling that needle back every time however is “Have Mercy” which is what you will be sayin’ when you get this record stuck between your ears right where it belongs.

Willie Nile has been a staple in my record collection forever, with classics like “Hell Yeah,” “House of a Thousand Guitars” and “American Ride” solidify Nile in my Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 4Ever. This time, Willie Nile has taken his game as a songwriter to an entirely different level with his brand new release “Children of Paradise” and the album is a first class stunner. Willie’s eyes have always been open and in this particular time and place, “Children of Paradise” resounds like a cosmic echo of “I Call BS!” “Don’t Let the Fuckers Kill Your Buzz” is a mantra to live by in these times of hate, double-speak and greed. The political prose couldn’t be more timely since the title track is about a boy looking for a home across an unwelcoming boarder. Nile’s dissent is always an all night party that comes straight from the heart. This record will live in mine and stay on my turntable till the world wakes up acknowledging that love is the answer and Willie Nile is preaching the gospel according to Rock & Roll.

I was born in the mid 60’s and have a BIG affection for great Pop Music. Real Pop Music. The Monkees TV show was a favorite in our house. THAT music is like the air I breathe, so, at least every day I need a dose of that sweet, beautiful bubblegum. The record that has been making me happier than a puppy with an expensive shoe to chew is “Glad All Over” by The Dave Clark Five.

Emily Duff is a singer you won’t be able to get out of your head. And she’s got a new record coming out soon. Find out more at: <https://emilyduff.bandcamp.com>

by Emily Duff

THE MONKEES  
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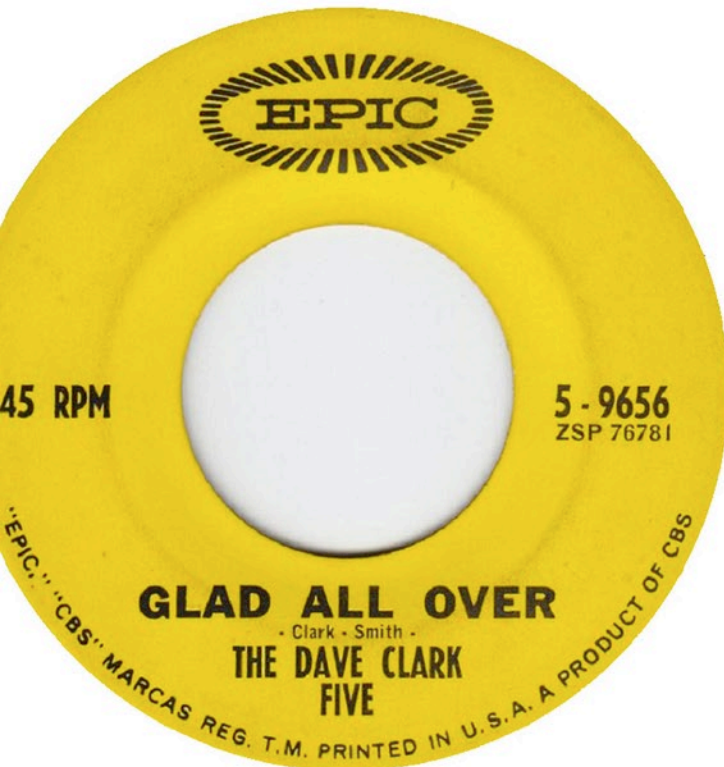
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# Can't Get it Out of my Head...

by Emily Duff



Every song from start to finish is bloody good and each one is a stay at home teenage dance party to the highest power. Even the “Tequilla” rip-off “Chaquita” and a cover of a Beatles’ cover of “Do You Love Me” will fill a giddy heart with glee.

“Bits and Pieces” is a rhythmic masterpiece and I defy you to stand still while it spins on your deck. “I Know You” will dig on this Pop Perfection I just can’t shake out of my head for love nor money. Have at it!

Recorded live at The Matrix in San Francisco in 1966 and released in 1968, a year after the band split up, Grace Slick & The Great Society’s “Conspicuous Only In Its Absence” is the epitome of the “San Francisco Sound.” Hippie-Dippie organ and shades of Middle Eastern diatonic scale solos abound on this brilliant collection of “Great Haight.” Grace’s vocals are as pure as the driven blow and each cymbal hit of psychedelic syncopation swirls you to new levels of groove. The adagio tempos of well known songs like “Somebody to Love” and “White Rabbit” will no doubt arrest your inner metronome and get you crying for the paddles to shock you back to sinus rhythm.

Might I suggest a great pair of headphones for this record? The equivalent of a musical “quaalude,” Lay back, relax, let the recorder solo wash over you, take you by the hand and lead you into what feels like a sonic interpretation of a Russ Meyer movie. Now don’t get me wrong...this is not a bad thing. In fact, it’s a damn fine way to spend 38 minutes and 9 seconds of your precious time. Have a tambourine with you for full affect. Enjoy!

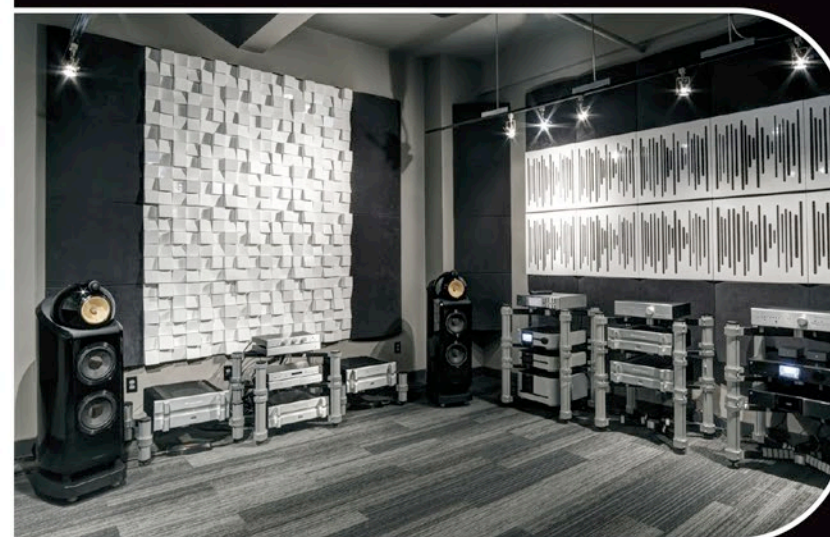
Lightning Rod Records bequeathed us another Paul Cauthen installment with “Have Mercy EP.” Only 7 songs but hey, when it comes to Paul, I will take whatever I can get! “Resignation” is a tune you can’t play once. The lyrics need to be learned and sung. Now DANCE! Dance, varmint! The title track “Have Mercy” feels like a Tony Joe White meets Merle Haggard treasure that got left behind in a Tulsa bus station locker. “Tumbleweed” needs it’s own TV show. Flat out John Ford landscape beauty starring John Wayne with Yosemite Sam tongue in cheeky monkey business up Paul’s sleeve. This record gets 5 smiles from me and I play it often.

Hope these tracks got you going, see you next time.

50 BRANDS

8 DEMO ROOMS

1 LOCATION



433 Carrall Street | Vancouver | Canada | 604 688 5502

[hificentre.com](http://hificentre.com)



The image shows a close-up of the Garrard 301 Statement turntable. The tonearm is made of polished wood and is mounted on a black metal plate. The motor is a black metal plate with a large black knob in the center. The knob has a scale with '+' and '-' markings. The motor plate is mounted on a dark wood base. The turntable platter is visible in the upper right corner.

# Artisan Fidelity Garrard 301 Statement

Approx. \$22k (options dependent) [www.artisanfidelity.com](http://www.artisanfidelity.com)

Everywhere you look, this turntable reveals more attention to fine detail than you can imagine. It's almost like popping the rear cover from a fine Swiss watch.

Every spring, every pulley is high art. And to assure the Signature isn't plagued with the speed inaccuracies of your Grandfathers' Garrard, the drive wheel is rebuilt to the strictest tolerances.

When listening to acoustic instruments, especially the violin and flute, their delicacy and sustain floats in mid air, captivating you.

Good as the Statement does with this faire, more explosive music like be bop jazz and classic rock have the rhythmic drive that many modern tables lack.

While this table has provision for two tonearms, it can be ordered as a single arm model, for those not having as much space on their equipment rack.

Is this the table for you?

That can only be answered by an audition. We are finishing our full review now, but if you've been considering the ultimate expression of the idler drive platform, we can't recommend the Artisan Fidelity Statement highly enough.

This is one lovely turntable.

## AUDOLICI From Portugal



A25M Integrated Amplifier



I50 "Swing"  
Integrated Amplifier



AVP-01 PreAmplifier



harold@soundconsultant.com  
608 208 3536 USA Distribution  
www.soundconsultant.com

**There is no escaping the sheer mechanical  
beauty of this turntable.**

If you love bespoke products, and want a turntable that you are almost sure not to see anywhere else, any of the Artisan Fidelity tables are for you.

AF Principal Christopher Thornton is a maniacal craftsman (in the best possible way), not just another plinth builder. Every part of his turntables are stripped to bare - rebuilt, refinished, and outright re-manufactured to aerospace tolerances.

The mighty Garrard 301 you see before you never worked this well or sounded this good the day it rolled off the factory floor.

## Artisan Fidelity

## Garrard 301 Statement

### *The Good:*

Big, ballsy sound that's easy to love.

A true work of art - as much fun to look at as listen to.

Easy to use, setup, and multiple tonearm options

### *Not so much:*

Fairly long lead time to purchase  
Limited dealer network

### *The Verdict:*

The Singer Porsche of Turntables

# SUMIKO

## PHONO CARTRIDGES

36 years of history  
36 months of development  
6 brand new cartridges

### Moving Magnet

*Rainier*



*Olympia*



*Moonstone*



*Amethyst*

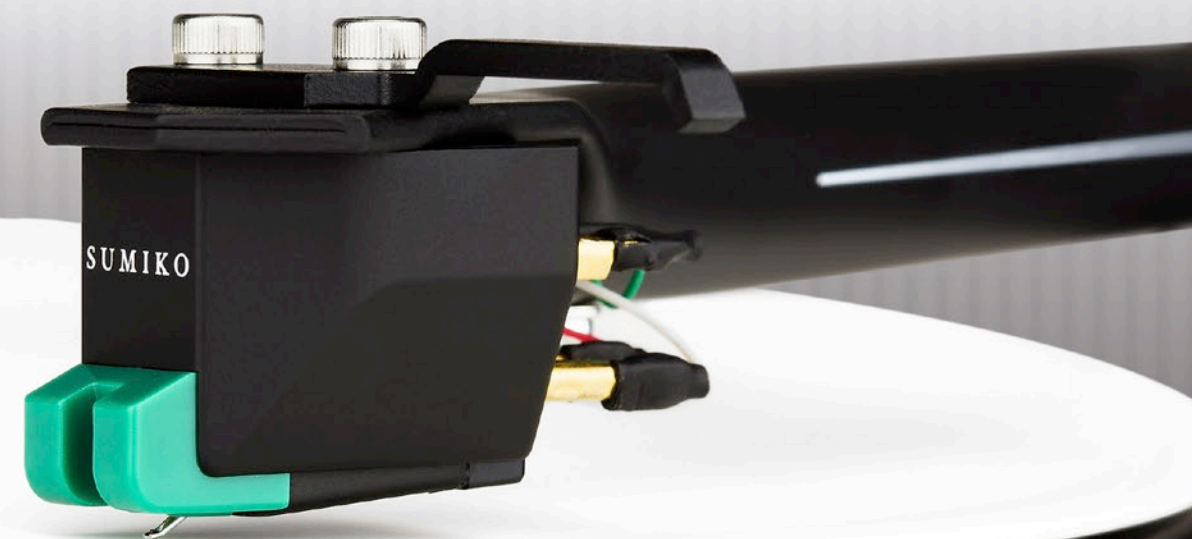


### Moving Coil

*Songbird*



*Starling*



[www.sumikoaudio.net](http://www.sumikoaudio.net)

SUMIKO • 2431 5th Street, Berkeley, CA 94710 • (510) 843-4500



**Luxman**  
**PD-171A**  
\$6,995

[www.luxman-global.com](http://www.luxman-global.com)

This machined handle (one of two) is another example of just how much care and attention to detail has been paid to every aspect of the PD-171A. Utilizing these handles, you can gently lower the platter onto the main spindle without damaging the bearing. We've never seen this on another turntable at any price.

No detail has been left unaccounted for. Every ancillary part is individually wrapped, bagged, and labeled for your convenience.

The instruction manual is thoroughly written and will guide even the novice owner through the setup process with relative ease.

Considering the high precision of the PD-171A, and the respect that has been given to its packaging and construction, we suggest using the best setup tools you can, to extract the maximum performance from yours.

Thanks to the removable head shells, those with multiple cartridges will have an easy time utilizing different setups.

For our full review, visit the [TONEAudio website](#). Just click [here](#).



*Diana*<sup>®</sup>





A respectful homage to Luxman direct drive tables, the PD-171 sports this gorgeous recessed, lit from underneath speed control indicator for both 33 & 45 r.p.m..

The rest of the controls are equally sumptuous, with a plug in light to help queue records in low light situations. And they didn't forget the 45 adaptor either.

# SOLID TECH

Hybrid comes from a long heritage of award winning rack engineering



## The Hybrid's latest developments allow flexibility like never before!

Starting for example with a 4-shelf vertical rack you can easily reassemble with the focus on horizontal expansion such as a 2-shelf racks side by side. If needed later, you can build vertically again while keeping the horizontal foundation from earlier. Fully customizable!



Hybrid isolation between shelves



Hybrid extrusion



Hybrid-measures



# Luxman PD-171A

## ***The Good:***

Amazing fit and finish  
Can be ordered with or without arm  
Removable head shell  
Rock solid audio performance  
Not a fiddly turntable

## ***Not so much:***

Zero

## ***The Verdict:***

We bought the review sample  
Enough said



**Even the packaging is cool.**

***“I can’t think of a better digital disc player than the PS Audio DirectStream Memory Player and DAC. If I had more than two thumbs to raise I would offer them, it’s that good. The only remaining choice is whether you want silver or black.”***

***---Jeff Dorgay, TONE Audio***

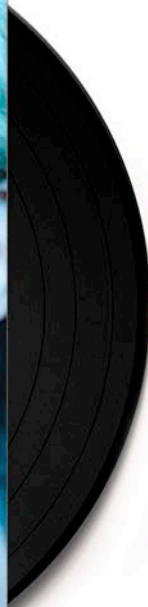


[www.psaudio.com](http://www.psaudio.com) 720.406.8946 Boulder, Colorado



# Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into



Boris Blank -  
Electrified

London Grammar -  
Hey Now

Gregory Porter -  
God Bless This Child

Anne Bisson -  
September in Montreal

SONOSings -  
Stacks

Max Reger -  
Prelude Largo

Cassandra Wilson -  
Dance to The Drums

Wallin' Jennies -  
One Voice

Trent Suggs at REL threw eight of his favorite tracks at us, that helps show off the effectiveness of a great subwoofer. Let us know what you think!

no.4 California

TONE Playlists are sponsored by...

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TOTEM 30  
Discover yours 30 ans years

The revolutionary Torrent Drivers and distinctive cabinet design of one series combined with the versatility of another, resulting in the perfect formula.

Discover yours / [totemacoustic.com](https://totemacoustic.com)

**Gryphon**  
**Sonett**  
\$6,500

[www.gryphon-audio.dk](http://www.gryphon-audio.dk)

Gryphon of Denmark is known for some of the world's finest audio gear, and one of the few manufacturers that excels in both speaker and electronic designs.

In addition to world-class sonics, every Gryphon product is a work of industrial art. The meticulous level of detail paid to every aspect of design and execution makes the Sonett something you will cherish for decades.

Should this be your first exposure to Gryphon, at only \$6,500, it may be your gateway to the rest of the line.

Greg Petan is finishing his review now.



## New Flagship Integrated Amplifier

**L-509x**



*"The L-509X is one of the most intimate-sounding, dynamic, texturally nuanced, truthful purveyors of music of my experience."* Ken Micallef

Luxman L-509x- Stereophile, May 2018



*"A bang up to date design, in both engineering and sound... simply special"*

Luxman L-509x- Hi-Fi News, January 2018

[www.luxman-global.com](http://www.luxman-global.com)

**LUXMAN**

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1-3-1 Shin-Yokohama, Kouhoku-Ku, Yokohama 222-0033, Japan  
Tel: 045 470 6991 Fax: 045 470 6997 [www.luxman-global.com](http://www.luxman-global.com)

# PrimaLuna®

Our Name Is Sound. You Know It.

"PrimaLuna's DiaLogue Premium HP is an integrated amplifier whose sound quality approaches that of pairings of reference Class A preamps and power amps. PrimaLuna has another winner"

— Robert Deutsch, *Stereophile*



\$4399

**DiaLogue Premium HP Integrated Amplifier**  
The finest tube integrated at any price. Any.



All four PrimaLuna components reviewed by *Stereophile* are rated Class A, meaning *the best without regard to cost*.

- ProLogue Premium Integrated \$2399
- DiaLogue Premium Integrated \$3399
- DiaLogue Premium HP Integrated (pictured) \$4399
- Award-winning preamps and poweramps also available

**PrimaLuna has won more Editors' Choice Awards from *The Absolute Sound* than any other brand.**

Go to [primaluna-usa.com](http://primaluna-usa.com) to get an inside look at our products. You will understand why critics around the world say PrimaLuna makes the best-engineered and best-built tube components you can buy at any price. [info@primaluna-usa.com](mailto:info@primaluna-usa.com) 909.931.0219

## Grado Statement v.2

\$3,500

[www.gradolabs.com](http://www.gradolabs.com)

Back when we first approached the original Grado Statment, their flagship cartridge was a lot of coin for a Grado, but it was worth it, featuring a luxurious midrange that knocked on the door of even the mighty Koetsu.

The shortcomings of the original, was a slightly rolled off top and bottom, with somewhat limited tracking ability. But that midrange! This was the sweetness that used to cost five-figures!

The v.1 kept all the strengths of the original with more extension at the frequency extremes, and improved tracking ability.

Now, the v.2 is even better, making the Statement v.2 a world class cartridge for \$3,500. This one delivers the sonic goods well beyond its price tag.

Read our full review here.





## **VPI Avenger Reference**

**\$20,995**

[www.vpiindustries.com](http://www.vpiindustries.com)

If you aren't up for the \$40,000 VPI Titan turntable, their Avenger Reference, tipping the scale at just under half that price will certainly give you a great taste of what VPI's all out assault on analog playback has to offer, in a somewhat more "moderate" package.

Like other VPI tables, consider the Avenger Reference a starting point. You can still add updates as time and budget allow, adding more tonearm boards and different tonearm wands, to allow the use of multiple cartridges. VPI's famous periphery clamp, shown here with the Analog Rim Drive system is also part of the upgrade path, so this is a table you can grow with, and never be bored.

[Click here to visit VPI's website for the tech bits.](#)

[Read Greg Petan's full review here on our website.](#)



**Rega  
RB2000  
Tonearm**

\$2,195

[www.soundorg.com](http://www.soundorg.com)

So many vinyl enthusiasts only think of Rega as a manufacturer of complete turntable packages, but their tonearms have always been available separately, and they adorn many other turntables, both from an OEM standpoint, and just a matter of choice.

While the RB30x series is much more commonplace, their top RB2000 arm is exceptional, as was the RB1000 it replaces.

The basic shape resembles that of the RB303 arm on the entry level Regas, but that's where it ends. The RB2000 requires a level of finishing and assembly that takes about ten times a normal Rega arm, along with much higher quality bearings.

The result is a world class arm, that only has one shortcoming - VTA isn't super easy to adjust. But it is possible with spacers. This beauty is a definite alternative to some of the more obvious choices, offering incredible performance for the price.

Watch for our full review soon.

**E.A.T**  
**JO**  
**N°5**

\$1,295

[www.vanaltd.com](http://www.vanaltd.com)

European Audio Team's Jozefina Lichtenegger is well known for products that offer excellent performance, and aesthetic beauty.

We've reviewed both of their phono preamplifiers to good result, so we anxiously await her new JO N°5 MC cartridge, done up in her signature mint green.

And, at just \$1,295, positive reviews are coming in from all corners of the globe. We can't wait to finish our review.

[Click here to visit VanaLTD's website](#)

Photo courtesy of European Audio Team



# Clearaudio Stradivari V2

\$4,000

[www.musicalsurroundings.com](http://www.musicalsurroundings.com)

All of the Clearaudio MC cartridges take advantage of 24kt. gold wiring in their coils, to provide a unique sonic signature.

However going down the range from their mighty Goldfinger V2, the choice of metal changes with the two cartridges at the bottom of the range using wood. In the case of the Stradivari, the wood of choice is ebony.

Tracking ability, and ultimate detail retrieval go down a bit with price, yet the Stradivari V2 captures the essence of the Goldfinger at a more attainable price, and like its big brother, tracks at 2.8 grams.

Review in process

*Enjoy the Experience*



**PASS**

Pass Laboratories  
13395 New Airport Rd. Ste G., Auburn, CA 95602  
(530) 878-5350 - [www.passlabs.com](http://www.passlabs.com)



# Koetsu Onyx Platinum

\$9,995

[www.koetsuaudio.com](http://www.koetsuaudio.com)

Japanese made Koetsu cartridges have a mythical air about them, delivering a sonic picture unmatched by others.

We've been using the Onyx Platinum as a reference cartridge now for over a year and it is as engaging as it was the day it arrived. If anything, more so, now that we've had the chance to play a number of our favorite recordings with it.

While Koetsu is known for a lush midrange presentation, as you go up the range, there is more extension available at both ends of the musical spectrum without sacrificing the midband magic. The Onyx Platinum is a true jewel.

[Click here to visit Koetsu's website](#)

[Read our full review here.](#)

Photo courtesy of Koetsu USA/MoFi Distribution



## Pass Labs XP-27

\$11,500

[www.passlabs.com](http://www.passlabs.com)

An evolution of Pass Labs' XP-25 dual chassis phono stage to the current XP-27, like their .8 series power amplifiers, narrows the gap between their top and "top-top" products if you will.

Taking what they've learned in an all out attack on state of the art design, the \$11,500 XP 27 is a highly desirable phonostage, as have all past Pass designs.

We will have more information for you very soon. A full review has just begun.

# Akiko Audio Phono Booster

\$500

[www.akikoaudio.com](http://www.akikoaudio.com)



We can't even begin to tell you how this little box works, but it does. We're not big fans of tweaks here at TONE, so we always view this kind of thing with major contempt. So much for expectation bias. Yet Akiko's passive power product works wonders and the Phono Booster does the same. Plug it into the ground lug on your phono stage, and prepare to hear a drop in background noise. Subtle but effective.

*Mofi* ELECTRONICS

## GET CLOSER TO THE ORIGINAL MASTER RECORDING



### Isolated AC Synchronous Motor

UltraDeck's stepped-pulley 300RPM AC motor provides excellent speed stability for pitch accuracy and rhythmic drive.



### Ultra Tonearm

The 10-inch straight, aluminum, gimbaled-bearing tonearm uses smooth ball bearings for low friction and Cardas Audio wiring to maintain complete signal purity.



### Anti-Vibration Feet by HRS

Developed in conjunction with the engineers at Harmonic Resolution Systems, anti-vibration feet isolate UltraDeck from ruinous vibrations and interference.

Explore the full line at [mofielectronics.com](http://mofielectronics.com)



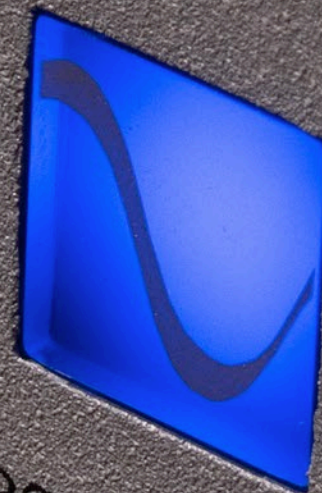
A high-end silver PS Audio DirectStream Power P20 amplifier is shown from a low angle. The front panel features a central digital display with four analog-style meters: THD, Distortion In, Frequency, and Power. The PS Audio logo is visible on the left side of the panel. The device is set against a dark, textured background.

# **PS Audio** **Direct Stream** **P20**

\$9,999

[www.psaudio.com](http://www.psaudio.com)

**Able to generate 2000 watts of clean AC power, the P20 is a fit for most systems. And you can always get two...**



PS AUDIO

**W**e wind up our analog issue with something for you to ponder. Power.

Without clean power, the delicate signal you try so hard to capture gets lost, gets distorted, and robs you of the expansive experience that transforms the analog experience. And it's not that great for digital, either.

Granted, not everyone is going to step off the cliff for \$10, but if you have a great system, the P20 will take it as far as it can go, supplying your gear with clean, fresh, *regenerated* AC power.

Once you hear the effect it has on your system, you will never be able to un-hear it again. It's way beyond "inky" black backgrounds. The P20 provides a simultaneous increase in smoothness and low level detail retrieval at the same time. Sound amazing?

PS Audio has been perfecting this approach for decades now, and their original Power Plant was fantastic, but it only had a 300 watt capacity, so it was a preamp/source component device only. But wow, it was good!

The 2000 watt capability of the P20 will handle all but the most massive mono power amplifiers, so that leaves most of you in the game, for complete system cleansing.

Those not needing 2000 watts at their disposal can also choose one of the two smaller models (P12 and P15), with lower prices and capacity. All three work equally well.

We can't suggest this one highly enough.

Please click [here](#) to read our in-depth review online.



## PS Audio Direct Stream P20

\$9,999

[www.psaudio.com](http://www.psaudio.com)

### *The Good:*

Tons of clean power  
No current limitations  
Built like a tank  
15 or 20 amp options  
Network connectivity

### *Not so much:*

It's kinda heavy

### *The Verdict:*

Makes a stunning difference in your system. The finest power product we've ever used. Worth every bit of the price asked.

# Playlist:

What Our Readers Are Into

Artic Monkeys - No Buses

The Avenger & Kadebostany -  
Castle in The Snow

Black Coffee - Your Eyes

Daft Punk - Instant Crush

Daft Punk -  
Lose Yourself to Dance

Phoenix II -  
If I Ever Feel Better

Red Hot Chili Peppers -  
My Friends

Serge Gainsbourg -  
La Javanaise

Thievery Corporation -  
Voyage Libre

David August -  
Anthem

With a massive sound system  
always at his disposal, David  
Mascioni, from the McIntosh  
group is always rocking out in  
the townhouse.

Here's a few of his favorites  
that he's shared with us...



no. 5 NYC

## MUSICAL FIDELITY

*Discover our full Range of Integrated Amplifier  
with exceptional power and clarity*

### M3SI \$1499

The M3si produces high quality sound, has an extensive range of useful inputs and offers high reliability, compact size and a fair price. With its strong 85 watts per channel, the M3si will drive a huge variety of appropriate loudspeakers.



★★★★  
[...] with increased  
capacitance means  
the M3si's bottom  
end is delivered  
with punch...  
HIFI Choice



### M5SI \$1999

The M5si is a real high end amplifier. At 150wpc, with high current delivery, it will drive virtually any loudspeaker easily.

### M6SI \$2999

The M6si offers such excellent performance, facilities and power that unless you are seeking the most exotic high-end sound quality you would never need another amplifier. Internally, the M6si is configured as 2 independent monobloc power amps with a separate pre amp.



listening to  
music should feel,  
but often doesn't. The  
M6si struck just the  
right balance.  
Soundstage  
Access

*All models are available in black or silver finish.*

For more informations visit [www.musicalfidelity.com](http://www.musicalfidelity.com)

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# Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...



## VPI Prime Signature

\$6,000

[www.vpiindustries.com](http://www.vpiindustries.com)

The top of VPI's "Production" lineup is a monster, available in black or rosewood. With adjustable VTA on the fly and a range of tonearm wands, this table is a dream come true for the analog lover with multiple cartridges.

## JBL L100 Classic

\$4,000/pair

[www.jblsynthesis.com](http://www.jblsynthesis.com)

Yes. They are back! JBL's L100 returned to CES this year to a mighty welcome, and this speaker is sure to attract a number of fans young and old.

Will they live up to the promise? We'll soon find out. And the classic foam grills look every bit as cool as the originals, which we just happen to have a nice pair of to compare.

## REL No.25

\$7,500

[www.rel.net](http://www.rel.net)

REL's flagship reference sub has every bit of tech that the REL engineers can throw at it, along with the coolest carbon fiber remote ever, allowing full adjustment right from your listening chair. We can't wait to give these a test drive.



# Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...

## Sugden A21SE Signature

\$3,250

[www.sugden.com](http://www.sugden.com)

Sugden has been making incredibly good, yet understated products for 51 years now. We reviewed the original A21 years ago, and it was fantastic, with a musicality approached by few amplifiers at any price.

If you can get by with 30 watts per channel, this piece of British hifi royalty will amaze and delight you. Thanks to a fifty percent larger power supply, Sugden promises more dynamics than before from their fully Class-A single ended design.

Watch for this in our next issue, which will be all integrated amplifiers.



## Clarity by Design

Transparent Uncolored Accurate.

This is what made the sound of the original British Broadcasting Corporation monitors legendary. Graham Audio has made it their mission to continue this legacy, and to bring the Chartwell LS3/5 and LS3/5A, the Chartwell LS6, the LS5/8 and LS5/9 to a broader global audience.

Drawn from many years of BBC research, and through the engineering genius of Derek Hughes, these speakers have been recreated using state of the art materials and technology under license from the BBC. A new addition to this series is the Chartwell Sub 3, a bespoke compact, passive sub-woofer designed to be used in conjunction with the LS3/5 monitors.

Graham Audio are also proud to announce the VOTU, their flagship 1000 watts per channel, high-end monitor for large studios and listening rooms. Effortless dynamics and vast detail come as standard.

...hear the difference



Distributed in the United States by: Graham Audio USA  
[www.grahamaudiousa.com](http://www.grahamaudiousa.com) | [info@grahamaudiousa.com](mailto:info@grahamaudiousa.com)



CHARTWELL  
A DIVISION OF  
GRAHAM AUDIO

# Future Tense

Reviews in our immediate future...



**Luxman**  
**EQ-500**  
\$6,995  
[www.luxman.com](http://www.luxman.com)

This all-tube, three input phonostage is beautiful to behold and is the ultimate in flexibility. Controls for gain, loading, and more are all available from the front panel. There's even a built-in cartridge demagnetizer. (labeled "articulator.")

With balanced and RCA outputs, the EQ-500 will drive any source and can be placed at a distance from your preamplifier if neccessary.

And, as with all Luxman products, it is beautifully excecuted. Built to last for a lifetime of analog enjoyment. Watch for our full review very soon.

# SCANSONIC HD



*"Speaker DNA  
- from the  
best of  
families"*

# Setlist

Photo by Phil Greenhalgh



Phil Greenhalgh returns to TONE with another cracking image, this time of Gary Numan, playing Liverpool's Exhibition Centre last July.

1. Everything Comes Down To This
2. Films
3. Bed Of Thorns
4. Metal
5. Pressure
6. Ghost Nation
7. Jagged
8. M.E.
9. We're The Unforgiven
10. Mercy
11. A Prayer For The Unborn
12. Here in The Black
13. My Name is Ruin
14. Cars
15. When The World Comes Apart
16. Love Hurt Bleed

encore:

17. Down in The Park
18. Are Friends Electric?

# Setlist

Photo by Brian Gage



Staffer Brian Gage grabbed this photo at Portland, Oregon's Mississippi Studios during a recent performance of Morgan James. He said, "Amazing singer, and I only took one shot!"

We think he captured the moment perfectly.

1. Up In Smoke
2. Hunter
3. You Thought Not
4. Making Up For Lost Love
5. Ransom
6. Emotions
7. A Case Of You
8. I Can't Stand The Rain
9. Better Me
10. Burden
11. Saved By You
12. Say The Worlds
13. Drown
14. Call My Name
15. Reckless Abandon
16. Sledgehammer (encore)



## *Integrated Wonders*

The new Esoteric integrated amplifiers represent a new level of musicality and resolution. They also represent a new level of value.

### **The all new F-Series by Esoteric**

The precision of an Esoteric preamplifier with the authority of an Esoteric power amplifier - in one gorgeous, premium built chassis -

# ESOTERIC



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For more information on Esoteric products such as the new F-Series, or to find your Esoteric dealer please visit:  
<http://www.esoteric-usa.com>

# Dealers That Mean Business:

You've read all the reviews, you've argued with the internet pundits,

and you're ready to write a check. Now what? If you're a slightly used customer that likes to shop for the best bargain you can find on Audiogon, this article is not for you. And, controversial though it might sound, I'm not against Audiogon. If you want a gently pre-owned preamp, love music, and just don't want to buy new, I get that – as long as you know what you're getting into. Audiogon can be a great place to buy pre owned gear if you know exactly what you want - and don't expect ANY service. But someone has to buy it new, so you can buy it used – remember that!

If you are the customer that likes to buy new, loves the feel (and the smell) of taking it out of the box for the first time, knowing no one else has touched it, I get that too. Personally, I'm about 50/50 on this experience, as I am with cars. Ask anyone who's bought a preamp or a used car from me, it's usually pretty pampered.


However, if you are going to spring for new gear, you need a good dealer. Someone who understands you, your music and most of all your perspective. You need someone to help you find the right components that will work together as a system, help you set it up in some cases, and offer support when things don't work out as planned. There's no substitute for experience, and a great dealer knows their products, and knows what will work best for you.

Nearly every audio system that has failed to achieve the greatness expected of it can be traced back to poor component choice (system and/or room) synergy and poor component setup. I've been to hifi shows, homes, and dealers all over the world – hearing sound good, bad, and somewhere inbetween. It always boils down to these two factors if something isn't truly broken, and it rarely is.

The solution is easy. Find a great dealer. While there isn't a hifi shop on every corner like there was back in the 70s, there are still some truly great dealers out there that will help you put together a stunning music system, regardless of your budget. And I'm on a mission to find as many of them as I can for you.

I'm starting with the folks I know, in this new section of the magazine. Most of the establishments in this list are running full page ads in the magazine – and there is a caveat. I will not accept advertising in this magazine from a dealer unless I've been to their place, seen the shop and have talked to a cross section of their customers to know they provide superior service. In most cases, these are hifi shops that I, or someone on the staff has purchased gear from as well.

These are not just people wanting to buy space in TONEAudio. Every one of these dealers carry my personal endorsement, and I hope that will help you on your journey. As we go forward, look for the "TONEAudio Approved Dealer" sticker on your favorite establishment. Know a great dealer, that you've had superior service from? Let me know, I would like to pay them a visit and add them to the list.



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David Michael Audio, Detroit MI | Don Better Audio, Cleveland OH | Goodwin's High End, Boston MA | JS Audio, Washington DC  
Musical Artisans, Chicago IL | Music Lovers, San Francisco CA | Ne Plus Ultra, Austin TX | Arizona Hi-Fi, Phoenix AZ  
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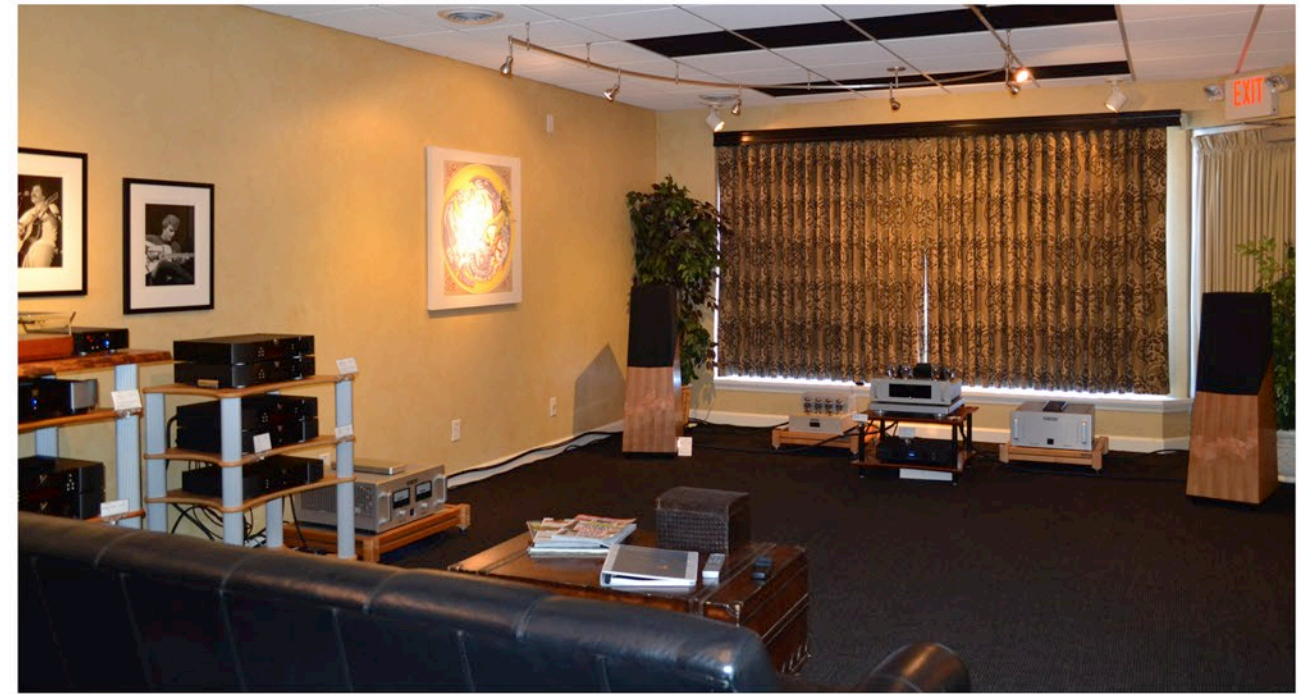
## Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

### Wauwatosa, Wisconsin - Ultra Fidelis

[www.ultrafidelis.com](http://www.ultrafidelis.com)

7125 West North Avenue  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213

414.221.0200

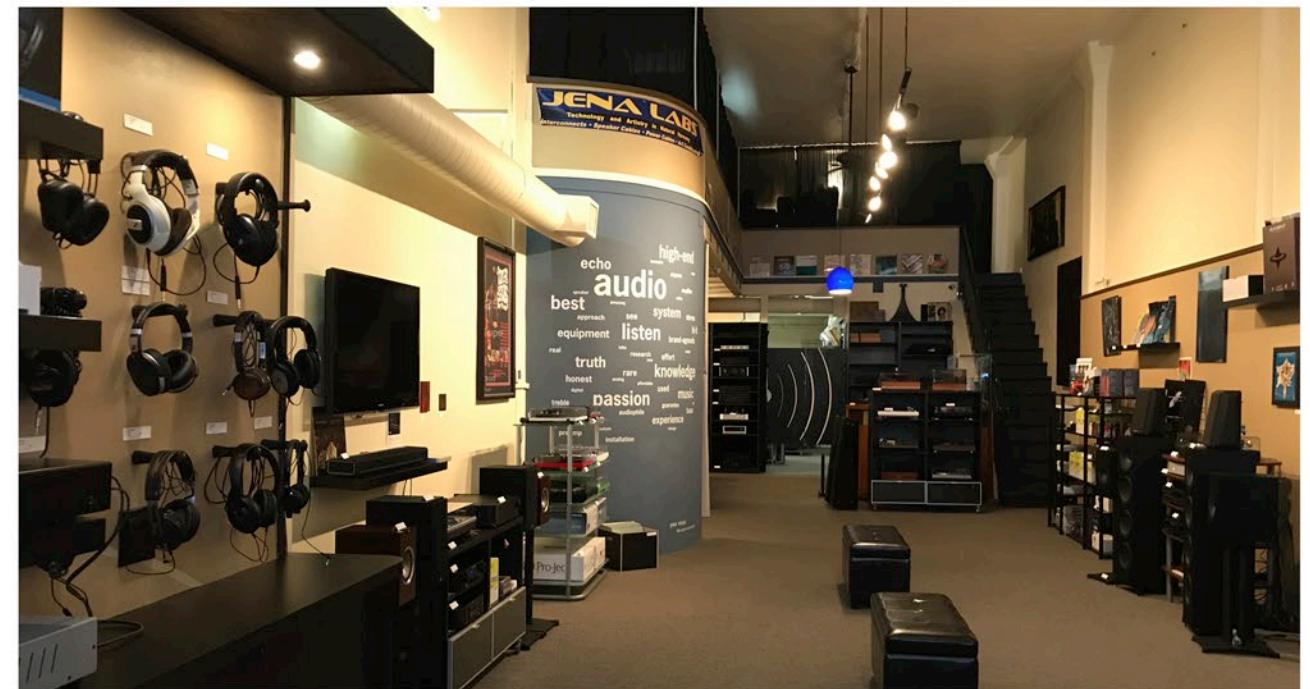


### Portland, Oregon - Echo Audio

[www.echohifi.com](http://www.echohifi.com)

1015 SW Washington Street  
Portland, Oregon 97205

888.248.3246



## Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

### San Francisco - AudioVision San Francisco

www.audiovisionsf.com

1628 California Street

San Francisco, California

415.614.1118



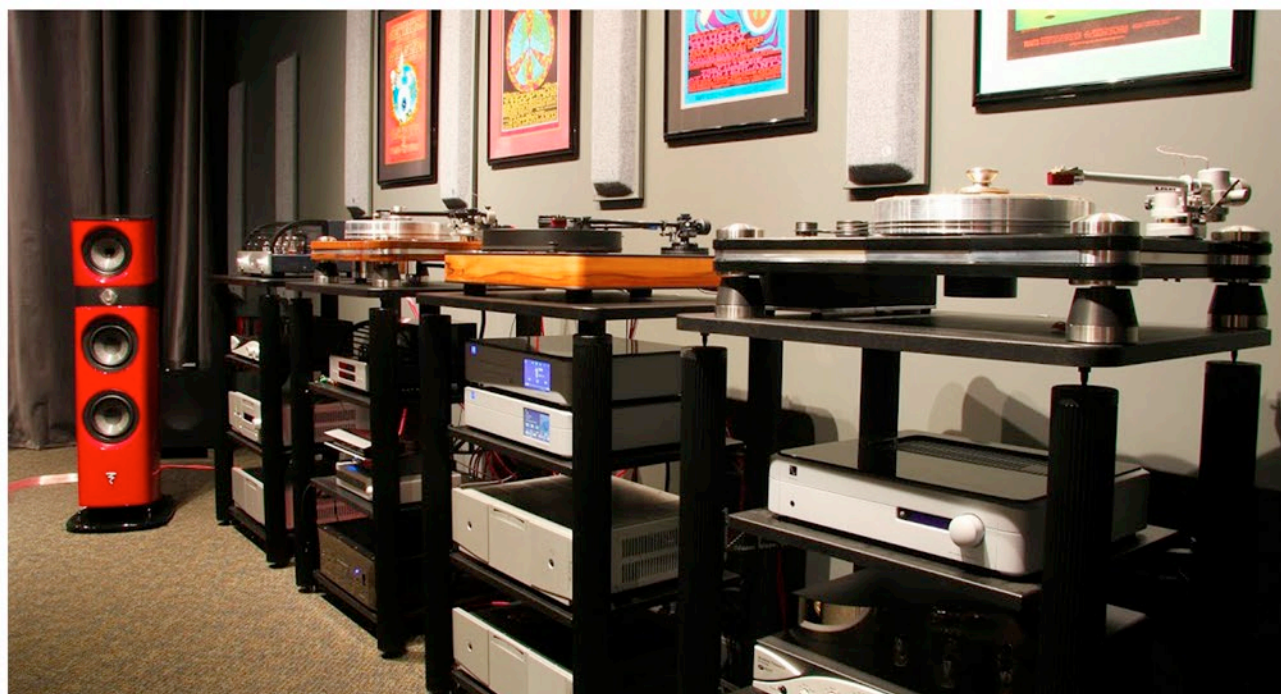
### La Verne, California - Upscale Audio

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## Austin, Texas - Whetstone Audio

[www.whetstoneaudio.com](http://www.whetstoneaudio.com)

2401 E 6th St. #1001

Austin, Texas 78702

512.477.8503



## Portland, Oregon - Stereotypes Audio

[www.stereotypesaudio.com](http://www.stereotypesaudio.com)

1401 SE Morrison Street, Suite 115

Portland, Oregon 97214

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# 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

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**Marietta, Georgia - The Audio Company**  
www.theaudioco.com  
146 South Park Square NE  
Marietta, Georgia 30060  
770.429.0434



**San Diego, California - Deja VU Audio West**  
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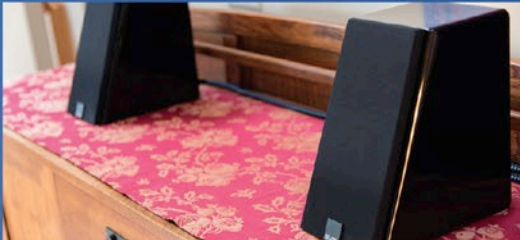
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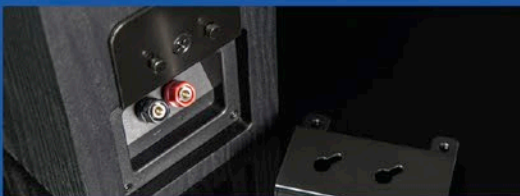
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## Vancouver, Canada - HiFi Centre

[www.hificentre.com](http://www.hificentre.com)

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Vancouver, BC V6B 6E3

888.232.9995



## Gig Harbor, Washington - Gig Harbor Audio

[www.gighroboraudio.com](http://www.gighroboraudio.com)

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Avantgarde Trio

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### DEALER INFORMATION

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# Get The Gear.

Where to find the gear you've seen in this issue.

Abyss	www.abyss-headphones.com	HANA	www.musicalsurroundings.com
Analog Magik	www.analogmagik.com	HiFi Centre	www.hificentre.com
Anthem	www.anthemav.com	Klipsch	www.klipsch.com
Aqua	www.aquahifi.com	Luxman	www.luxman.com
Audio Classics	www.audioclassics.com	McIntosh	www.mcintoshlabs.com
Audio Physic	www.vanalt.com	MartinLogan	www.martinlogan.com
AudioVision SF	www.audiovisionsf.com	Musical Fidelity	www.audiopluservices.com
Audio Research	www.audioresearch.com	Nagra	www.nagraaudio.com
Audolici	www.audolici.com	Naim	www.audiopluservices.com
Bassocontinuo	www.sumiko.net	Octave	www.octave.de
Boulder	www.boulderamp.com	Paradigm	www.paradigm.com
Bowers & Wilkins	www.bowers-wilkins.com	Pass Labs	www.passlabs.com
Brinkmann	www.brinkmann-audio.com	PrimaLuna	www.primaluna-usa.com
Cardas	www.cardas.com	Pro-Ject	www.pro-jectusa.com
Clearaudio	www.musicalsurroundings.com	PS Audio	www.psaudio.com
Conrad-Johnson	www.conradjohnson.com	Raidho	www.raidho.dk
dCS	www.dcsLtd.co.uk	Rega	www.soundorg.com
Dynaudio	www.dynaudio.com	REL	www.rel.net
E.A.T.	www.vanalt.com	Simaudio	www.simaudio.com
Esoteric	www.esoteric-usa.com	Sonoma	www.sonomaacoustics.com
Echo Audio	www.echohifi.com	Sonus faber	www.sonusfaber.com
Exogal	www.exogal.com	Sumiko	www.sumiko.net
Focal	www.audiopluservices.com	Suncoast Audio	www.suncoastaudio.com
Gamut	www.gamutaudio.com	SVS	www.svsound.com
Gig Harbor Audio	www.gigharboraudio.com	Totem	www.totemacoustic.com
Gold Note	www.goldnote.it	Upscale Audio	www.upscaleaudio.com
Golden Ear	www.goldenear.com	Vicoustic	www.audiopluservices.com
Graham Audio	www.grahamaudioUSA.com	VPI	www.vpiindustries.com
Grand Prix Audio	www.grandprixaudio.com	Woo Audio	www.woaudio.com

# Last Word

Our parting thought to ponder.

*Burt Bacharach on 8-Track.*

Hell yeah.



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