

»» **BEST BUYS**

TOP TURNTABLES

Vinyl has made a big comeback of late, and there's never been a better choice of turntables to play your cherished records on

BEST FOR VALUE

PRO-JECT DEBUT III/ORTOFON OM5E £130

★★★★★

The price says it all. For just £130 you get an excellent budget turntable with aluminium tonearm and Ortofon OM5E cartridge. The Debut III simply trounces similarly-priced CD players where all the important aspects of music making are concerned. It offers a taut, sprightly and well-focused sound, while low frequencies are full-bodied in the classic vinyl manner, with not a hint of bloat or lethargy. In the midrange, voices are given ample room to breathe and treble frequencies are crisp and attacking. This deck is a stellar performer and remarkable value for money.



BEST FOR JAZZ

PRO-JECT RPM5 £400

★★★★★

Pro-ject's budget Debut series has made the entry-level disc-spinner range its own (see above), and we reckon the RPM5 is good enough to do the same in the mid-priced area. It's a well-thought-out package: your money buys a nicely finished and well made deck, complete with a carbon fibre tone arm. You'll also need to buy a cartridge: the £50 Ortofon 510 works well, and is what we used during testing. In use, the RPM5 delivers all the detail you can reasonably expect for the money in a very musical manner. Our Product of the Year in 2006 and still a fabulous piece of kit.

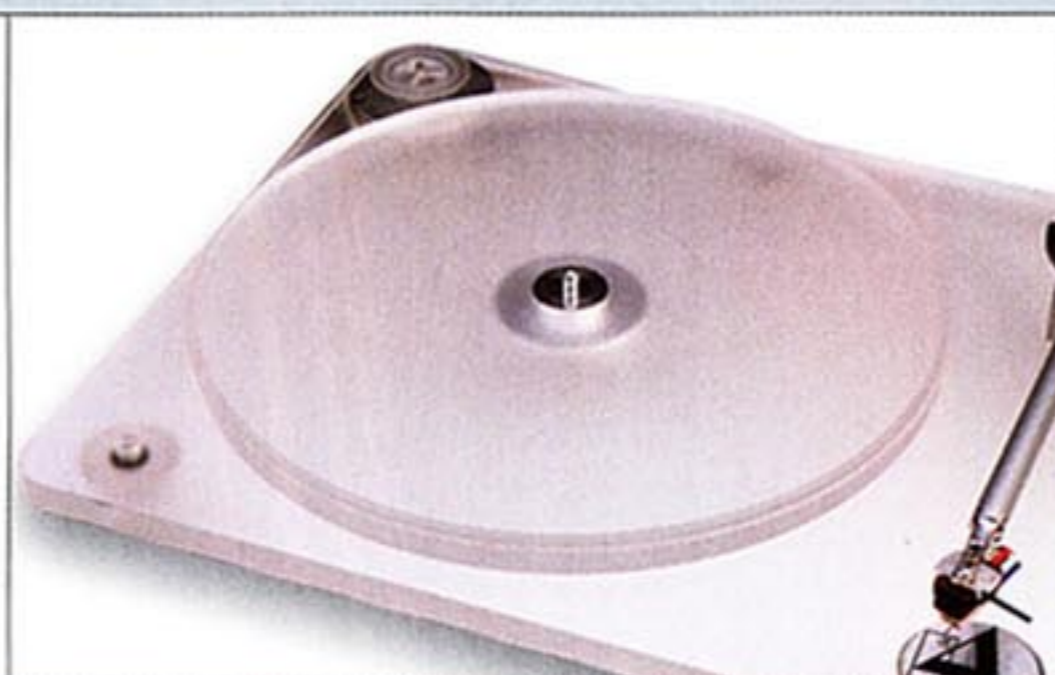


BEST ALL-ROUNDER

CLEARAUDIO EMOTION £690

★★★★★

We made the Emotion our Product of the Year turntable in 2004 and 2005, and with good reason. It continues to thrill and delight every-time we dig it out – it's lovely to behold, beautifully built and sounds superb, delivering a level of musical fidelity a CD player costing four figures would struggle to match. The Emotion is a dynamic, detailed listen, fully in touch with the emotional and mechanical aspects of your music. It may look like a Philippe Starck frippery, but the Clearaudio Emotion is a serious and purposeful proposition. If you want your turntable to look as good as it sounds, try this.



BEST FOR STYLE

ROKSAN RADIUS 5 £850

★★★★★

Trust Roksan to do things differently. The Radius 5 might look like a stylish but conventional deck, but under the skin you'll find gems of engineering that trace their roots all the way back to the company's first ever product, the Xerxes turntable. The deck is arranged in layers, to minimise vibration, and the motor is very compliantly mounted to even out any speed irregularities. As a result, the Roksan Radius 5 is a stormer, with a level of control and resolution that few can match. Have no doubt, this is a magnificent piece of engineering and worth every penny. We love it.



Try them with these...

→ **AMPLIFIER**



CYRUS 8vs
£800

★★★★★

This current version of the Cyrus 8 is the best yet, delivering superb imaging, drive and spaciousness combined with exemplary build quality.

FULL REVIEW [page 38](#)

→ **SPEAKERS**

PROAC STUDIO 140
£1440

★★★★★

These are great all-rounders that work well with all genres of music: they deliver punch, power and insight as and when they're needed, and dynamics are bold.

FULL REVIEW [page 96](#)



→ **PHONO STAGE**

TRICHORD DINO
£329

★★★★★

As the Cyrus amp above is a line-level device, you'll need to add the Award-winning Trichord Dino phono stage to boost the signal from the turntable.

FULL REVIEW [WHF'S&V Awards 2005](#)

£690 - £940

Clearaudio Emotion

★★★★★

£690



BEST BUY

THIS IS A great-value package: the Emotion turntable comes equipped with Clearaudio's Satisfy tonearm and an Aurum Classics Wood cartridge: and they all work together superbly.

Clearaudio's engineers clearly can't leave things alone. Since this deck first appeared, it's gained an improved belt and a matching motor pulley. The result is a greater sense of sparkle and clarity, further improving an already beautifully balanced sound, with few weaknesses. Rhythms are gripped with determination, and pounded out with a great deal of enthusiasm.

A sumptuous performer

REM's *Automatic For The People* can sound messy and confused on many turntables, but certainly not here: the Clearaudio delivers vocals with

FOR

A beautifully balanced sound that excites or soothes in equal measure

AGAINST

Admittedly, over £600 is a substantial investment, but it's worth every penny

VERDICT

With further upgrades since we first awarded the Emotion five stars, it's not surprising it's an Award-winner

class-leading clarity without sacrificing any sense of body or warmth.

Detail, dynamics and attack are all first-rate, but don't worry, subtlety isn't





“The Emotion delivers vocals with class-leading clarity, without sacrificing warmth”

sacrificed in this bid to excite. Put on a mellow tune such as Nick Cave's *Wonderful Life*, and it shifts gear effortlessly to produce a sumptuous yet detailed performance. This is a deck that responds to whatever you play on it.

Build-quality is impressive, too, with each part of this package feeling solidly engineered and lovingly finished.

Spending more than £600 on this package might seem extravagant – but not once you've heard this deck in action. Its combination of talents won it our Product of the Year accolade in 2005, and now you know why.

AT A GLANCE...

-  33/45 RPM ✓✓
-  ELECTRONIC SPEED CHANGE ✗
-  ARM INCLUDED ✓
-  CARTRIDGE INCLUDED ✓

ALSO WORTH CONSIDERING...

£750-£1365

Roksan Radius 5

★★★★★

£750



HERE WE HAVE the more affordable version of the Radius 5, in a wood finish. Setting up is harder than with some rivals but the Roksan rewards with an enjoyable presentation.

VERDICT

A solid performer that rarely puts a foot wrong: the Roksan should be on any sub-£1000 turntable audition list

Pro-ject RPM9X

★★★★★

£1100



PRO-JECT MAKES MORE than just budget decks, as this proves. So what impresses here? Well, the bass is hefty but taut, and the treble is sweet, but timing and attack aren't quite up to scratch.

VERDICT

A big, bold dramatic deck that lives up to its funky looks, but the very best rivals at this level outgun it slightly

Clearaudio Champion L1

★★★★★

£1365



A STANDARD CHAMPION deck costs £810 but take the step up to Level 1 and the price jumps to £1365. This buys another acrylic layer for the plinth and a metal stand for the motor.

VERDICT

Combines stunning aesthetics with great sound; best suited to vocals, light jazz and classical; it's upgradable

Clearaudio Solution AMG



£2375

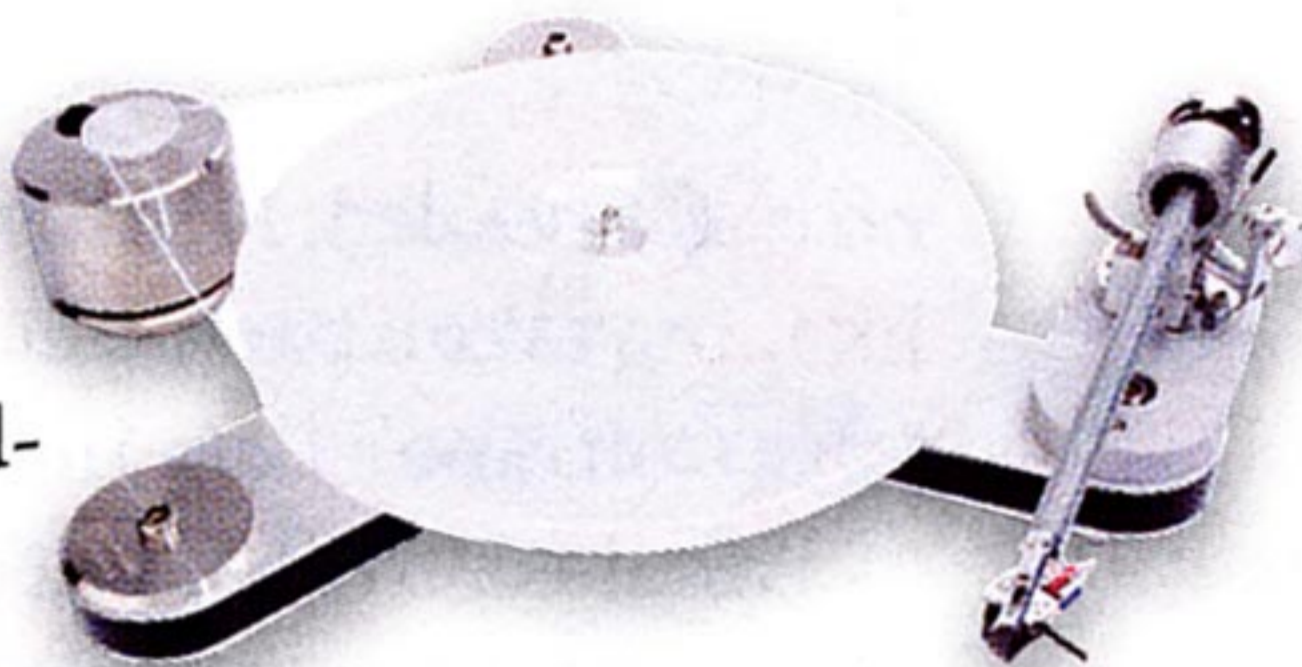
THE AMG ON

test here

marks the middle ground of the Solution

series, and has an advanced

version of the Satisfy tonearm with a carbon-fibre arm tube and single-piece wiring from cartridge to amplifier. Delivery is clear, detailed and pure-sounding product, but it's too restrained for our tastes.



VERDICT

This is a very fine deck that's really easy to admire, but a little harder to love; needs more drive and punch