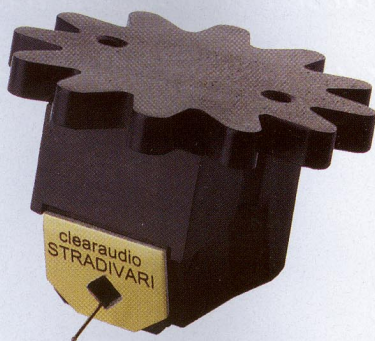


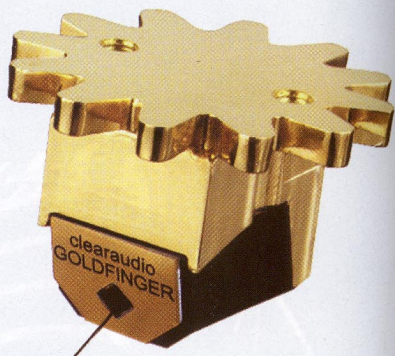
Phono Cartridge of the Year



Clearaudio Stradivari \$3000

With no discernable tendency toward edginess or bogus brilliance, this pickup is unsurpassed for sheer listenability with voices and acoustic instruments; its overall presentation has ample roundedness and body yet is detailed in a wholly natural way, with splendid air and ambience retrieval. There is a very slight extroversion in the range where cymbals, triangles, and other high-lying percussion generate a lot of their energy; but it doesn't adversely affect reproduction of strings, which are beautifully natural, brilliant or warm as called for. Tracking and suppression of surface noise are superb, dynamic range simply hair-raising. There is an overall rightness, an organic coherence, about this pickup that is difficult to define but instantly evident in the listening. PS's new reference.

Reviewed by Paul Seydor, Issue 172



Clearaudio Goldfinger v2 \$8000

Now, in a v2 version, with twice the number of magnets and lower-weight coils, the latest Goldfinger is the best cartridge yet from the German analog mavens at Clearaudio. For several years now, Clearaudio has been moving away from the clinical sound of its earlier offerings toward a more *gemütlich* (and more natural) balance. The Goldfinger comes closer than ever to neutrality, adding substantially to overall transient speed and lifelike timbre without sacrificing any of Clearaudio's traditional strengths in soundstaging, extension and resolution at the frequency extremes, and astonishing low-level detail. Along with last year's cartridge of the year—the Air Tight PC-1—the Goldfinger is currently the best mc we've reviewed.

Review by JV forthcoming