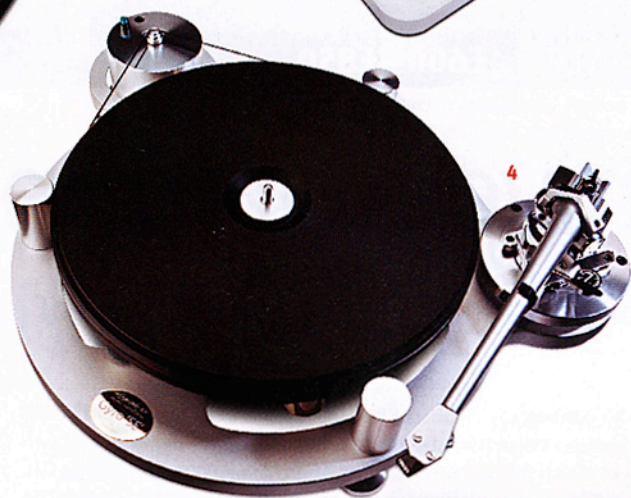


VINYLA answer?

It's a vintage time for top-quality turntables – and with prices for every pocket, you don't have to be a millionaire...



1 SIMPLY GORGEOUS
ROKSAN XERXES 20
£2895 ★★★★★

Roksan has been making its Xerxes turntable for many years, and it's long been a top vinyl-spinning choice. This is the latest version, and the price-tag buys you the turntable itself, in a £250-option piano gloss finish, plus the Tabriz arm and Corus Black cartridge. What grabs you immediately is that this deck extracts maximum smile factor from any record you play. It's as simple as that, and could you ask for more?

2 A CLEAR BARGAIN
CLEARAUDIO
EMOTION
£690 ★★★★★

Clearaudio by name and nature: this deck is made from translucent satin clear or satin blue acrylic, and comes complete with the company's Satisfy tonearm and an Aurum Classics Wood cartridge, making this a superb package for the money. And in this latest form, it has excellent sparkle and detail, allied to solid timing and bags of subtlety when required. No wonder it won Awards in both 2005 and 2006.

3 BEST FOR REAL
HI-FI ON A BUDGET
PRO-JECT DEBUT III
£130 ★★★★★

Pro-ject has played a major part in the recent renewal of interest in vinyl LPs (and the turntables needed to play them), with a great range of highly affordable decks. The basic Debut III comes complete with an Ortofon cartridge in place, so it can be up and running in seconds, and sounds very persuasive. Spend more, and you get the £225 Phono SB version, with built-in phono stage and electronic speed control.

4 BEST TIMELESS
DESIGN CLASSIC
MICHELL GYRODEC SE
£2230 ★★★★★

Like the Roksan Xerxes, the Gyrodec's been around for ages – well over 25 years, in fact. Seen here with SME's IV arm, it takes some time to put together and set up correctly, but this long-established design still looks futuristic today. And the sound lives up to the style: it's fast, expressive and capable of explosive dynamics when the music calls for them, and yet controlled and subtle. Lovely, really...

5 BEST FOR STYLE
ON A BUDGET
PRO-JECT RPM5
£400 ★★★★★

Pro-ject's designers may be the kings of the entry-level turntable, but they can also turn on the style while still delivering performance to challenge some pricier rivals. The RPM5 uses an MDF platter atop a sleek plinth, and comes complete with the company's carbon-fibre tonearm installed. And it has a sound to have you re-exploring your LP collection: all-night listening sessions are a real danger with this one.

6 BEST COMPLETE
TURNTABLE PACKAGE
WILSON BENESCH
FULL CIRCLE
£2100 ★★★★★

The Full Circle package puts together a Circle turntable, a.c.t. 0.5 tonearm and Ply cartridge to make a total vinyl-playing solution from the Sheffield company. And yes, that's carbon-fibre, stiffening the main components of the deck, in the armtube, and forming the body of the cartridge. It all contributes to a subtle, refined and highly addictive sound, as well as a thing of fabulous hi-fi beauty.