

dCS | LEGENDS

Only A Few Engineers Become Legends



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During the course of his extraordinary 40-year career, the late Ed Cherney touched the hearts of musicians and music fans alike.

His great production skills and deep emotional connection to music enabled him to instinctively understand the making of a great song which allowed him to engineer and produce recordings for a variety of artists including Bob Dylan, Queen Latifah, Eric Clapton, Bonnie Raitt and The Rolling Stones. But perhaps Ed's greatest talent was the passionate way he engaged with everyone he met.

Over the years, Ed received numerous honors including four GRAMMY® Awards, beginning with his work on Bonnie Raitt's *Longing In Their Hearts* which won for Best Engineered Album (non-classical). This was followed by GRAMMYs for Buddy Guy's *Blues Singer*; *Summertime: Willie Nelson Sings Gershwin*; and most recently Willie Nelson's *My Way*, which won for Best Traditional Pop Album.

Ed's remarkable life is why dCS is proud to celebrate him posthumously as a recipient of our dCS Legends Award.

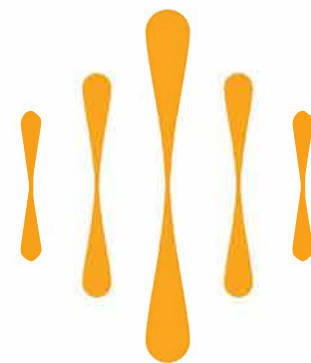


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-AV Forums

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-Soundstage (EISA Member)

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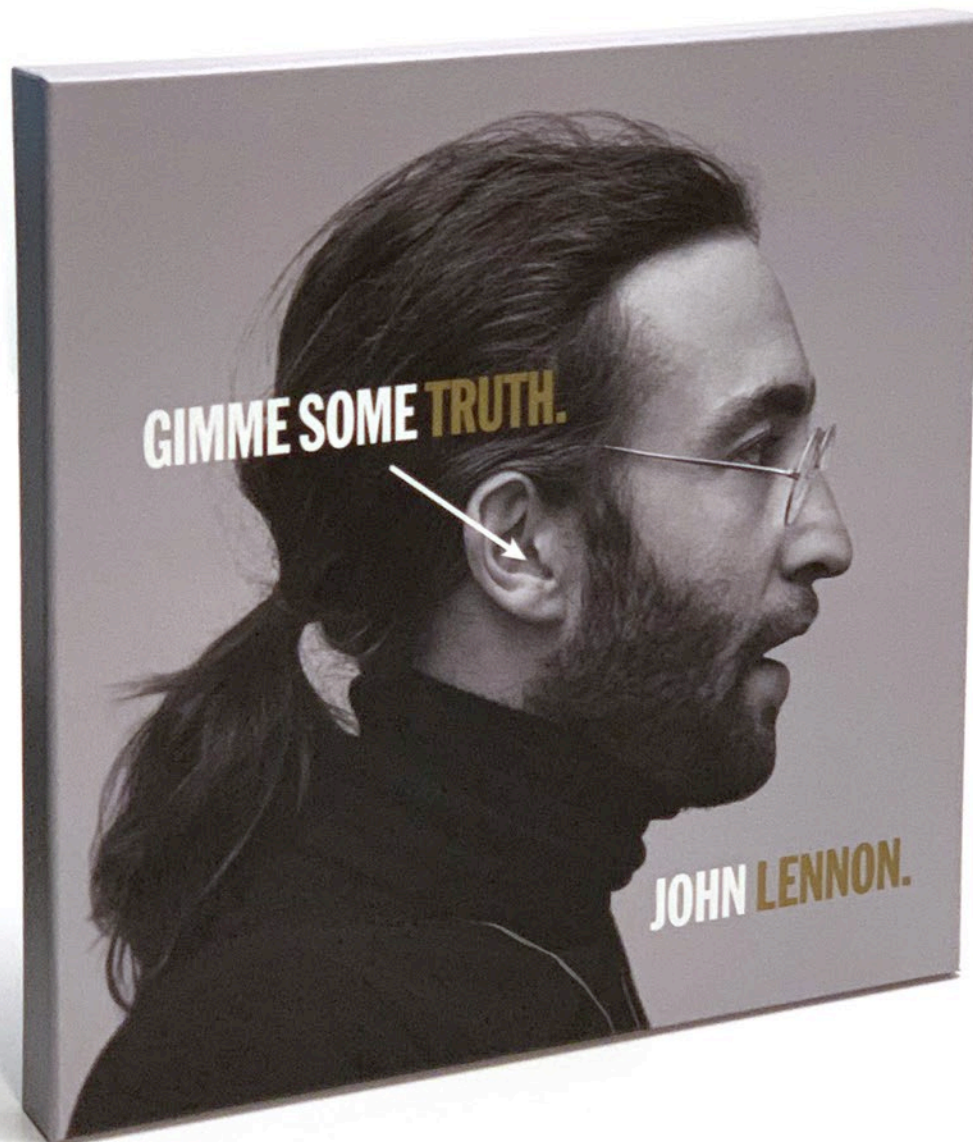
-Hi-Fi News (EISA Member)



SVSSound.com

In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...



You know we love boxed sets and we're always pretty smiley about the Beatles.

In honor of what would have been Lennon's 80th birthday, the *Gimme Some Truth* box is "completely remixed from scratch for a new collection."

The sound quality is still less than stellar, especially on the LP version, but that's now really why you buy something like this. It truly is part of the celebration, and the packaging is outstanding.

So as an audiophile choice, this box gets a B-, but as a great bit of Lennon/Beatles memorabilia, a solid A.

Right on.

Sonus faber

ELECTA AMATOR III

Legacy refined



When John Atkinson came to measure, I insisted he listen...
He let out an involuntary "Wow!" The presence of the images
and the absence of reproductive artifacts were remarkable.
It's what this hobby/pursuit is all about.

Michael Fremer, Stereophile, May 2020



When Music Matters



Valve Amplification Company

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Sponsored By Qobuz



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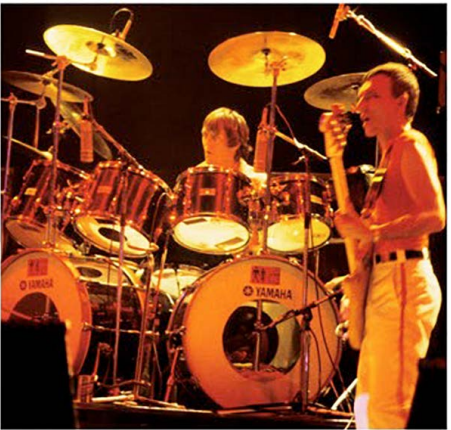
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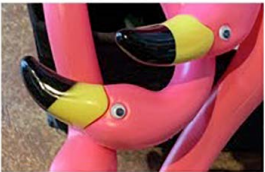
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Few things are as compelling to listen to at low volume levels than an amplifier with single ended triodes. This issue we build a system around the Line Magnetic LM-805 1A.

By Jeff Dorgay



TONE is published 6 times yearly in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. And except for that one print issue, we've been online only, Saving the trees since 2005.



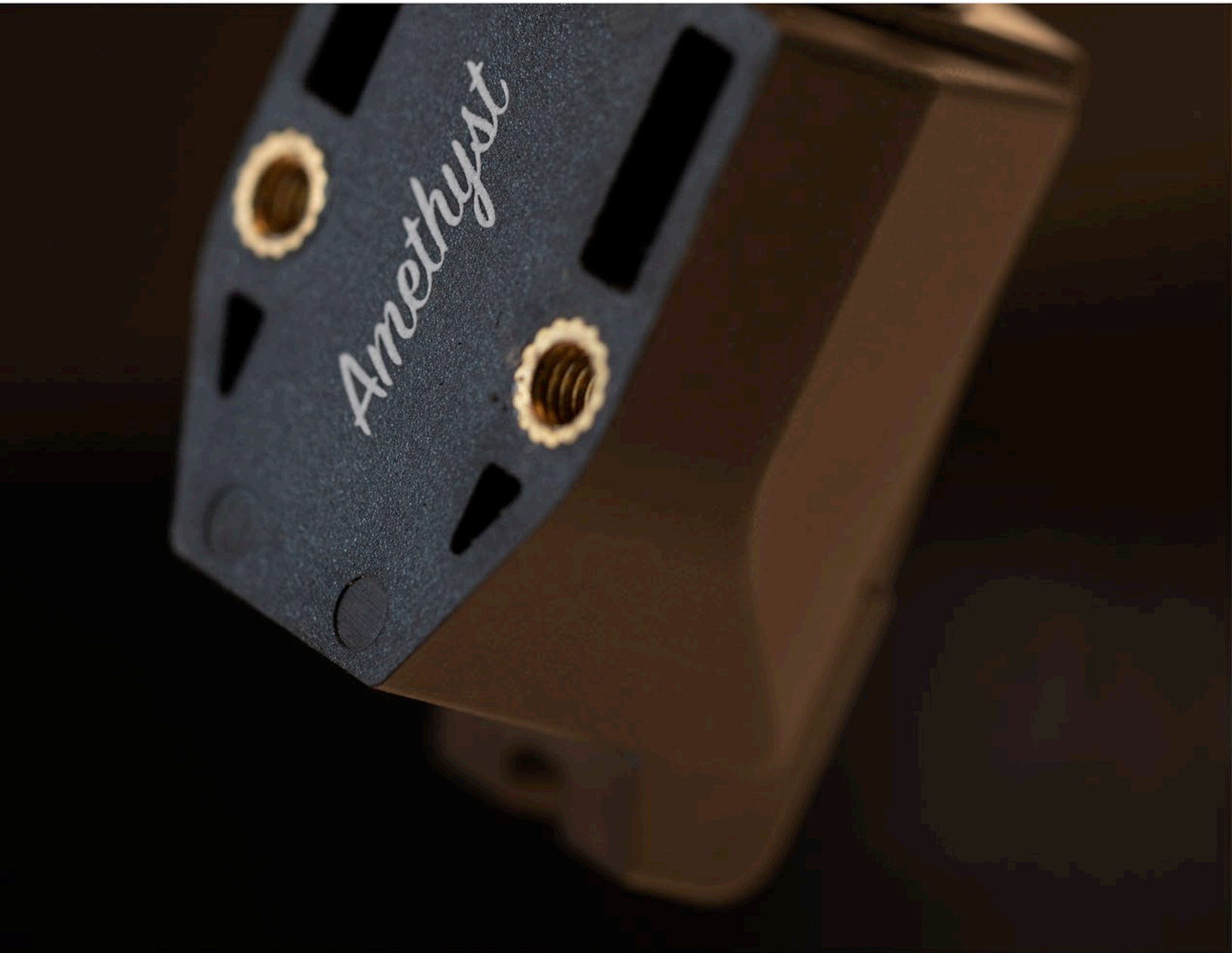
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More Analog...

New Contributor, and Industry Veteran Kevin Wolff takes the new Amythest Moving Magnet cartridge from Sumiko for a spin.



Optimized or Compromised?



With the modular OCTAVE HP 700 preamplifier, there is no trade-off!

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new arrivals...

This issue, we are privileged to add another top-shelf industry expert to our team.

Kevin Wolff should be a familiar name and face to many of you that have attended a hifi show, or dealer event for Sumiko, AudioQuest, or Bowers & Wilkins in the last 15 years.

Kevin will be doing the heavy lifting on many of our analog reviews. His meticulous nature, will help us all get the info.





Cover Shot:

REL's new S/510 subs take advantage of their latest R&D efforts, delivering the goods in a smaller system.

And of course, we had to go for a six pack configuration.

Shot with Panasonic's Lumix S1-R and 24-105mm zoom lens, with spotlights. Final exposure is 8 seconds at f6.3, ISO 100.



Walnut **NEW**



Maple

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Turntables are carefully made with extreme precision to pick up the finest details in a record. The stylus navigating the tiny variations in the vinyl's grooves is a delicate process that is very sensitive to vibrations. The DELOS butcher block from IsoAcoustics decouples the turntable from the supporting surface and dramatically diminishes structural vibrations and resonances, resulting in greater clarity and detail.

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no.104

P u b l i s h e r s L e t t e r

Nice to be back again, though a little quicker than normal.

We lost a bit of time over the summer due to COVID-related logistical issues, so our last three issues of the year, will be a little closer together so we can stay on schedule. The beads on the end of the string are crowding each other a bit, or maybe we can just attribute it to a little analog compression and call it a day.

One of my favorite parts of this job is being exposed to gear performing beyond expectations. Just when you think you've seen and heard most of it, a surprise is always welcome. That applies to everything I enjoy; automobiles, watches, music, and most of all cameras. Having earned my living as a working pro photographer in the advertising world before I started TONE, I lived in the film/analog days, using everything from a Minox to an 8x10 Sinar P.

I embraced digital imaging back when Adobe Photoshop was still in final beta form, and picked up a digital camera before they were practical. Both from an image quality and an expense point of view, but have always been committed to moving forward.

Panasonic's Mark Toal was kind enough to lend me the use of their S1R digital camera, with a 47MP sensor and Panasonic's 24-105 mm lens. This camera has been developed with Leica, and should you be in the market for something like this, it can take the full line of Leica SL lenses. I have to say, the Panasonic lens is awfully good, so perhaps the Leica glass will bring an even bigger surprise.

All of the images for this issue have been produced with the S1R, and this camera has been a joy to use. Something old timers like myself often harrumph about is the ever shrinking size of digital cameras. The S1R feels like my old Nikon F2 with motor drive, and I kind of like that.

It's fun to focus on something other than hifi for a few minutes, and this has been a very pleasurable diversion. I hope you enjoy the photos. It's as much fun to take the pictures for TONE as it is to evaluate the gear.

As always, please stay safe out there.



Here's a clip that someone from Facebook shared from a radio station in the early 70's. A lot of heavy hitters here.

1. STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN---Led Zeppelin
2. FREE BIRD---Lynyrd Skynyrd
3. LAYLA---Derek and the Dominoes
4. DESPERADO---Eagles
5. ROUNDAABOUT---Yes
6. ROADS TO MOSCOW---Al Stewart
7. WHIPPING POST---Allman Brothers
8. AQUALUNG---Jethro Tull
9. 24 HOURS AT A TIME---Marshall Tucker Band
10. CLOSE TO THE EDGE---Yes
11. HEY JUDE---Beatles
12. FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND/LOVES LIES BLEEDING---Elton John
13. CAN'T YOU SEE---Marshall Tucker Band
14. DO YOU FEEL LIKE WE DO---Peter Frampton
15. SUITE: JUDY BLUE EYES---C.S.N.Y.
16. TAXI---Harry Chapin
17. AND YOU AND I---Yes
18. ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER---Jimi Hendrix
19. INNA GADDA DA VIDA---Iron Butterfly
20. LOW SPARK OF HIGH HEELED BOYS---Traffic
21. WON'T GET FOOLED AGAIN---Who
22. SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL---Rolling Stones
23. NIGHTS IN WHITE SATIN---Moody Blues
24. GIMMEE SHELTER---Rolling Stones
25. GREEN GRASS AND HIGH TIDES---Outlaws
26. NANTUCKET SLEIGHRIDE---Mountain
27. LA GRANGE---ZZ Topp
28. MIRACLES---Jefferson Starship
29. A DAY IN THE LIFE---Beatles
30. BEST OF MY LOVE---Eagles
31. BABY I LOVE YOUR WAY---Peter Frampton
32. JESSICA---Allman Brothers
33. YOUR SONG---Elton John
34. AMERICAN PIE---Don McLean
35. BLUE SKY---Allman Brothers
36. SWEET JANE---Lou Reed
37. BROWN SUGAR---Rolling Stones
38. BELL BOTTOM BLUES---Eric Clapton
39. DREAM ON---Aerosmith
40. IN MY OWN WAY---Marshall Tucker Band



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Revisiting the Nakamichi CR-7a:

I can still remember the ones that almost got away—that beautiful South Carolina girl I had started to date, that shiny red Jaguar convertible I saw on the used car lot, and that expensive new Nakamichi CR-7A cassette deck I spotted in a hi-fi store. But before I get to my backstories, let's begin at the beginning.



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– Jon Myles, Hifi World

"The differences were stunning.....What I can state is that the Ultra Black 11 cables are currently the best I have heard in my system."

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– Chris Kelly, The Ear

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In 1973, the Nakamichi Corporation introduced two extraordinary stereo cassette tape decks—the Tri-Tracer Models 1000 and 700—which boasted 3 discrete heads (erase, record, playback), dual capstan drives, adjustable record head azimuth, tape pad lifters, and Dolby B noise-reduction. Suddenly, the lowly cassette tape was elevated from just being a portable music source (remember the Sony Walkman?) to a medium good enough for pro and home recording. Nakamichi had finally overcome the sonic limitations of 1/8-inch wide tapes playing at 17/8 inches per second.

When Nakamichi decks were first being sold, open-reel magnetic tapes were considered (and are still considered by many audiophiles) to be the ultimate source for recorded music in home audio systems. They could capture a wide range of frequencies and dynamics without being subject to scratches, dust, warping and the other nasties that plagued vinyl discs. Prior to the digital recording era, open-reel master tapes were the original sources for commercial LPs. I bought my first Nakamichi stereo cassette deck, the Model 480, in 1979, and used it mostly for recording classical music broadcasts and to back up some of my most valuable records.

That all changed ten years later, when I saw a Nakamichi CR-7A displayed in my dealer's showroom. At \$1,900 (\$3,800 in today's currency), the price was a bit off-putting, so I just added it to my stereo equipment "wish list" and moved on, or so I thought.

I simply could not get this wonderful tape deck out of my head. The CR-7A was loaded with features intended to ease the burden of an amateur recordist. The CR-7A featured automatic calibration of playback, azimuth bias and recording level with independent memory banks for the three tape formulations (normal, chrome, and metal), a real-time tape counter, an auto fader at the end of a cassette side, and an auto-repeat function. Timed recordings could be made, connecting the deck and its source to an outboard timer.



Enjoy the Experience



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A subsonic filter eliminated the “whomps” when taping warped records and another filter suppressed FM radio’s dreaded 19kHz pilot tones. A wireless remote control could start or pause a new tape recording, play back a pre-recorded tape, and manually adjust playback head azimuth. Late night listeners could take advantage of the headphone jack on the façade, with its own volume control.

The CR-7A also featured a choice of Dolby B (SNR> 66dB) or Dolby C (SNR>72dB) noise-reduction systems, and a frequency response of 10-20kHz +/-2dB, emulating that of an open-reel deck recording at 7.5 inches per second. This outstanding audio performance was the result of three discrete heads, two separate motors for the tape transport (FG servo Direct Drive for the capstan and a DC for the reel drive) and two DC motors for the cam drive and playback head azimuth control. And a pair of sexy digital FL peak-reading meters that could be easily seen from the listener’s chair!

Nakamichi ceased production of the CR-7A in 1993, as cassette tapes were steadily losing ground to the compact disc. Another ten years passed, and, as a new Audiogon member, I occasionally surfed their website for great equipment deals. One day, I noticed a listing for a “pre-owned” Nak CR-7A in great shape that had recently been serviced. It was priced at under a grand, and, best of all, this listing was about to expire. Of course, I snapped it up.

Since then, this special cassette tape deck has always been in one of my sound systems. Listening to taped broadcasts of a Pavarotti concert from the stage of Chicago’s Lyric Opera or a final piano recital by

Vladimir Horowitz in Orchestra Hall or an RCA cassette tape of the Houston Grand Opera’s ground-breaking performance of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess always puts a big smile on my face.

Ditto for Madonna’s *True Blue*, and Prince’s *Parade* cassettes that I picked up more than thirty years ago. The sounds of pre-recorded cassettes varied considerably and tended to have slightly rolled-off high ends that can be boosted by Nakamichi’s playback head azimuth adjustment. My off-the-air tapes used higher end tape formulations (chrome or metal) and, in spite of the frequency limits (30-15kHz) of FM broadcasts, sounded noticeably better than most of their pre-recorded counterparts.

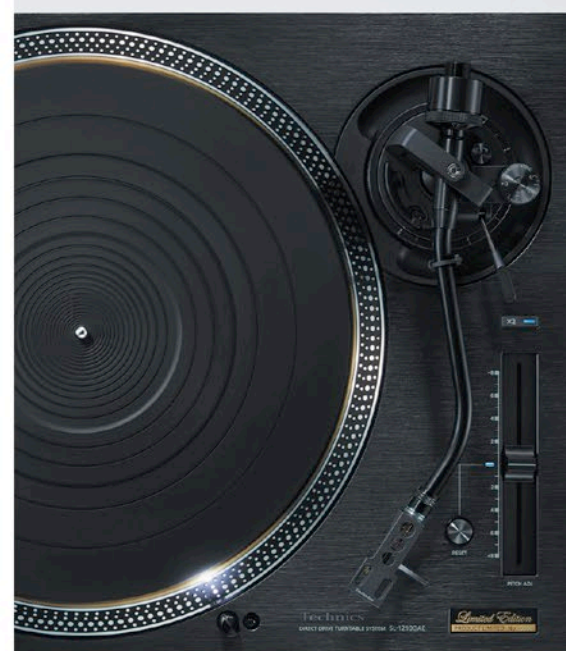
There are still Nakamichi CR-7As for sale online, although the “like-new” or “lightly-used” ones will run you a pretty penny. They just don’t make ‘em like that anymore but when they were making ‘em, Nakamichi decks took the recording and playback of those pocket-friendly cassette tapes to a much higher level. As for “the other ones that almost got away,” I no longer tool around in that red Jag rag top I finally bought (just too hard to get in and out of at my age). Oh, and I finally did marry that beautiful blonde girl who has patiently tolerated my audiophilia for the past thirty-three years.



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The **Sumiko**
Amethyst
MM Cartridge

\$599

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Though probably not on anyone's audiophile record list, Parliament's 1977 *Live, P.Funk Earth Tour*, clearly illustrates whether a cartridge can groove. More strict audio enthusiasts might refer to this effect as pace. From the lead – in track “P-Funk (Wants To Get Funked Up) to Spergroovalistic-prosifunkstication Medley,” there is no question about whether George Clinton and his band are in a groove. With rhythm arrangements by Bootsy Collins and George Clinton, the Amethyst provides the trip I had hoped for. While this album will never test the dynamic or resolving ability of any system, it will test a system's ability to elicit a strong emotional response. I was thoroughly impressed. Considering this is my original copy, purchased on release and played on far too many systems at parties, it remains a litmus test for musical fun.

A bit of backstory

Few audio companies have such broad generational identities as Sumiko. Today most people know Sumiko by the extensive line of phono cartridges carrying their name. If you learned of Sumiko in the early 2000s, you would probably remember them primarily as the North American importer of fine European brands such as Sonus faber and Pro-Ject. Pushing back a couple of decades, (and if you are like me and have more gray hair than you care to admit,) Sumiko was a North American analog powerhouse.

1095

Great sound around a G...



They were responsible for bringing brands to the US marketplace like Grace, SME, Kiseki, Supex, and Talisman to name a few.

Additionally, they created some of the most memorable analog products of that period: the famed MDC-800 (The Arm), the more modest FT-3/MMT tonearms, and of course the high-output moving-coil Blue Point and Blue Point Special phono cartridges.



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Here and now

Today, Sumiko continues to produce current variations of both the Blue Point and BluePoint Special in No. 2 (\$449.00) and EVOIII (\$549.00) variations, respectively. While both are enjoying a decades-long success story, under the current leadership of the McIntosh Group, Sumiko is still creating a long list of new designs. Starting with a couple of new entries into the moving coil Reference Series are the Songbird (\$899.00) and Starling (\$1,899.00).

Their next effort is a new line of moving magnet designs for those that want a replaceable stylus as well as a more cost-effective high-performance alternative. Enter the new Oyster Series, starting with the Rainer (\$149.00), Olympia (\$199.00), and Moonstone (\$299.00). Each of these share the same basic generator (body)

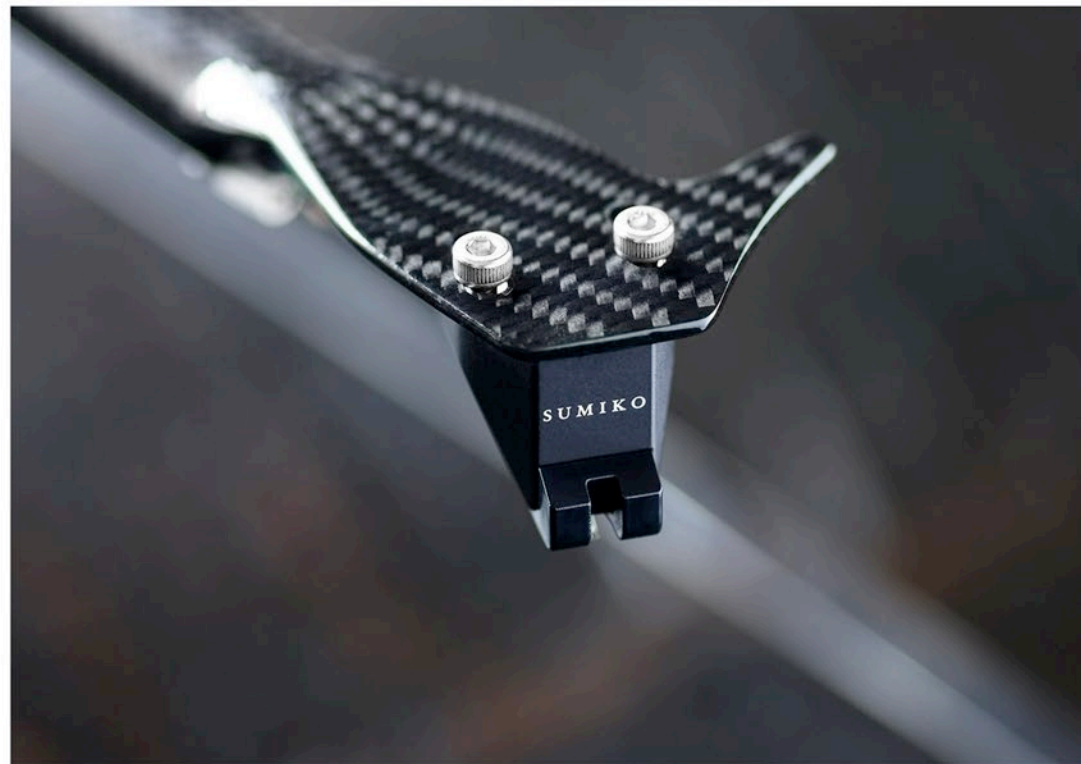


Photo courtesy Sumiko

differing in stylus design. This makes it easy to start with the Rainer and upgrade your systems performance, merely by purchasing one of its sibling's better stylus replacements. As has been at the foundation of analog products from the beginning, the goal has been to increase resolution while reducing noise when going up the range. The Amethyst, nails this goal.

A diamond is your records best friend

The Line-Contact stylus of the Amethyst has a much smaller contact area than the standard elliptical stylus on the entry level Oyster cartridge, and resolution starts here. Properly setup, this stylus profile can reach deep into the record groove, extracting as much information as possible. Mated to an aluminum cantilever and slightly lower output (2.5mV vs. 5.0mV in the rest), is the other aspect of this cartridge offering increased resolution versus other Oyster Series models or competitive designs.

Engineered for Reality

Testing

Wireworld

Cable Technology

was founded with the unique mission of perfecting audio cables through objective listening tests.

Far more revealing than normal cable comparisons, these tests compare cables to virtually perfect direct connections between components. Robert Harley, editor of *The Absolute Sound*, described this "Cable Polygraph" as, "illuminating insight into exactly how each cable affects the sound."

Technology

Cable Polygraph testing led to the DNA Helix conductor geometry (US Patent No. 8,569,627).

Layered flat conductors with parallel strands prevent the 'eddy current' losses caused by twisted and solid conductors, providing superior preservation of musical detail, dimensionality and dynamics.

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The **Sound**
Organisation

To keep noise down, Sumiko uses the same basic body as the other Oyster Series models but with further internal refinement of the resonance-optimized housing. A nice little touch that all four new models share is the integrated, threaded insets. No more fiddling with mounting screws, washers, and nuts.

Installation and setup

As with all cartridge purchases, the process starts with unboxing. The Amethyst comes in the familiar wood box used on other models such as the Blue Point Special EVOIII/Blackbird complete with a smart “wrap” designating Sumiko and the model.

Mounting the cartridge is a snap. I used my customary stainless screws, but Sumiko has done a nice job supplying all you need including a stylus cleaning brush. The recommended tracking range is listed at 1.8g – 2.2g. I like to begin far below this range, in this case at 1.6g. After a bit of break-in, further listening, and fine vertical tracking force adjustments I found the most dynamic setting to be at 1.9g. While each setup is different, my experience aligns with Sumiko’s stated recommendation of 2.0g. With limited break-in and listening, I was immediately taken by how wide and focused the soundstage is. Remarkable, especially for a cartridge in this price range, is the bass response. Nearly immediately out the box, the Amethyst has great bass power and more importantly, rhythm.

With a bit more time on the cartridge, I got down to making fine adjustments to stylus rake angle, azimuth, and vertical tracking force until I landed at what I feel is optimal in my setup. The Amethyst was quite responsive not leaving room for a lot of guesswork. This says a lot about the consistency of manufacturing along with overall quality. Everything should matter and here it does. I made a few more adjustments to overhang and then, final listening. After making adjustments with my reference albums, I started listening to Lana Del Rey’s “Honeymoon.” The lower end on this recording is perky, and a bit overdone, but in all the right ways maintaining a connection to the music without turning into something out of place. The top end is polite and nicely presented. The sound stage from left to right was rock solid with no movement and nice focus.

Next up was Jon Batiste’s “Hollywood Africans,” Grammy-nominated *Saint James Infirmary Blues*. This reading of one of America’s great songbook tunes is quite special. Batiste’s piano offers a solid feeling of power and presence. This was especially clear as the horns come in, providing tonal contrast. This cartridge does a great job resolving the almost whining sound of the early horns. The Amethyst does not resolve as much information as my main reference setup is capable of, it did present all that was important and got me into the music, as opposed to merely feeling as if I was looking in on it.

All in all, the Amethyst is a great all-around cartridge. Given the price of \$599.00, it ventures into the higher price range of what the analog world calls “modest.” If you have a turntable that came with an already mounted cartridge, this will represent a performance upgrade of a heroic level. At only 6.9g total mass, it remains flexible and will be right at home on nearly any modern tonearm.

As a moving magnet design with 2.5mV output, compatibility with most modest phono stages or inputs is one of the great design advantages along with the ability to replace the stylus should bad things happen to good people.

Lastly, and most importantly, this cartridge grooves in all the right ways.



Andover Model-One

Capable and Versatile
\$1,999

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Playing some Miles Davis on the Andover Model-One's Pro-Ject sourced table, I'm intrigued at how they've solved the vibration issues with what's essentially an amp and speakers built into a turntable base. The One's designer, Bob Hazelwood (with who I had a great chat and initial demo at last year's Rocky Mountain Audio Fest), explains it all in great detail. But back to Miles, the sound is rich and spacious, without a hint of feedback coming through the speakers.

Hazelwood makes it a point to tell me that while the table was sourced by Pro-Ject, it was custom made to fit their application. "It has an MDF and steel plinth, along with a few other tweaks, but it's somewhat close to their Carbon Esprit SB."

A casual observer might think the Model-One priced a bit high at \$1,999, but once you get up close and get your hands on it, you can see why it's priced as it is, and justifiably so. The Andover Model-One offers tremendous sonic performance and is built to a very high standard. When you examine the quality of the metalwork, the craftsmanship in the woodwork, and how the turntable integrates into the base, you might just think this was made in a particular factory in Italy. Hazelwood chimes in again, telling me that their biggest challenge is getting people to understand precisely what the Model-One truly is. He points out that "You can't really get the full experience from a YouTube video, you need to take it home. That's why we offer a 30-Day return policy with no hassles. We pay the shipping both ways."

The Model-One has audiophile roots and sensibilities, but this is not an audiophile product, and I mean that in the best way possible. This is a high-quality music system for someone that appreciates good sound, but either doesn't want to be bothered with all the work it takes to put together a group of separate components like this, doesn't have the space, for a rack full of gear and speakers, or both.

I've read a handful of articles over the years as vinyl has made its comeback, and based on some very loose research, I get the opinion that the average new vinyl enthusiast (buying records for the last few years) maybe has 100-150 records. The Model-One works well on any shelf you can find space, but if you have the room, you can place it on top of their Model-One Subwoofer (\$799) and the Upper Stand (\$299) to add more bass to the mix, storage for about 200 LPs, and a small, one-drawer slideout shelf.



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Again, you might argue, "But I could go buy some separates for \$3,100." Yes, you could, but that's not going to solve the problems that the Model-One solves. When you make the transition from grumpy audiophile to music lover, you aren't sitting in the sweet spot all the time, posting to social media about what Beatles pressing you think is the best one. You're probably enjoying the company of some friends or family. You're probably multitasking, doing who knows what. The bottom line is you're a person that wants better sound quality than the average soundbar, or powered speakers can offer, but you still want that level of convenience – and you want to play some records too. In that case, there really isn't anything else out there that does what the Model-One does.

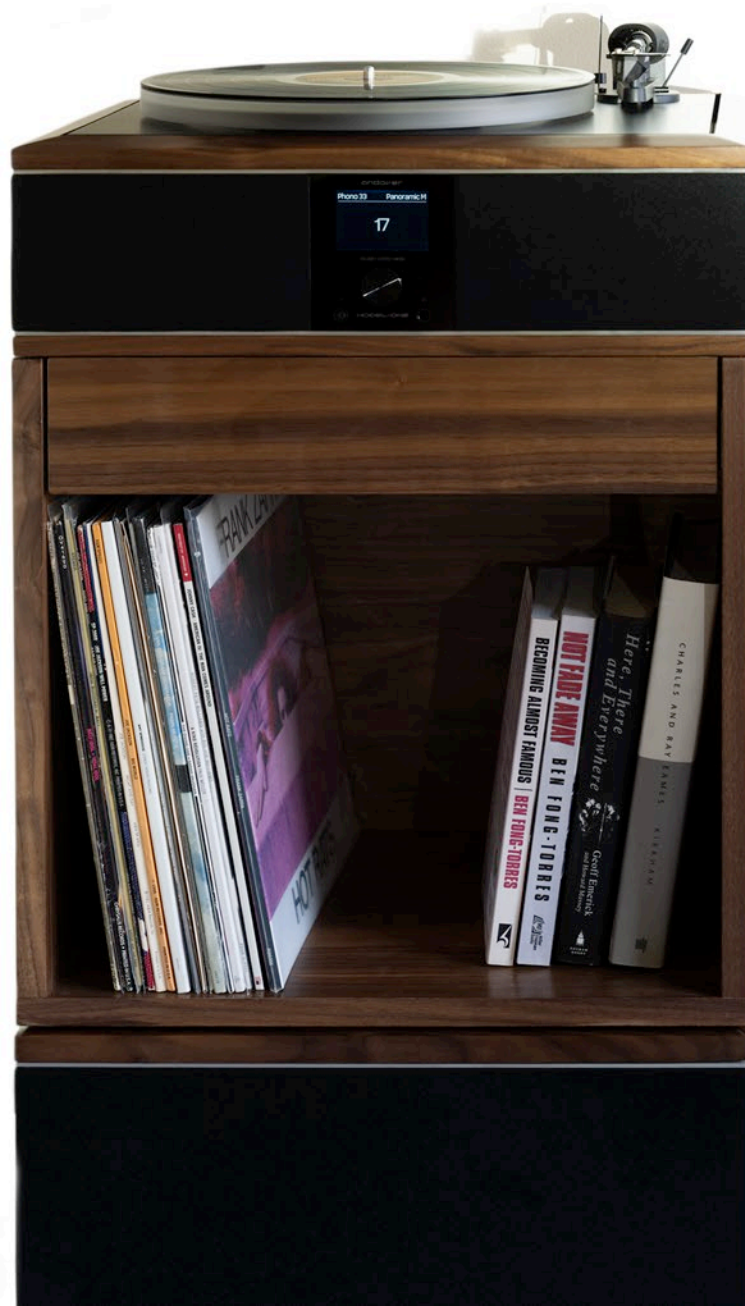
Between when we first saw this product at RMAF, and now, they've also brought out their Songbird Simple Streamer (only \$129). It decodes digital files up to 24/192 and works with all the major streaming services. It doesn't offer a ROON endpoint, but we're guessing that's not a deal-breaker in the context of what you'd use this system for anyway. For the bulk of our digital listening, Qobuz and Spotify were streamed from an iPad and an iPhone 11, with fantastic results. You can read our full review on the Songbird here. Adding the subwoofer raises the performance bar considerably, further illustrating the great job the Andover team has done with vibration control.

Moving to some bass-heavy hip hop and prog favorites, it's still nearly impossible to get the system to feedback through the turntable, and for those of you who need to play your Model-One system at a near meltdown level, I suggest streaming it. This behavior is somewhat counter to the system concept: make no mistake the Andover Model-One with subwoofer will play loud enough to annoy your neighbors.

It's also important to emphasize what a fantastic job the Andover team has done integrating the subwoofer.

Regardless of program choices, the sub increases the Model-One's depth by itself, merely offering greater low-frequency extension, without calling attention to itself. It never sounds like a compact hifi system with a booming box on the bottom. Especially at modest to reasonable volume levels, it's easy to forget that this is a compact system.

Mr. Hazelwood and I had a long discussion about bass response and bass management in both the subwoofer and the main cabinet. If you'll notice, the Model-One has its woofers on opposing cabinet sides so that most of the internal low frequencies in the cabinet cancel out.



Enjoy the Experience



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That was a great start, but to get the final result, they had to experiment heavily with internal bracing, "and a lot of measurements – we did the rest with DSP." Andover chose a sealed box for the subwoofer so that it would play loud enough, and blend easily with the Model-One, or something else.

It's worth mentioning that while the Model-One subwoofer is designed around the Model-One player and only has a single RCA line-level input, this woofer worked well with the powered speakers we had on hand that offered LFE channels. If you already have a main component in place and you're just needing some more low-frequency output, this dual 10-inch sub with DSP makes an excellent addition to your system at \$799. Either way, pairing the Model-One with the top cabinet and drawer is an incredibly convenient ensemble. It's a great place for your records, and perhaps a few good books.

The Model-One is the epitome of great sound and user-friendliness. Bob Hazelwood sums it up perfectly when he says, "the idea behind this product is to make something offering the essence of a great audiophile system without the obstacles."

I'd say they've succeeded brilliantly.

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JourneymanAudiophile

by Jeff Dorgay

The Sonus faber
Sonetto V
www.sonusfaber.com
\$4,999/pair

A Compact Classic

Thomas Dolby's "May the Cube be With You" turns out to be the track used to put about 100 hours on the Sonus faber Sonetto V speakers before serious listening begins. The deep synth bass line in this track works wonders at breaking in woofer cones, and the spacy production vibe and multiple layers in this tune make it easy to hear the Sonettos change character over a weeks' time of continuous play. Like nearly all high-performance speakers, they are a little closed in when first unpacked.

The Sonetto Vs need at least 100 hours to deliver everything they are capable of, and you will need to spend some time optimizing them in your room for the best result. This is not a speaker you can just drop in the room anywhere and expect great results. However, if you can take the time to properly place them, you will be rewarded with outstanding results. It's like setting the desmodromic valve train on a Ducati – you need patience to get it right, but when it's right, it's really right.

Journeyman Audiophile



I betcha didn't know that

The three-way design of the Sonetto V uses a pair of 180mm (7-inch) woofers, and a 150mm (5.9 inch) midrange coupled to the Sonus faber DAD soft dome tweeter. The woofers utilize an aluminum cone, while the midrange a pulp fiber cone, that will be familiar to long time SF owners. The cabinet shape is also familiar: the rounded lute shape that has made Sonus faber famous. A pair of dual binding posts lurk around the back, in case you prefer bi-amping.

With a sensitivity rating of 90db/1watt, you probably won't need two amplifiers to play them incredibly loud.

However, we suggest an amplifier with a fair amount of drive to get the best result. A budget integrated or surround receiver will not provide the necessary control, and may leave you disappointed. If that's your starting point, don't shy away from a pair of Sonettos, but know there will be more performance at your disposal when you are able to upgrade. As we've been reviewing integrated amplifiers this issue, we tried the Sonetto V with everything from the 30 watt per channel PrimaLuna EVO100, all the way up to the \$17k Thrax Enyo – all with excellent result. The Sonettos even spent some time with our reference MC275 amplifier – an incredible match for these speakers, and a solution easily available from your Sonus faber and Mac dealer.



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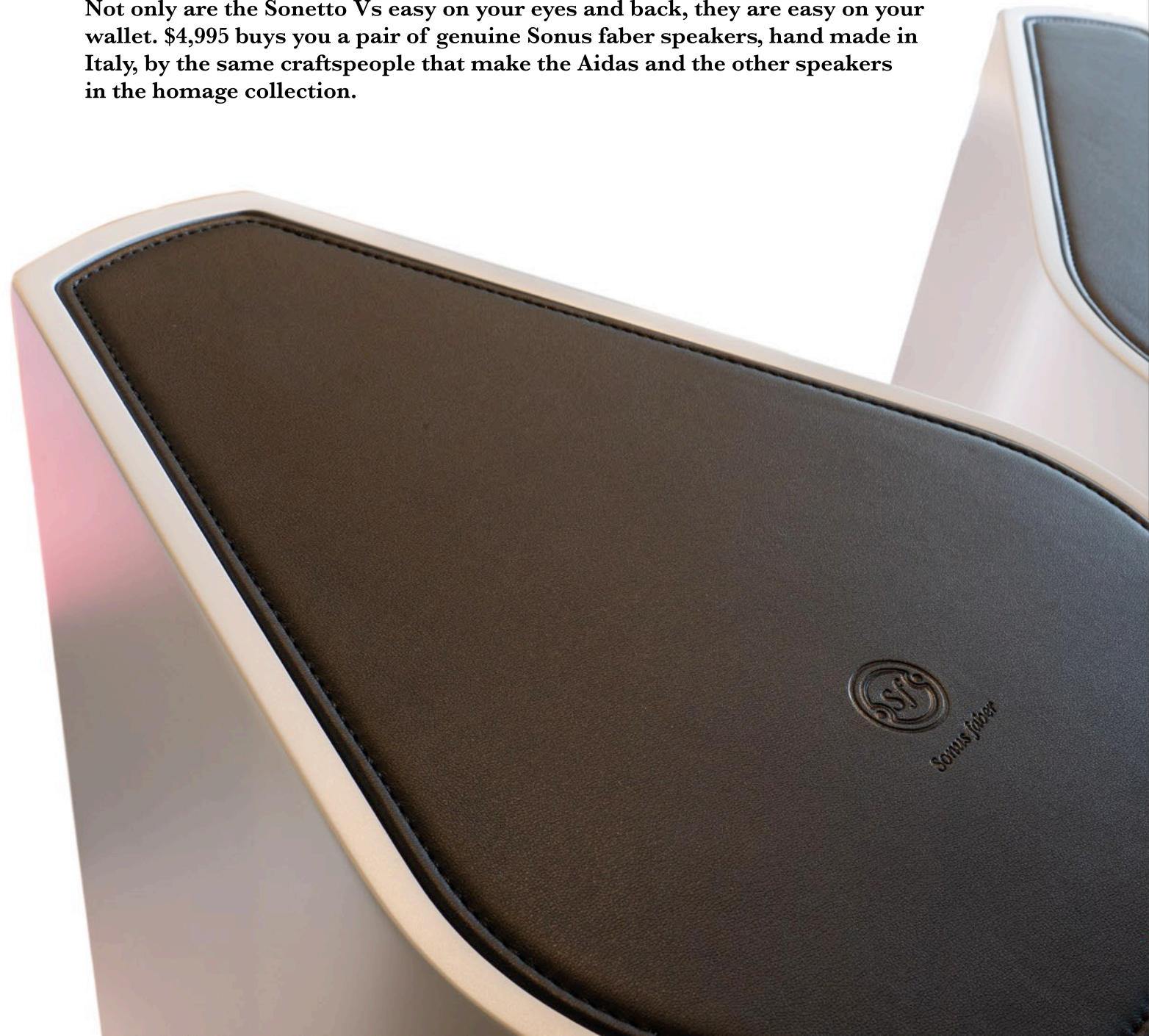
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Journeyman Audiophile

That's the way I like it

Just the thought of a Sonus faber speaker one person can lift alone is intriguing. Though you can also get the Sonetto V speakers in a wood finish, but the matte white with leather top surfaces are positively stunning. Sonus faber is known around the world for the high-quality finishes adorning their speakers, with a lacquered finish that will put the world's finest automobiles to shame, but the matte white is very fashion forward. White speakers just disappear in the room visually, making it even easier for the speakers to disappear sonically.

Not only are the Sonetto Vs easy on your eyes and back, they are easy on your wallet. \$4,995 buys you a pair of genuine Sonus faber speakers, hand made in Italy, by the same craftspeople that make the Aidas and the other speakers in the homage collection.



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JourneymanAudiophile

Finally, the Sonetto Vs are part of an entire range. It consists of larger and smaller speakers, along with a wall mounted speaker and center channel that all share the same voicing, so expanding your Sonetto Vs to a full-blown theater setup in the future is as easy as calling your Sonus faber dealer and getting more stuff.

Shake your booty

When setting up the Sonetto, you need to optimize them in room for the best low frequency coupling. Setting up the speakers around the left speaker first to get the best combination of bass extension and mid bass to midrange coherency will take a little while. Nail that and move on, to the right speaker. Once you get there, the fine tuning can begin, adjusting toe in and speaker rake angle until the speakers completely disappear in the room.

I used the tried, and battle worn Jennifer Warnes' "Ballad of the Runaway Horse" to get this right. Everyone who's ever worked for Sonus faber or their importer Sumiko will all exhale and laugh right now, but for the rest of you, this is a great track to optimize speaker parameters, and you've probably got your own, but I've used this track so many times, it's easy.

Properly set up in your room, the Sonetto Vs will deliver convincing bass response, and a mid/treble that is highly pleasing. Sonus faber speakers from the last 8 years or so definitely have a more modern sound than early SF speakers, which had always been known for their delectable midrange. The Sonetto Vs do not betray their heritage, yet they have a more extended high end and along with solid LF response too.

A direct comparison to my Sonus faber Stradiveri's (which are a little bit old school in the SF lineup) proves the Sonettos more forward, much like moving up about 10 rows in the auditorium. But both are lovely in their own way. However, this does prove that the Sonettos can work in a 24 x 16 foot room without a problem. That being said, most listening was done in a 13 x 18-foot room with excellent result. If your room is somewhere around 12 x 14 feet or larger, you'll be just fine.

Get down tonight

Stuck in the late 80s and early 90s while breaking in the Sonetto Vs, a long playlist of Thomas Dolby, Level 42, and Paul Young tunes just feel right with these speakers, powered by the glow of the MC275.

JourneymanAudiophile

A bonus for our apartment dwelling readers, the Sonetto Vs can definitely power the party, but they play great at low volume levels too. Not every speaker can get this critical job done, and even when playing at low levels, these speakers create an enormous, three dimensional sound field that won't have the neighbors pounding on the walls. What's the point of having great speakers if you have to put your headphones on all the time, right?

To be fair to the Sonettos, I left the past behind, making my way back to the current day, musically speaking. Bottom line, there was nothing I threw at the Sonettos that couldn't do justice to.

Getting in a party mood with "Oppa is Just My Style," the Sonettos prove they can play loud when the need arises. Even at eviction notice levels, these speakers did not distort, bottom the woofer cones, or exhibit soundstage collapse. Staying at party SPLs, the deep bass line in Girls Day's "Look at Me" had a number of people looking for the subwoofer. And just before you think I've gone way too KPop on you, the new AC/DC single "Shot in the Dark" was just released, so a final infusion of heavy guitars (at high volume, of course) ticks the last box. This is a great pair of speakers that can play whatever you enjoy without excuse.

I'm a pushover

Being a Sonus faber owner, I have to admit a bit of built in bias towards the brand. You won't mistake the Sonettos for a pair of something else – they have a sound of their own. Like famous painters, everyone has a style that they truly love. If you are looking for a pair of truly beautiful speakers that offer up a very dynamic, tonally rich presentation, take the Sonus faber Sonetto Vs for a spin.

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Can't Get It Out of My Head

by Jeff Dorgay

The things that happen when you walk away from Facebook for fifteen minutes. After a quick photo shoot, I return to my desk with the screen lit up that Eddie VanHalen has passed away. I had to put up a quick blog post, recalling the day I first heard *VanHalen*, which was actually about 36 hours before its initial release. That was a life changing moment. Rock fans of a certain age had Jimi Hendrix. My generation had Eddie VanHalen. And just as Hendrix had his disciples, VanHalen converted and inspired a whole new crop of guitarists. But no one ever had the finesse, and sense of humor that Eddie VanHalen possessed.

Often known for his blistering solos, look no further than “Ice Cream Man,” on the self-titled album, “Spanish Fly” on *VH II*, or “316” on the *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge*, that he had a playful side, and didn’t take himself that seriously.

I bought *Van Halen*, the morning it was released, on February 10, 1978. On the way home from the record store, I dropped by Pacific Stereo and bought a pair of huge 15” 2-way Cerwin Vega speakers (that were hatefully efficient) to bring home with the album. Dad came in my room, with the VU meters barely moving, and even at this point, could barely talk over the system, as I played “Eruption.” “What the hell is that? He shouted over the distortion.” “This is the new VanHalen album,” and I gave the Nakamichi 400 preamp’s volume control a big clockwise spin, quickly achieving concert hall levels, the meters now moving towards 0dB.

**I was thrown out of
the house a week later.
Coincidence?**

Maybe.



VanHalen went on to produce 11 more studio LPs, and for better or worse, I enjoy them all, the first three (*Van Halen*, *Van Halen II*, and *Women and Children First*) remain the go to choices.

These records, along with selected tracks from *Fair Warning*, and *Diver Down* are my musical comfort food. Give me a bottle of beer, any beer, these three records, and I’m in my happy place. Maybe it’s the memories, and the way these records were imprinted on my life at the time, and maybe it’s the raw energy and creativity that blaze through whenever I play them. 40 plus years later I never tire of early Van Halen, there’s truly something special here.

And that’s why today, I can’t get VanHalen out of my head.

Emily Duff will return with her insightful prose next issue, but for now, even though it will be a couple of weeks since EVH’s passing, hold a lighter up in tribute.

I had to follow up the Eddie VanHalen Tribute with a VanHalen playlist. I know those of us that are VH fans all have their favorite tunes. Here are my dozen faves...
-Jeff Dorgay



Van Halen - Atomic Punk

Van Halen - Ice Cream Man

Van Halen II - You're no Good

Van Halen II - Somebody Get Me a Doctor

Women and Children First - Take Your Whiskey Home

Women and Children First - In a Simple Rhyme

Fair Warning - Push Comes to Shove

Diver Down - The Full Bug

Diver Down - Big Bad Bill (is Sweet William Now)

1984 - Drop Dead Legs

For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge - Judgement Day

Best of, Volume 1 - Humans Being

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Setlist

Oriental Theater, Milwaukee, WI - October 1, 1981

Photo by Jeff Dorgay



39 years ago, before bands played their albums back to back, as a nostalgia move, The Tubes were in the middle of supporting their latest release, *The Completion Backwards Principle*. They took to the stage in the same suits they wore on the album’s cover, blasting through the ten songs from the album in barely half an hour. Then, the costume changes ensued.

Those of you that were Tubes fans back in the day, knew their shows rarely went less than two hours, and in this case, the legendary San Francisco outfit did not dissapoint. After running through the rest of their most popular tunes (of course they did “White Punks on Dope”) they came out for an encore of Beatles songs, ending with the band all holding chain saws for a rousing version of “I Saw Her Standing There.” They returned again for a 20 minute medley of Who songs before the house lights came up.

Unfortunately, Setlist.fm does not have a record of the exact setlist on hand, so you’ll have to fill in the gaps, but it was a glorious show.

W H A R F E D A L E

The reviews are in.



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Setlist

Dante's , Portland, Oregon - November 19, 2010

Photo by Jeff Dorgay



Somthing about “tribute” bands always leaves me cold, but the sheer spirit and imagination of Beatallica’s clever fusion of Beatles and Metallica songs definitely rules. And As I mentioned in no. 34, “you have to love a band that can fuse “Frankenstein” with the theme from “The Munsters.”

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. The Battery of Jaymz and Yoko | 9. Munsters Theme/Frankenstein |
| 2. Sandman | 10. Running For Your Life |
| 3. Masterful Mystery Tour | 11. While My Guitar Deathly Creeps |
| 4. Sgt. Hetfield’s Motorbreath Pub Band | 12. Fuel on the Hill |
| 5. Leper Madonna | 13. I’ll Just Bleed your Face |
| 6. Anesthesia (I’m Only Sleeping) | 14. Hey Dude |
| 7. Ktulu (He’s So Heavy) | 15. I Want to Choke Your Band |
| 8. Hero of the Day Tripper | 16. A Garage Dayz Nite |

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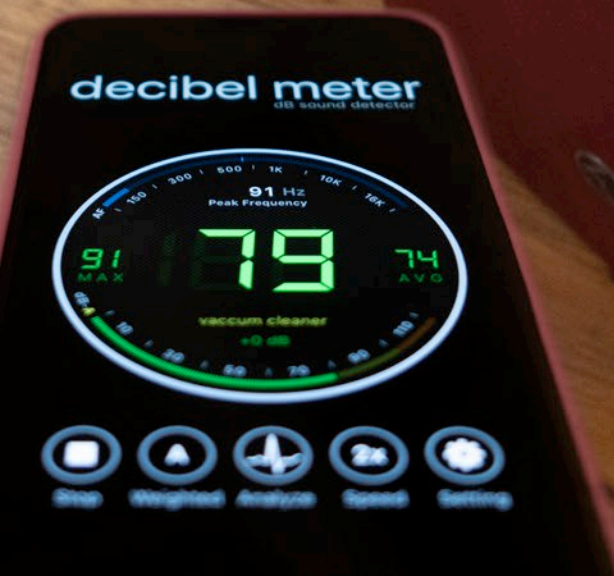
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Shh...

The fine art of low level listening

By Jeff Dorgay



More often than not, when you go to an audio dealer or HiFi show, whoever is doing the demo is usually cranking the hell out of the program material, and not in the most flattering way. This doesn't always attract people to the world of high-performance audio. A chorus in a Joe Jackson song laments being "brutalized by bass and terrorized by treble." You don't have to go there if you'd rather not.

Not that I don't like heading towards 11 on the volume control, now and then. If your system has the sheer dynamic drive to approach concert levels, a little bit of that can be fun. There's something about moving that much air in the room - giving you the feeling that you're experiencing a live performance, that's intoxicating. I find it not unlike driving a high-performance car faster than is reasonable and prudent. Now and again, absolute power does corrupt absolutely.



It's equally enticing to listen to a system that does a fantastic job of playing at a low level, however this is a different kind of fun. Not all systems capable of sterilizing you with 120db playback can get the job done at lower levels. So, we're going to mention some components that work well together to give you that low-volume lounge groove. Because there are times you don't feel like putting on a pair of headphones.

The system assembled here happens to be in my main listening room, consisting of the Line Magnetic LM-805iA Integrated amp, a pair of the Zu Audio Dirty Weekend speakers, and the Line Magnetic CD player. We're using a TORUS TOT AVR for line conditioning and a full suite of the latest Blue II cables from Tellurium Q



Last issue, we were talking about a 3 watt per channel SET, from Coincident. If you spend most of your time listening at low volumes, it's tough to beat the sheer liquidity of a single ended triode amplifier. As with everything in audio, most triode enthusiasts have a favorite tube.

Personally, I've had great experiences with all of them, and while the 805 used here in the Line Magnetic amplifier might not be quite as nuanced as say, a 2A3, they put out a lot more power, and that allows a wider range of speakers to be used.

In this case, the Zu Dirty Weekend speakers, with a sensitivity of 97dB/1-watt and super tube friendly 12-ohm impedance are the perfect recipe for musical bliss.



Pairing the Lime Magnetic LM-805 IA with the matching Line Magnetic CD player makes for an excellent combination. Cabling it all up with the new Blue II range from Tellurium Q, keeps the system real.

A good place to start your less than loud journey?
The Dzihan & Kamien Orchestra - Live in Vienna.
This mix up of jazz, house, and a bit of ambient instantly reveals what this combination is all about. For those of you that enjoy the solo female voice, try Anja Garbarek's Smiling and Waving. If that's too trippy, go fully old school and queue up some Emma Fitzgerald.



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Shh...

It doesn't take more than a quick listen to the LM CD player to see why CD's are making a comeback. If only \$2,000 disc players sounded this good in 1985!

Best of all, there's a digital input around back, so you can use this player as a high resolution DAC too. Just add a streamer and your favorite streaming services are at your disposal. The tube output stage does a lovely job at taming the bits.

There's a full review of the LM CD player in the works, but we all remained baffled at how they can make gear this good for such a low price, comparatively speaking. Contributor Eric Neff will also have in-depth analysis of the Zu speakers too, but just like the LM gear, these are the value of forever.

So many forget that dynamics are the fourth dimension, and without them, music sounds small and fake. If you love the Dirty Weekends as much as we do, you'll never be happy with a pair of minimonitors - ever.

For the hard core music lover that is still out of reach of the Line magnetic stuff, build yourself a Bottlehead kit, or restore a vintage Dynaco SCA-35. 15wpc will blow you out of the room, and you'll enjoy putting something together with your own two hands.

Next issue, we've got a lovely system built around some Luxman components.



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\$2,490
focal.com

Cool as high end headphones are, some dedicated headphone listeners do make the transition to two channel systems, in a room, with speakers. Focal's Arche headphone amplifier, at just under \$2,500 is a powerhouse, offering an incredibly versatile headphone amplifier that also includes a high-resolution DAC, and a built in headphone stand. How nice is that?

Two things really set the Arche apart. It offers balanced XLR and standard RCA variable outputs, so that it can be used as a two - channel preamplifier – which is awesome, but Focal takes it one step further. They offer a RCA analog input, allowing you to plug in one analog source.

After spending so much time with the Arche as a headphone amplifier, and as the anchor of a two-channel system, I'd tell you to buy one even if you didn't have a pair of headphones.



Headphone Art

The Fine art of Personal Listening



Actually, it gets even better. If you have recently purchased a pair of Focal Utopia (reviewed here) Stellia (reviewed here) or Clear headphones, you are eligible for a \$1,000 discount towards an Arche. The Arche is a killer deal at \$2,490, it's an outright *steal* for \$1,490.

The only two things missing, is a remote control, and the ability to play MQA files. The former is no big deal, because we all need the steps, and the latter even less of an issue. Best of all, the Arche is tiny, only taking up a 2.36 x 7.87 x 11.69 inch footprint. Aside from the lack of remote, I really appreciate is the IEC AC socket on the back panel. I.e., no wall wart power supply to lose or add clutter, should you put your Arche in a desktop system.

A small warning though, be careful with the sharp, pointed feet on the bottom of the Arche. There are little pads in the accessory kit to eliminate this, but if you miss them, you are going to scratch the hell out of whatever shelf you place it upon.

You can choose voltage or hybrid amplification from the front panel, along with presets for Focal phones, to optimize the Arche's performance with perfect impedance match. When this is wrong, even the best headphones can sound flat, lacking in bass, and uninvolved. Swapping between our reference Utopia phones and the supplied Stellas couldn't be easier, and the Arche was an excellent match for some Mr. Speakers, Audeze, and Grado phones we had on hand.

If you follow Focal on social media, their main hashtag is #proudoftmysound, and it shows. The Arche is like every other component (big or small) that we've unboxed from Focal. The level of care and respect paid to the packaging and the unbox experience makes you feel great about the purchase.



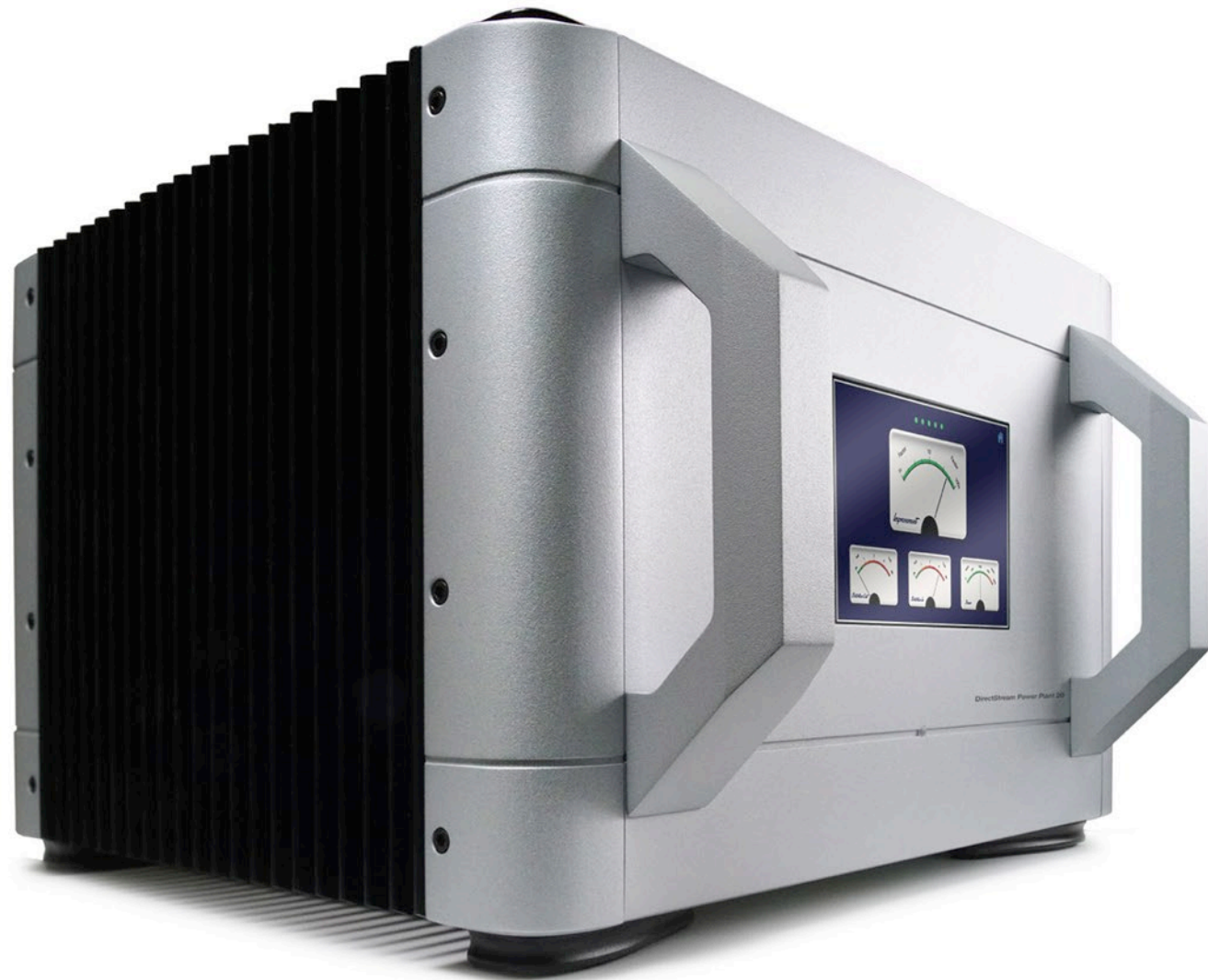
Decisions, decisions

When used as a DAC, via SPDIF or USB inputs, the Arche takes advantage of the AK4490 converters, and features dual mono, Class-A amplification. We used the digital output of the Luxman D-03X CD player, as well as a budget Cambridge CD player to spin discs with excellent result. Adding analog to the mix, my vintage Technics SL-1200/Shure M44 and iFi phono stage proved a ton of fun for LP playback. The Arche is an incredibly versatile box! The match up with the Stellia and Utopia phones is spectacular. A few online entities have nitpicked the Focal phones, but after using them with a number of great headphone amps,

synergy with the Arche amp is as good as it gets without looking at a headphone amplifier in the \$5,000 range. And none of these \$5k amplifiers offer a built in DAC. Both the Stellia and Utopia phones take advantage of Focal's beryllium driver technology, the same thing used in the tweeters of their topspeakers. This driver is fast, and detailed, but it does need a few hundred hours of playback time to fully break in – a perfect use for that built-in headphone stand. Plug your phones in, put some music on repeat, turn the volume up mid way, and in a week, your Focal phones will be sounding their best.

The PS Audio DirectStream Power Plant 20

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—Jeff Dorgay, TONEAudio



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Headphone Art

The Fine art of Personal Listening

Cursory listening at a couple of dealer events towards the end of last year, suggested that the Arche would be a perfect match to the Focal phones, yet it is equally good with other phones. We spent a fair amount of time using it with our Audeze HCD-2s, and the new Axiss Dianas. My old Koss Pro 4AAs, now nearly 50 years old, even delivered an outstanding performance.

Bring it on

Whatever music you love, the Arche will surprise and amaze you. It sounds clean and distortion free; the sound field rendered inside your head is massive. Listening to the tinkly bits in Wang Chung's soundtrack for *To Live and Die in LA* is a delightful romp. The deep basslines that you might be used to with your speakers, are here in full force. A quick playlist of Massive Attack and Aphex Twin confirms it.

The Arche handles high resolution digital files with ease too. Tracking through a lot of early Motown tunes in 24/96, via Qobuz and Tidal again shows off the delicacy that this amplifier delivers.

Having spent a fair amount of time with some pretty expensive headphone amps, the Arche offers top range performance.

Trying to get a handle on some acoustic instruments, listening to a bevy of vintage Windham Hill CDs – (Liz Story in particular) again the combination of the Stellias and the Arche exhibit tonal correctness, and explosive dynamics.

Back to the big room

Exciting as the Arche is as a headphone amplifier, if you never use it for anything more, you'll be thrilled, it's an amazing two-channel preamplifier/DAC. Taking advantage of the balanced XLR outputs, I connected it to our McIntosh MC275, and then to the pair of Focal Kanta no.1s we also have in for review. In a 13 x 15 foot room, this is sheer bliss, taking up a very small amount of space.

I'm guilty of liking a slightly warmer than neutral tonal balance, so the slightly warm Kantas and the McIntosh tube amp is absolutely heavenly. The Kantas throw such an intimate soundstage in this small room, it's as if I'm sitting inside a gigantic pair of headphones! Moving along, a number of other power amplifiers were tried, from a vintage Nakamichi 620, a BAT tube amp, a PrimaLuna EVO tube amplifier, and the Pass Labs XA30.8. All proved excellent, though different sonic combinations.

But where?

After using the Arche in desktop, bedside and full-room systems, it excels wherever it is used. While we will be awarding the Arche our Product of the Year award next issue, in the personal electronics category, it would be just as easy for it to win in a number of other categories. The Arche offers so much sonic performance at such a reasonable price, I can't imagine not wanting to build an entire system around it. Plus, it's built by Micromega, and backed by Focal, so you can rest assured it will be supported for years to come.



Cover Story:

**You really need
six.**

REL's S/510 subwoofers, configured as a six-pack array are rattling something in my living room, playing some vintage Genesis – “Squonk” to be exact. I turn the volume down just as the FedEx person rings the bell, and he teases me about being a “crappy boomer rock guy.” Lousy as my musical taste is, we have a socially distanced 10-minute conversation about subwoofers, as he’s somewhat of an audio enthusiast. He does confess that it sounded like the windows were going to fall out of my house as he walked up to the door. “Six of them? Why would anyone have six subwoofers?” As my favorite cartoon secret agent Sterling Archer is fond of saying, “Why would I not?”

Our review of RELs no.25 subwoofer as a six-pack array was somewhat controversial last year, especially in light of us calling it one of two products of the decade. Having lived with the no.25s for over a year now, I am no less thrilled with these massive subwoofers in my listening room than I was the day REL's John Hunter left, work complete. There is nothing that handles the lower registers, delivering bass that is powerful and nuanced like the no.25s. As fast and articulate as any speaker you might place in front of them. Completely seamless when properly installed and setup. I could go on and on. But they are that good, providing a musical experience like nothing else.

That’s great stuff, but not everyone has the space, budget, or front end to need a six pack of no.25s. REL has just introduced a few new models, the Carbon Special, the S/812, and their smaller model, the S/510 we have here. At \$2,499 each, a six pack will set you back about \$15k, but this is considerably less than a six pack of no.25s. Perspective is relative.

Additional photography courtesy of REL.

REL S/510 Subwoofer

\$2,499 (each)
rel.net

The REL S/510

My living room system has been upgraded to a pair of Dynaudio Contour 20s, and these \$13k/pair monitors will be the subject of an enthusiastic review soon. A few years back, I had the privilege to use the Dynaudio Evidence Platinum towers that tip the scales at over \$100k/pair. I'm playing the price card, only because the Contour 20s with a six pack of S/510s behind them play louder, deeper and with more resolution than Dynaudio's old flagship did. So, at just a touch over \$30k, the Dynaudio/REL combination is fantastic and in their own way, fantastic values.

Configuration

The S/510 takes advantage of the latest in REL's technology. This nearly 16 x 16 inch cube (18.25 inches deep, a full 20 inches deep, taking into account for the high level connectors) weighs in at 70 pounds and feels even more solid when lifting out of the carton.

Like the entire REL lineup, the (gloss black or gloss white) finish uses a ten-layer process, with a much smoother and deeper finish than you'll ever see on a Bentley, Aston Martin, or Rolls Royce. In short, it's perfect. The only downside is that you need to handle them with extreme care, and make it a point to only dust them with a damp microfiber towel, or they will get the same surface scratches that your car gets if you've ever taken it through a car wash. While black subs have always been the rage, I'm a huge fan of the white, it disappears in the room even easier.

The S/510s use a 10-inch aluminum cone, long throw driver that has a thin coating of carbon fiber on the rear face for additional stiffness. The 12-inch passive driver is downward firing. These are mated to a 500-watt amplifier, and RELs proprietary filters, which allow the S/510s to be set up for music, home theater, or a combination with equally good results.

For those not familiar, REL relies on a high level connection to their subwoofers, via your speakers outputs. This allows the tonal characteristic of your amplification to be expressed with their subs, rather than just coming out via the preamplifier's line level outputs. Those feeling the need to still do things in that manner, will be pleased to find line level RCA and balanced inputs, along with a single LFE/.1 input.

The key to success

Because REL subwoofers are a true low bass system, they are not meant to be crossed over from a set of satellite speakers at 80-120hz – though they will work this way if required. REL prefers that you pick a main speaker with enough low frequency extension, and run it full range, to let the REL sub(s) fill in only the lowest frequencies. A REL sub with this in mind, when properly set up, will disappear completely in your listening room. In addition to filling in the deepest part of the frequency range, they also add presence and dimension to the rest of the frequency range in a way that nothing else we've used can achieve to this level of realism. Six of them disappear in the same manner.

In the case of the Dynaudio Contour 20s, they have a claimed low frequency response of 42hz (+/- 3db), so the RELs aren't having to go too far up into mid-range territory. For additional comparison, I also used a pair of Focal Kanta 1s, Focal Kanta 3s, and the Eggleston Nico's we reviewed earlier this year. A vintage pair of Acoustat 1+1 ESLs were also dragged in for a listening session or two, but this is probably overkill for 1+1 owner. Nevertheless, the combination worked brilliantly. However, the majority of the review listening was done with the Dynaudio speakers, and the six S/510s and Dynaudio Contour 20s are now a permanent reference.

A seamless transition from your main speakers to the RELs requires starting with meticulous setup of the mains. Regardless of how well you think your main speakers are set up, it might be worth spending a few hours (or more) making sure the main speakers are optimized in your listening room. Because you will get all the LF output you need from the RELs, you no longer need to have the room gain from your mains to compensate. Chances are you might be able to position your main speakers for a bit smoother top to bottom response and let the RELs do the heaviest lifting.

Fine tuning

Just as getting your main speakers optimized, the same rules apply for a REL six pack, and the same procedure is followed. The first sub is set up as the anchor, then the right channel. The two on the bottom of the array provide the deepest bass, coupling with the floor to provide the necessary low frequency extension. They also serve up a majority of the LF dynamics.

dCS | LEGENDS

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In the world of music production, there's a select group of recording engineers who have strived throughout their career to deliver the highest quality listening experience possible.

Over the course of his nearly forty year career, Mark Wilder has mastered or remastered over two thousand recordings for such diverse artists as Aretha Franklin, Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny, Phish and Sting. And as senior mastering engineer at Sony Music's Battery Studios, Mark's golden ear and pursuit of sonic perfection can be heard in many major titles found in the incredible Legacy Recordings catalog.

To date, Mark has won six GRAMMY® Awards for his work on such iconic albums as Bob Dylan's *The Cutting Edge 1965-1966: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 12*; and *The Basement Tapes Complete: The Bootleg Series, Vol. 11*; Bill Withers' *The Complete Sussex and Columbia Albums*; Billie Holiday's *Lady Day – The Complete Billie Holiday on Columbia 1933-1944*; Louis Armstrong's *The Complete Hot Five & Hot Seven Recordings*; and Miles Davis and Gil Evans' *The Complete Columbia Studio Recordings*.

Mark Wilder's dedication to his craft and his passionate commitment to music are why dCS is proud to honor him as the latest recipient of our dCS Legends Award.



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The middle two subs, cross over at a slightly higher frequency (Again, this is done meticulously, a click at a time, the RELs offer very fine adjustments) When you have these properly adjusted, they will prove seamlessly integrated with the bottom two, and you'll notice a lot more mid-bass attack and presence in the lower midrange region of your main speakers. We're talking about a click or three higher on crossover making all the difference, so proceed with care and in small increments. At this point, the overall soundstage in the Dynaudios increases in width, depth, and height dramatically.

But it's the last two on top that produce the last, and perhaps the most significant helping of realism. These are crossed over even higher than the middle and bottom subs, yet they provide the dramatic increase in overall presence that only the six pack can deliver.

This is what adds the true feel of room and hall space. Listening to Jeff Beck's *Live at Ronnie Scott's*, the difference in hall ambience is staggering. Now you can easily hear people clapping at the front of the room and the back, with the right spatial relationships in place.

Unplug the six pack, and it's still pleasant, but the clapping is now diffuse. Moving on to the live recording of Al DiMeola, John McLaughlin, and Paco DeLucia's *Friday Night in San Francisco*, reveals the air and space between these three virtuoso guitarists playing acoustic to be stunningly real.

**This is when it's easy
to start being fooled
that you're listening
to the real thing, not
just a recording. This
is what it's all about.**

In the end, I admit to a little bit of cheating, because it was so much easier to set the S/510 array up, being able to use the no.25s as a reference. I just kept going back and forth, listening to the same tracks over and over, until I felt I'd tweaked the S/510 array as close as I could to the sound of the no.25s.



So, what's missing?

The biggest difference between the S/510 six pack and the no.25s comes in terms of ultimate scale, and gradation. If you imagine music strictly in terms of a 0-100% scale, the top REL stack has the ability to reproduce low frequencies with an incredibly fine gradation between loud and softest sounds. Which gives the no. 25 stack a higher level of intricacy to the music it reproduces. (provided the rest of the system is up to the task)

But bass is a lot about moving air in a specific sized room. In a smaller room, at modest to fairly high levels, with the right main speakers the stack of S/510s deliver an experience that is very powerful, convincing, and incredibly close to what the big array delivers in a big room. A six pack of no. 25s in my 13 x 18 foot living room would severely overdrive the room and not be as effective as the 510s in this room.

Going back and forth between my big room and the living room, I was never disappointed in the S/510 array. Just before COVID kicked in, I had the pleasure of visiting REL's home office where John Hunter had a six pack of S/510s set up with a speaker I know very well – the MartinLogan CLS.

The CLS has always been notoriously tough to mate with subwoofers because of their incredibly speed and transparency, but the S/510s are perfect. They make the CLSs sound like massive speakers that rock, in a way that the CLS and even the flagship ESL from MartinLogan, the CLX can not. (and I've owned both) This combination in the context of a \$30k system, was one of the most musically enjoyable systems I've heard at any price in a long time.

The detail and texture in the lower frequencies, along with the sheer weight that the six pack of S/510s provide is always what keeps me coming back for more music, for a longer listening session. With both the CLS and my Dynaudios, revisiting familiar tracks that are either bass heavy, bass challenging or both reveal unheard of nuance, with a new sense of recording depth previously unavailable.

If you start with a pair of S/510s, you will not be disappointed. At, \$2,499 each, these are a fantastic value, offering tremendous performance. When you are ready to step up to an array, you need only get an additional cable from your REL dealer to piggy back the subs. For those with larger rooms, but still shy of the true “public room” sized salons that No.25's often find themselves working in, the S/812 Line Arrays are just as amazing with additional weight and deep bass extension and are better suited to larger speakers.

If your needs are more mixed, requiring your system to do double duty for theater as well as hifi listening, the S/510s can also be configured via your processor's LFE channels. While I do not have a theater setup in my main listening room, I did use a single S/510 connected this way in our bedroom system. Pairing the S/510 with the Totem Kin Play's LFE channel integrates perfectly, and made catching up on last season's *Star Trek – Discovery* episodes very enjoyable.

If you can make it happen, the six pack array is the way to go. Once you experience low frequencies rendered the way a REL six pack does, it will be tough to go back.

www.rel.net

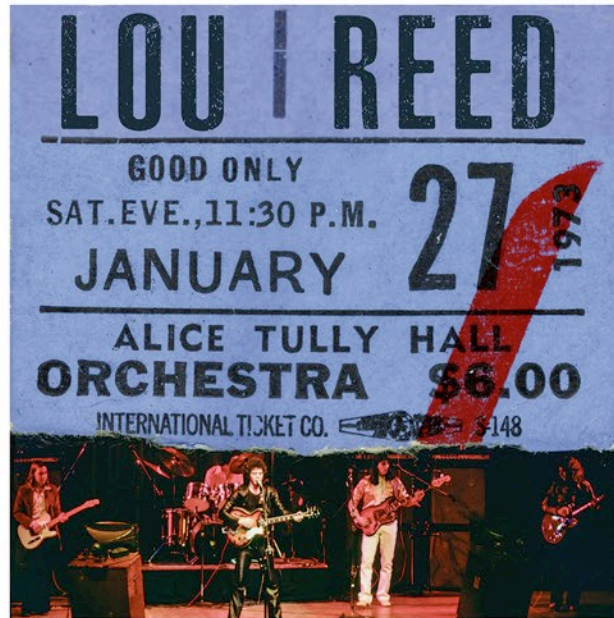
The REL S/510

REL

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With this year's Record Store Day being split into three days because of COVID, it made the goodies slightly more accessible to those braving the germs and the elements.

We asked our staff members, and Facebook friends what their favorites were, so this is a full album list...



Tommy Bolin - Tommy Bolin Lives!

Lenny Bruce - Lenny Bruce is Out Again

Primus - Suck on This

Virgin Suicides Soundtrack - Various Artists

Out to Get You! LIVE - Cheap Trick

Cleveland Calling - Rory Gallagher

David Bowie - I'm Only Dancing (The Soul Tour '74)

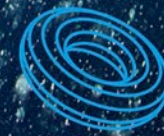
David Bowie - ChangesNow

Rams: Original Soundtrack - Brian Eno

Hawkwind - At the BBC 1972

Elton John - Elton John

Ace Frehley - Trouble Walkin'



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In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

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Dave Hanson,
EnjoyTheMusic.com



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most flexible headphone amplifier
I've ever encountered..."*

Grover Neville, InnerFidelity

*"Fit and finish is impeccable,
as I have come to expect
from Manley..."*

Al Chieng, Positive Feedback

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Steven Stone, HiFi+

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Gary Alan Barker, Headphone.guru

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Swill

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By Cameron VanDerHorst



I'm not sure if we've ever covered a wine in the Swill column before. I do know for certain that this will be my first time reviewing something that didn't have a pull tab or a bottle cap on it. This issue, we're reviewing 19 Crimes' Snoop Cali Red, the Australian vintner's collaboration with none other than Snoop Dogg.

I'm no wine expert – that title goes to my doctor sister, who wrote a review of Snoop Cali Red and sent it my way. Unfortunately, the review was illegible. I have four older sisters, and when Christmas cards arrive in the mail, I usually use the process of elimination to figure out which one came from her.

What I do know is Snoop Dogg, and I highly recommend listening to *Doggystyle* or *Paid Tha Cost to Be Da Boss* while drinking 19 Crimes Snoop Cali Red. I especially recommend listening to his collaborations with my second favorite doctor, Dr. Dre.

19 Crimes Snoop Cali Red is a proper cab – it's full-bodied and dark. However, it's also fruity and just a bit sweet at the end, like the sort of movies that are always advertised as being "fun for the whole family."

Legal Stuff: While we all enjoy consuming adult beverages, (if you're of legal age, of course) TONE and Cardas Audio ask you to be responsible...

TONE104.088

Swill

Sponsored by Cardas Audio

by Cameron VanDerHorst

It's a delicious, easy-drinking wine that pairs well with beef. It would also do well as a dessert wine, especially when combined with a chocolatey dish. My recommendation is to kill a bottle over a steak and a slice of moist chocolate cake while listening to *Nuthin But A "G" Thang* on repeat, followed by a nap. They might as well have called this wine The Chronic.

Regular readers will note that I use the phrase "easy-drinking" quite often in my reviews. There's a reason. I don't drink booze that isn't at the very least tolerable. Alcohol is supposed to be fun. I don't know who you're trying to impress by drinking stuff that tastes like cough syrup, floor cleaner, or transmission fluid, but it ain't me.

Like most of 19 Crimes' output, you wind up feeling like you've spent a lot more than you did. As a freelance journalist, I'm not exactly country club material. That said, I do get plenty of opportunities to rub shoulders with the sort of folks who routinely spend into the triple digits for a bottle of quality wine. I've yet to meet one of these folks who doesn't love 19 Crimes. It's a premium product with premium packaging and premium taste at a reasonable price. If only our favorite high-end audio brands were able to operate on this same principle, I'd have a system that could blast *Gin & Juice* at the sort of volume that would get the police called.

Ed. note: I think we can help you with this...



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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 met so many of our readers from all over the globe, 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.

Let's call it what it is - MINE! We'll be sharing more of our favorites as we go.



Stihl Cordless GTA 26 Pruner

\$269

stihl.com

Stihl calls it a pruner, but I call it a mini chainsaw. After watching a YouTube review from the Texas Home Improvement Network, I'd say this is a pretty unique little trimmer with a lot of uses.

And, I think I need one.

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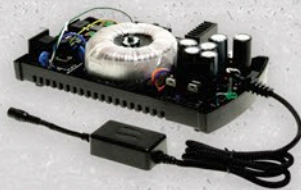
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The Upscale Audio Edition processes 50% more LPs per session than the standard Kirmuss Record Cleaner.

Just \$1,335

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\$999



MINE
it should be YOURS



Bringing back the 80s

\$85
shopswatch.com

I'm not sure if we like Lego's or Swatch watches more around here. Swatch fans can rejoice with the legendary manufacturer's recent push to re-imagine their original works.

You can't go wrong with yellow.

TONE104.095



Experience the new line of granite loudspeakers from Acora Acoustics. *Hear the sonic advantages of utilizing granite enclosures. Granite provides rigidity that conventional enclosures can't. Granite allows you to hear the music, not the enclosure. This results in greater imaging and micro-dynamics leaving you with just the music, pure and simple.*

*Acora Acoustics
-Hear the Truth-*



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Find out more about the benefits of granite enclosures,
and the other advantages utilized by Acora Acoustics
Please visit <http://www.acoraacoustics.com>

Colored Carnuba Wax

\$43.95 - \$74.95

esotericcarcare.com

Considering how many speaker manufacturers are now applying automotive finishes to their cabinets, it's important to keep them looking their best. This colored, spray carnuba from Polishangel is one of the best we've used, both on our cars and on our colored speakers.

Sonus faber owners, with the classic red finish take note, this will keep your speakers looking fabulous.

And, it's easy. Grab a couple of fresh microfiber towels - wax on, wax off. Just be sure to wear some latex gloves or you will have colored hands!



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MINE
it should be YOURS

A very old friend...

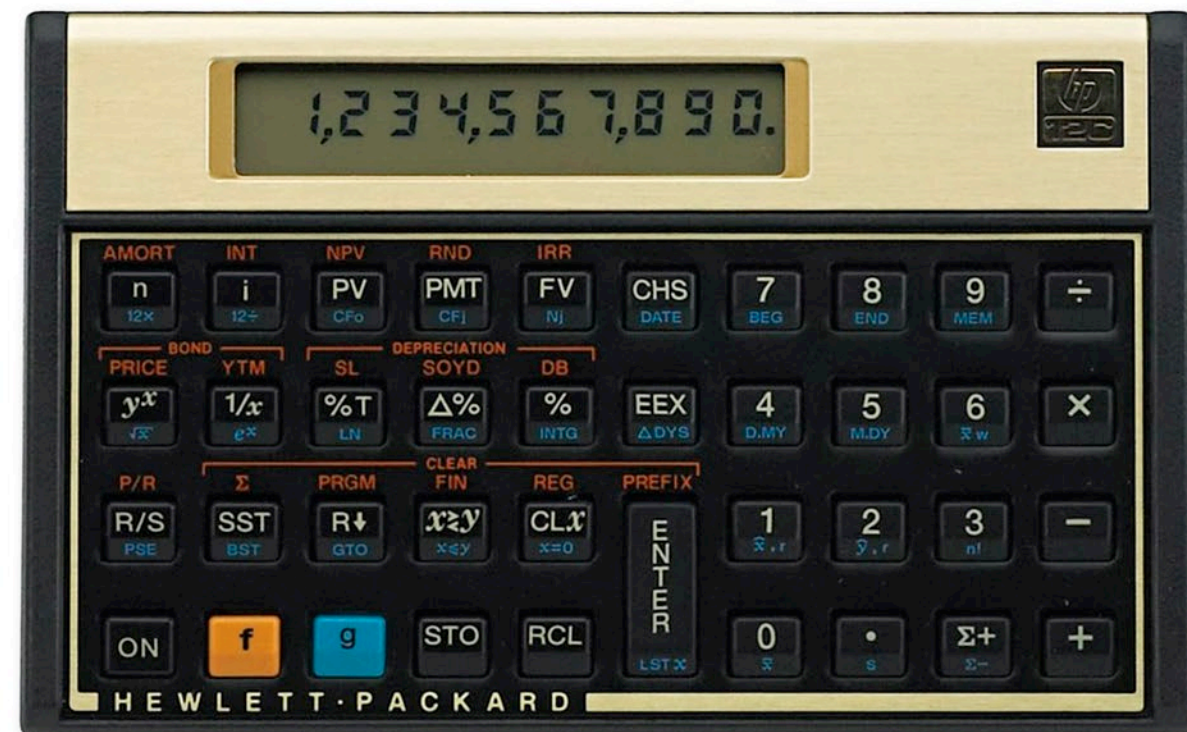
\$85
staples.com

A recent Facebook discussion about calculators had a few readers mentioning how much they still use and love their HP 12C.

A little research shows, that after almost 40 years, they are still being made. And still a trusted tool by many in the scientific and financial worlds.

You can still buy em, blister packed at Staples.

Wow!



MINE: it should be yours

A pound of pixels - the Lumix S1R

\$4,599 (with Panasonic 24-105mm lens)
shop.panasonic.com

If you've noticed a bit of a bump in quality in this issue's photos, the reason is below. Featuring a 47.3MP MOS sensor, this is definitely medium format territory, yet the camera feels more like an early DSLR, or 35mm film SLR from the late 70s. In short - this camera feels substantial.

As someone who spent many years toting around a Nikon F3 with a motor drive, the S1R is like coming home to a style of photography you've always known.

The electronic viewfinder is excellent, and the viewfinder on the rear of the body equally good. You merely need to touch the screen to tell the S1R where to focus, making your creative moments uninterrupted.

Unlike many medium format DSLRs, the sensor in the Lumix makes for great captures at low ISO/ long exposures and high ISO too.

The 24 - 105mm zoom will cover nearly all situations, but Panasonic offers a full line of lenses. And, if that isn't enough, this camera shares a mount with Leica. The full L-Mount system can also be used with the S1R.

As this camera will probably be added to our photographic arsenal, this will be a combination to report back on.

-jeff dorgay



TONE104.101



"no matter what I listened to, I couldn't imagine the sound being much better"
Soundstage! June 2017

Technology

Bryston's new patented Salomie Circuit is a revolutionary new way to reduce distortion and noise unveiling never before heard details only hinted at by other equipment. The input stage operates at distortion of less than 0.001 percent!

Power

Cubed Series technology is available in 10 different amplifiers ranging from the B135³ integrated at 135 watts per channel, the venerable 4B³ at 300 watts by two channels, to the incredible 28B³ 1000 watt mono block.

Control

For the first time, Bryston brings Cubed Series to the front end. Our new BP-17³ Preamplifier features the Salomie Circuit from input to output reproducing higher resolution than ever before.

BRYSTON

677 Neal Drive, Peterborough, ON K9J 6X7 Canada
705-742-5325 | www.bryston.com



Han Solo Refrigerator Cover

\$99

amazon.com

Is there anything that Amazon DOESN'T have?

Star Wars fan or not, this makes for a pretty interesting conversation starter for when we can actually have people over to gather in our kitchens again.

Meanwhile, might be a great prop for some cosplay...



"No one offers a better combination of high performance, classic good looks, and functionality in a compact form factor than Nagra does with their Classic Line. When you want maximum performance in a minimal footprint, this is the way to go!"

Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio

NAGRA

SWISS INNOVATION SINCE 1951

MINE
it should be
YOURS

Tub Time from Kohler

\$5,698 (hardware not included)
kohler.com

After a long day of arguing about current issues, the upcoming election, and whether digital is better than analog or vice-versa, how about a nice, hot, bath?

There, that's better.

The Kohler Ceric bath is a comfy 65" x 31" and has a central drain, so you can immerse yourself fully.



Audio Technica
AT-OC9XSH Dual
Moving Coil Cartridge
\$648.99



Nordost
QKore3
Ground Unit
\$3,499.99



Clearaudio
Balance V2 MM/MC
Phono Stage (Silver)
\$3,499.99



VAS
Nova Special MC
Cartridge w/Stylus
\$1,799.99



Audio Desk System
Vinyl Cleaner Pro
Record Cleaner
\$3999.99



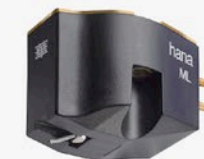
Audioquest
Niagara 1200 Low-Z Power
Noise-Dissipation System
\$999.95



Cayin
A-50T MKII Tube Int.
Amp w/MM Phono Stage
\$1,899.99



Equi=Tech
1.5RQ Power
Conditioner
\$4,699.99



Hana
ML Microline
MC Cartridge 0.4mV
\$1,199.99



IsoAcoustics
GAIA I Speaker
Isolators (Set of 4)
\$599.99



KirmussAudio
KA-RC-1 Ultrasonic
Restoration System
\$875.00



Stax
SR-009 Ltd. 80th Anniv.
Open Back Headphones
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Music Hall
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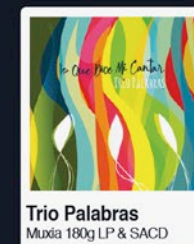
Sasha Cooke
Yarlung 180g 45rpm LP



Kenny Burrell
Blue Note Tone Poet 180g LP



Jennifer Warnes
Impex 180g LP & SACD



Trio Palabras
Muxia 180g LP & SACD



Vanessa Fernandez
Groove Note 180g LP



Beethoven
Chasing The Dragon 180g LP

The elusive bootleg

\$399

keithrichards.com

Contributor Bob Gendron mentioned last issue that the Keith Richards live record from the Dec.15, 1988 Palladium show should be released on vinyl.

They must have been listening.

You can go for the four hundred dollar box with all the goodies you see here, vinyl only, or if you're totally slumming, the CD for \$15.98. Either way, if you love this band from the *Talk is Cheap* tour, it's not to be missed.



www.francoserblin.it

Francis Serblin

Club Mix compilation expert, Scott Tetzlaff’s theme for this playlist is “getting stuff done.”

He says this playlist will push you forward, at a comfortable pace, without getting in the way of concentrating... mixed with a few words of inspiration.



- Talismantra - Warmth Reheated
- Avia - Why Should I Cry (Lester Remix)
- CFCF - You Hear Colors
- Elite Beat - Sports Radio
- Tycho - Ascension (Rob Garza Mix)
- Rjd12 - Ghostwriter
- Michael Mayer - Papa’s Groove (doP & Masomenos remix)
- Hraach - Silver Cord
- Stelvio Cipriani - Ograzmo, nero, sequenzia no.1
- Thunderball - Pop the Trunk (Thievery Corp. Remix)
- Jungle - Busy Earnin’
- Potatohead People + DeLaSoul - Baby Got Work

TONE Playlists are sponsored by -



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If a loudspeaker is famous for its performance, why change it? MartinLogan’s new **Motion® Series** achieve the same superior performance as previous generations, with lifelike clarity, exceptional accuracy, and dynamic range.

A stylish new enclosure design updates the look, with performance-enhancing internal bracing, reinforced baffles, new fabric grilles, and a choice of three beautiful finishes.

“...the vocals sounded eerily lifelike, and the instrumental timbre was natural, with a depth so palpable I could practically reach my hands into it.”

David Martson, The Absolute Sound, on Motion 60XT

martinlogan.com

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FUTURE TENSE Reviews in our immediate future...

Backert Labs Rhumba XPhono 1.1

\$7,500
backertlabs.com

Building on the excitement of using the Backert Labs Rhumba lineage, seeing what they can do with a phono preamplifier is equally intriguing.

Rounding out the Backert Labs lineup to four boxes, all preamplifiers, this one looks very promising. Initial listening impressions are excellent.



Streaming DAC with Preamp

The DS-10 is the Streaming DAC with Preamp for the contemporary audiophile. With a new generation D/A Converter, UPnP-DLNA Streamer, Line Preamplifier and Headphone Amplifier, the DS-10 and DS-10 PLUS feature connectivity and innovative technologies like the Bluetooth 5.0 - for the first time ever on a High-End audio unit - brilliantly enclosed in a half-width sized chassis made of thick aluminium.

The icing on the cake? The Chameleon Mode, our proprietary technology that allows you to fine-tune the performance of the DAC for the music you're playing, acting on the PCM Equalisation curve (Low Pass filter), the High-Frequency De-emphasis, and the internal power profile. **High-End audio made in Italy.**

DS-10 & DS-10 PLUS

The versatile Streaming DAC designed by Gold Note for the contemporary audiophile.

- D/A Converter AKM AK4493 PCM up to 32bit/ 768kHz and DSD512 native
- Preamp analogue stage
- Headphone output with volume control
- Analogue input 3.5mm
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- Roon Ready and controlled via GN Control App



FUTURE TENSE Reviews in our immediate future...



Parasound JC1+ Monoblocks

\$8,499 Each
parasound.com

From the brain of legendary designer John Curl comes the new and improved version of their JC1 monoblocks.

The 17-thousand dollar question is, are they twice as good as the ones they replace? We've put our hands on a pair of originals and let you know...

But Parasound has never produced a loser. This is going to be fun!



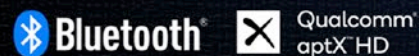
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Fun.

We Are
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totemacoustic.com



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FUTURE

TENSE Reviews in our immediate future...



Cyrus One Cast

\$1,999
cyrusaudio.com

The Brits have a real knack for making great compact integrated amplifiers that are big on functionality.

The Cyrus One Cast concentrates on offering a great MM phono stage and a class D amplifier section that produces 100 watts per channel.

There's a great on board headphone amplifier, and the DAC has the ability to stream via Bluetooth/AptX.

Some of us never quit....

Reel to reel isn't the only revolution.

If you've always enjoyed making a mix tape, but are tired of the crazy prices for NOS cassettes, now there's an answer.

Try the new Capture C-60 cassettes, from Splicit.

It's a Type 1 tape, with plenty of range, to capture the nuance on your favorite LPs or CDs.

Hence the name.

www.splicit.com



FUTURE TENSE Reviews in our immediate future...

Pass Labs X150.8

\$6,800
passlabs.com

Our publisher has been using Pass XA series monoblocks for some time now with excellent luck. Senior contributor Rob Johnson takes on the task of evaluating the mostly Class-AB, entry level, X150.8 amplifier you see here.

Tune in soon, he's got a lot of good things to say about this amplifier!



**Bowers & Wilkins
702S2**

bowersandwilkins.com
\$4,995/pair

\$5k/pair sees to be a trend/sweet spot lately in high performance speakers. The competition in this price category is indeed fierce, and we are looking forward to listening and comparing one of the UK's finest, to the Sonus faber Sonettos we review this issue.

It's always fascinating to experience a different perspective and engineering priorities.



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Luxman Japan Head Office:
1-3-1 Shin-Yokohama, Kouhoku-Ku,
Yokohama 222-0033, Japan
Tel: 045 470 6991

Naim ND555 and PS555

naimaudio.com
\$12,995 and \$19,995 (you need both parts)

Naim has been quietly making some of the world's finest digital components for some time, starting with their legendary CD555 CD player, which was a reference component here for years, along with the PS555 you see here.

Now, Naim redefines the rules of the game with their new ND555 network player.

The CD compartment is gone, but the excellence begun with the CD555 is upheld here.



Formula xHD

- Proprietary Optologic DAC
- Pure FPGA-based R2R Ladder
- Fully-floating (isolating) D/A converter system
- Hybrid USB xCore 200 (dual core) in Bit Perfect up to 768 kHz PCM and DSD 256
- Filterless Non-oversampling digital architecture



Unconventional DNA



La Voce S3 dac



La Scala Optologic dac



Formula xHD dac



La Diva cd transport



MADE IN
FRANCE

DAC & AMPLIFIER | ARCHE

Digital-analog converter, pure class A amplifier: Arche is the ideal all-in-one solution to enjoy your high-end headphones but also drive your home hi-fi system. This product also offers presets for every set of Focal

Premium headphones to make sure you get the absolute best from this ultimate combination. In addition, Arche comes with a solid aluminium headphone mount, inspired by the brand's logo, for an easy access to the headphones and an original design.

Amplify your emotions

\$2,490*

* Price for the Arche amplifier only.

FUTURE TENSE

Reviews in our immediate future...

Sonus faber Lumina 1

\$899/pair
sonusfaber.com

The new Lumina series from Sonus faber has a more traditional shape, but is every inch a Sonus faber. The Lumina 1 will be a perfect fit for those in more compact spaces that still demand high quality sound.





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nowlistenhere.net

FUTURE TENSE Reviews in our immediate future...

Rel T-Zero MKIII Subwoofer

\$449
rel.net

We've been accused of just being intrigued with REL's massive six-packs, and for good reason. It's the top of the mountain in low-frequency rendering.

But not everyone needs, wants, or can afford that kind of commitment. The T-Zero MKIII proves that their smallest sub still embodies all of the principles that make a Rel a Rel.





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SOUNDORG.COM/FYNE



FUTURE TENSE Reviews in our immediate future...

McIntosh MA12000

\$14,000
mcintoshlabs.com

This is an issue all about integrated amplifiers, right? This monster just got released as we were wrapping the issue, so we just had to include it.

The MA 12000 has all of Mac's best tech in one big (and heavy - 108lb) box. A great MM/MC phono stage, full functioning streaming DAC, 8-band EQ, two pairs of glowing tubes and the legendary blue power meters. all on the front panel.

All you need is a turntable and two speakers.



If you're old enough to remember Saturday morning cartoons, or dinner hour TV shows, (or maybe just enjoy reruns) someone always had a band. In more recent years, there have been a number of movies based on fictitious, or semi-fictitious musical groups.

Here's a playlist dedicated to the bands that never really were, with exception to The Monkees.



- The Monkees - Theme Song
- The Partridge Family - C'Mon Get Happy
- The Wonders - That Thing You Do
- The Archies - Sugar Sugar
- Josie And The Pussycats - Inside, Outside, Upside Down
- Jet Screamer (with Judy Jetson) - Eep, Opp, Ork, Ah-ah!
- Buckaroo Banzai & The Hong Kong Cavaliers - If I Don't Have You
- Spinal Tap - Big Bottom
- Dethklok - Duncan Hills Coffee Jingle
- Ashley O - On a Roll

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SUMIKO BLUE POINT NO.2 CARTRIDGE



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In House

The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Brand X - *Is There Anything About?*

As we have another cassette deck article in this issue, we've been making mix tapes again and breaking out the pre-recorded tapes like it was 1980.

This is a bit off the beaten path, but hard core prog fans know what we're up to.



"Rega's new P10 is by far the company's most sophisticated, refined, quiet, and subtle-sounding turntable yet."

Michael Fremer, *Stereophile*, March 2020

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rega

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972-234-0182

The
sund
Organisation

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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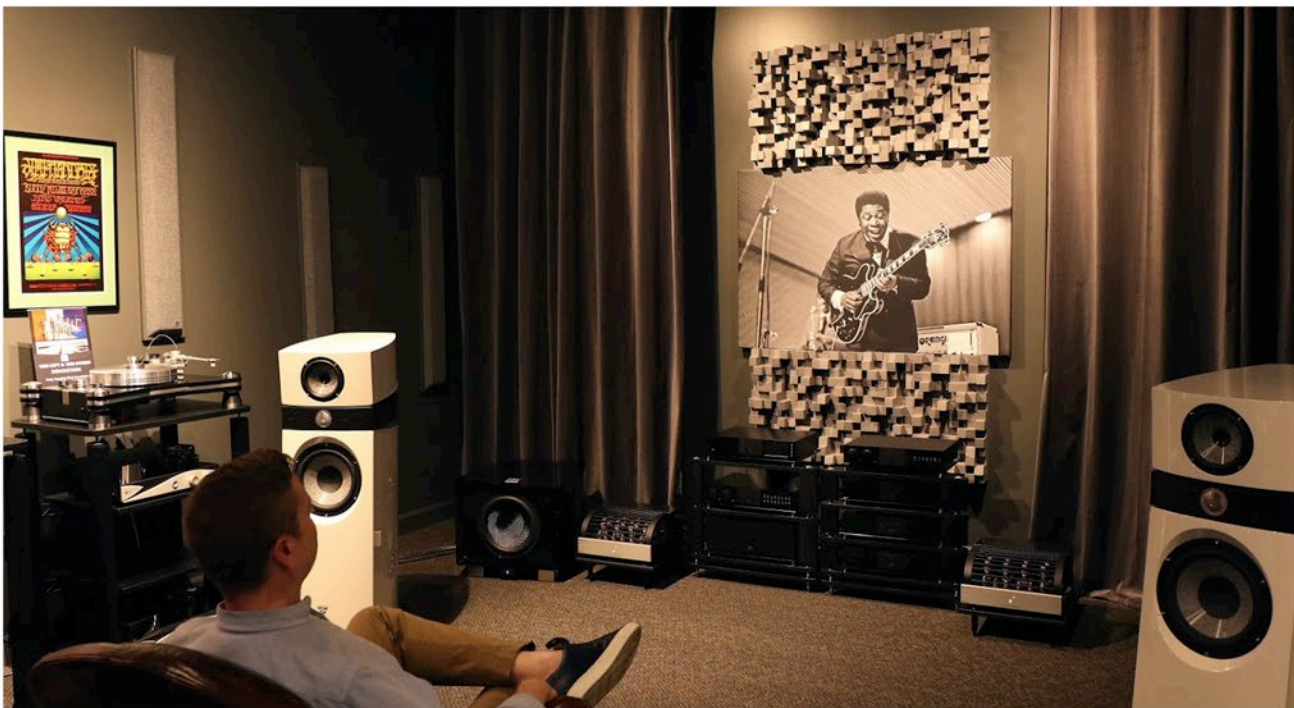
La Verne, California - Upscale Audio

upscaleaudio.com

2058 Wright Avenue

La Verne, California 91750

909.931.9686



Vestal, New York - Audio Classics

audioclassics.com

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Paul Rigby
(The Audiophile Man)

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

WHAT HI-FI?
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Paul Rigby
(The Audiophile Man)

GROOVY
8/10

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Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

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Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

847.966.4434



Scottsdale, Arizona - LMC Home Entertainment
lmche.com
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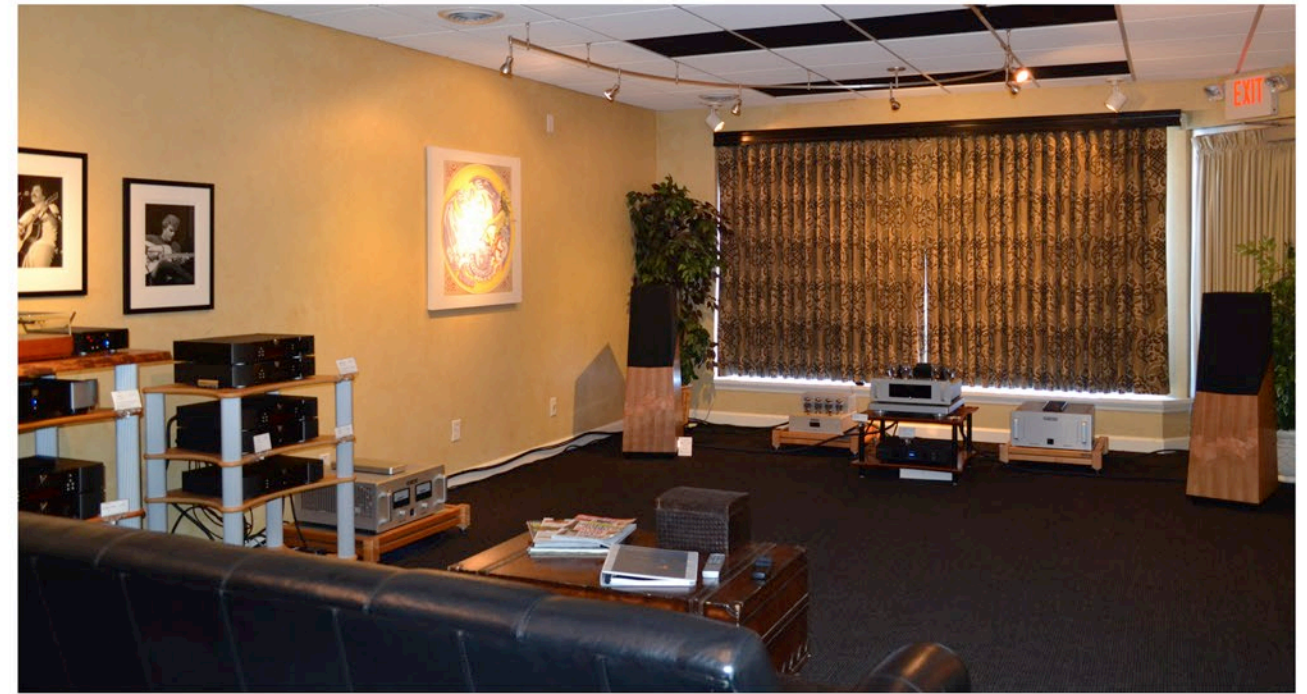
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www.ultrafidelis.com

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53213

414.221.0200



Portland, Oregon - Echo Audio

www.echohifi.com

5904 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy

Portland, Oregon 97221

888.248.3246



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Sarasota, Florida - Suncoast Audio
www.suncoastaudio.com
7353 International Place, Unit 309
Sarasota, Florida 34240 941.932.0282



New York City, New York - Noho Sound & Stereo
www.nohosound.com
62 Cooper Square
New York, New York 10003



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*Iridium
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*Iridium
Phono*



*Iridium
Speaker*

www.cardas.com

Dealers That Mean Business - Listings

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www.theaudioco.com
146 South Park Square NE
Marietta, Georgia 30060

770.429.0434



San Diego, California - Deja VU Audio West
www.dejavuaudiowest.com
4848 Ronson Ct. Ste E
San Diego, California 92111

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www.francoserblin.it

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Kiseki	kiseki-usa.com	Rega	soundorg.com
Luxman	luxmanamerica.com	Sonus faber	sonusfaber.com
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Nagra	nagraaudio.com	TONE Imports	toneimports.com
Naim	focalnaimamerica.com	Torus	toruspowers.com
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In House

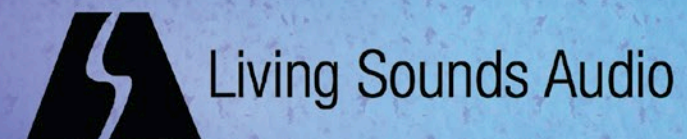
The soundtrack of assembling the issue...

Run D.M.C. - *King of Rock*

Listening to a few generations of Technics SL-1200s for issue #105, this record begs to be played.

And in this instance, on a black SL-1200 Mk.5, with Shure M44-7, for full effect.

Can you rock it like this?



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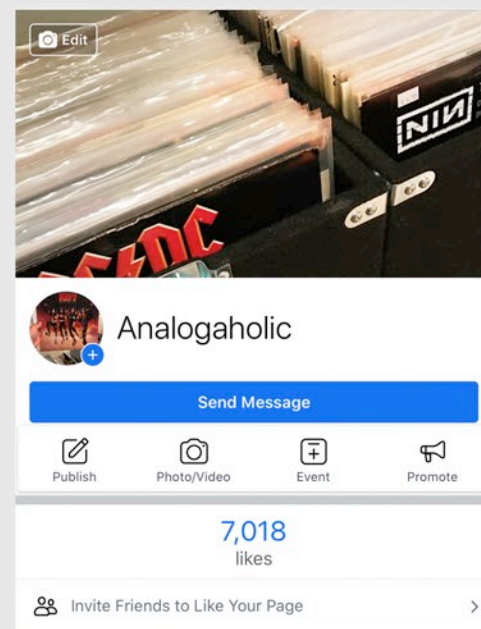
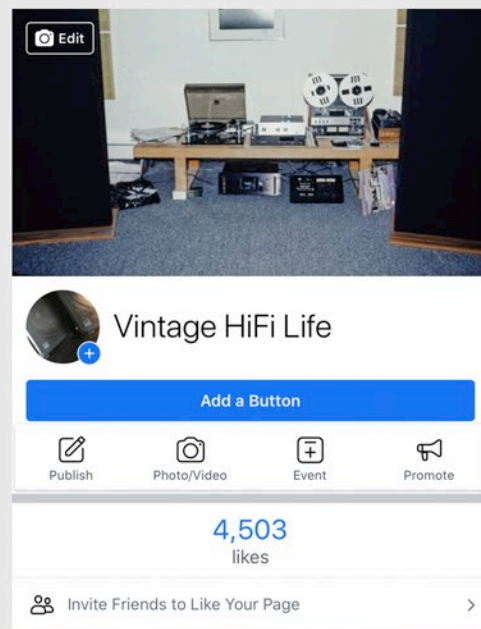
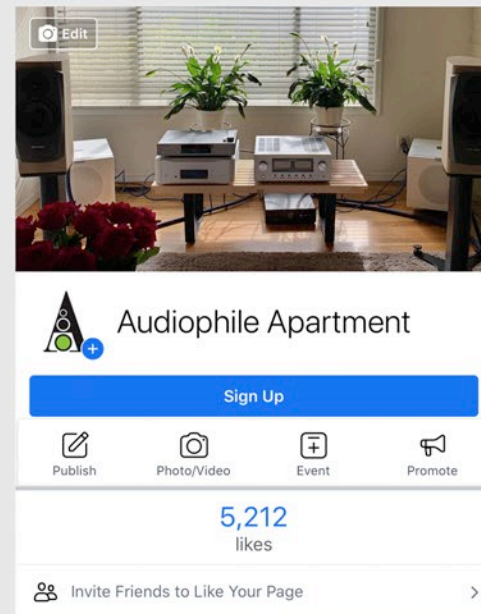
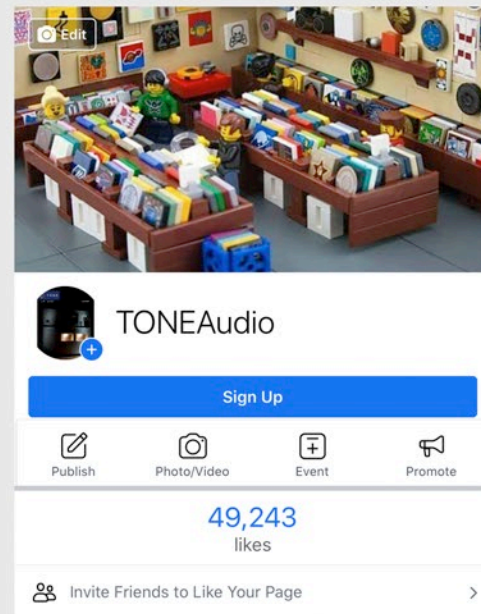
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HEAR THE HIDDEN DETAILS



We've tried to make it pretty easy for you to find us out on Facebook, and have divided up our pages to be a bit more subject specific.

Here they are with links. Just click on the page that interests you most. We look forward to hearing from you when you have a spare moment.

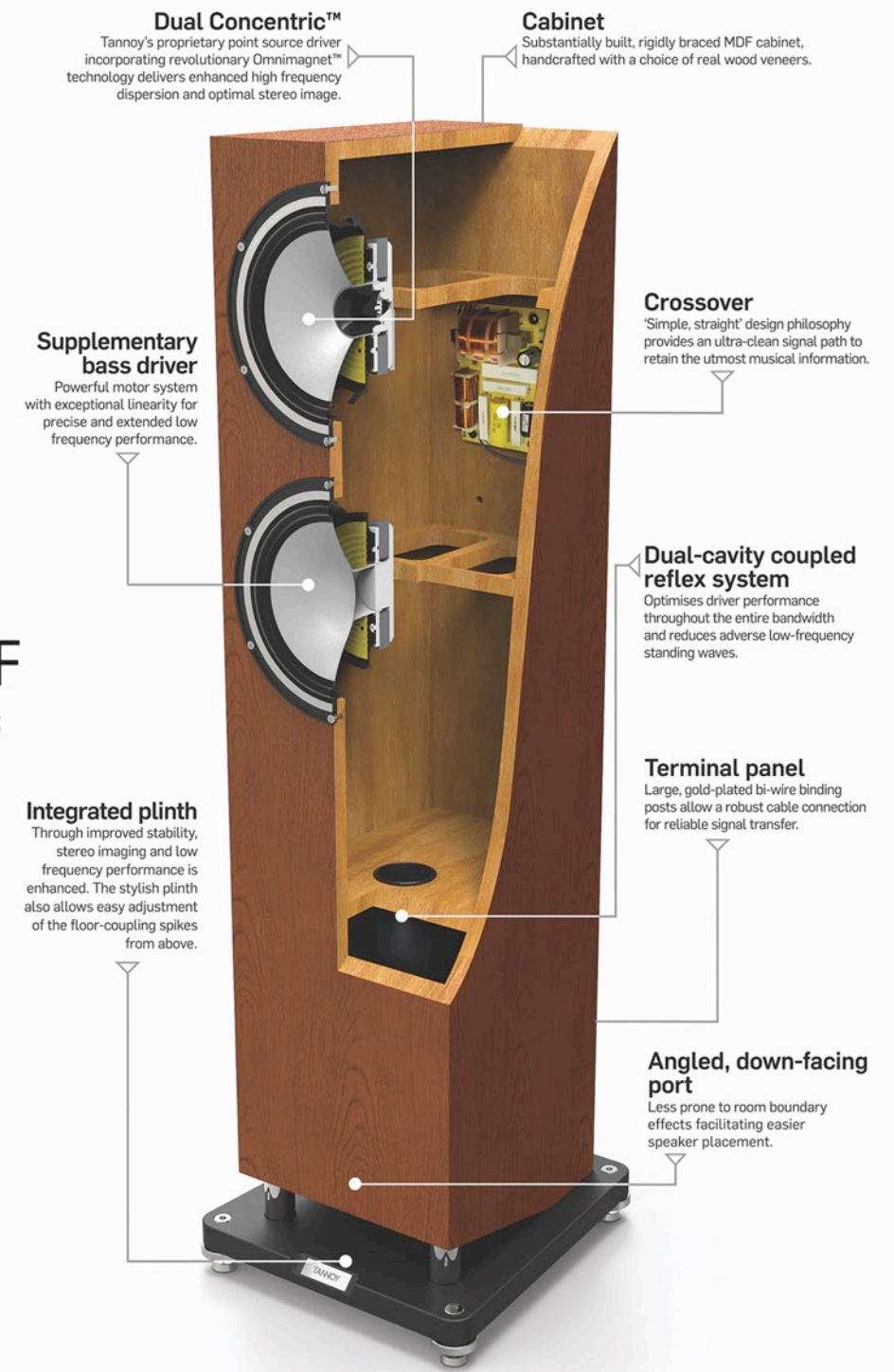


Revolution XT 8F

THIS \$10K SPEAKER IS JUST \$2300 PER PAIR

AVAILABLE IN
GLOSS BLACK
GLOSS WHITE
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MEDIUM OAK

TANNOY



"The Tannoy Revolution XT 8F was Robert Harley's top discovery at the 2015 Consumer Electronics Show. His first impression was as follows: 'After listening to it and looking at the real wood enclosure, I guessed the price at \$7000 to \$10,000. The Revolution XT's price was then revealed to be just \$2600 per pair.' After living with the 8F happily for several months, I was ready to declare it a sensational entry-level loudspeaker. But I see that I need to slightly amend that statement—the only thing entry-level about it is the price. The real wood veneers and level of finish don't suggest an entry-level product, and sonically it performs to a much higher standard. I'm in total agreement with Robert's assessment: The Tannoy packs a virtuoso midrange that is competitive with speakers approaching \$10k retail."

— DICK OLSHER, THE ABSOLUTE SOUND



This time, the end of the photo shoot signifies the end of summer as well.

We'll put the unsuspecting flamingoes away for a brighter day. And we can all use a few of those. Here's to the hope that next summer has us back going to hifi shows, record stores and (safe) visits with good friends.



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Next issue, **105:**

Next issue...Awards!

We've said it before, we'll say it again, every piece of gear we hand pick to discuss in TONE is award worthy, but we live in a world that loves trophies.

We pick our absolute favorites next issue.

And an integrated amplifier roundup.

Stay tuned.

And as always, drop on by our Facebook page and let us know how you are...



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