

**Pro-ject
2 Xperience £550**

↑ FOR

Delivery brims with detail; slightly laid-back character is ideal for longer-listening sessions; solid build and (to most) attractive looks

↓ AGAINST

Can lack attack and aggression; price doesn't include a cartridge

◆◆◆ VERDICT

This Pro-ject has a well-polished sound, but doesn't over excite recordings, so shouldn't be matched with laid-back sounding electronics



WHEN WE FIRST tested this deck, in April 2004, we quoted its price at £500 – that's what the UK distributor told us – but it actually costs £550. However, the 2 Xperience performs so well it keeps its five-star verdict.

For those familiar with Pro-ject, this level of performance comes as no surprise. Via its superb Debut budget range, the Czech-based firm's played

a major part in reuniting thousands of hi-fi fans with previously attic-imprisoned boxes of vinyl.

While the Debut decks are great value, this £550 design offers a big step up in build and performance. It uses a Pro-ject 9c tonearm, as found on its £1000 RPM 9X sibling, and a stylish transparent acrylic plinth. There's no cartridge supplied – though buyers can get 25 percent off various Ortofon styli – so we fitted our £150 reference Goldring

1042: a fine needle and a suitable partner. Assembling the 2 Xperience isn't hard, but we'd advise newcomers to ask their dealer for some pointers.

Up against the Clearaudio, this turntable offers a more laidback and relaxed performance. It still extracts impressive levels of information from recordings, but it's more Miles Davis than Ray Davies. Spin some up-tempo tunes and delivery is rhythmic and frequencies evenly balanced, but percussion doesn't

It's clearly a great turntable, but the Pro-ject's just pipped by the Clearaudio

carry the snap of the Clearaudio or the Technics. However, what the Pro-ject lacks in attack, it makes up for in a fluid and realistic performance. If you enjoy chilled out vocals, and especially a slice of smooth jazz, this deck makes a great choice.

There is no doubt – Pro-ject knows how to build great-sounding turntables, so check out the 2 Xperience.