

FAMILY TIES | PRO-JECT TURNTABLES



£500 to £699

Pro-ject RPM 6

Price £500

SOUND

★★★★★

BUILD

★★★★★

FACILITIES

★★★★★

VERDICT

★★★★★

IT'S CLEARLY FROM the same family as the RPM 4, sharing both its shape and Pro-ject 9 arm, but otherwise this costlier deck – the price excludes a cartridge – is a very different beast.

The 16V AC motor has an offboard AC/AC plugtop power supply, while the subplatter is acrylic and fits on a substantial inverted bearing, so getting nearer to the theoretical ideal of having the arm and platter bearings on the same level.

The massive MDF platter sits atop the subplatter, with a layer of vinyl bonded to this accepting the record. This vinyl-to-vinyl bond is thought to give very good support and damping, and it's helped by the provision of a big metal weight that fits over the spindle. The advantage of the big platter is that it has a flywheel effect, smoothing out speed fluctuations.

The on/off switch is underneath, as on the RPM 4, and changing speed involves partial disassembly and

hoiking the belt down on the pulley using the tool provided, or the purchase of the new SpeedBox.

Using the £300 Ortofon MC25FL moving coil cartridge – supplied by distributor Henley Designs for use with this, the RPM 9 and Perspective turntables – and with the Phono Box SE reset, the RPM 6 was spun into action. And boy, is it quiet, with no noticeable surface noise even during quiet passages with the amp cranked up. Music has excellent power and weight, allied to that fine but unforced detail that's so typical of vinyl played well. From the Roger Waters disc to the single of USA for Africa's *We Are the World*, the RPM 6 sounds bigger and better than the decks that have preceded it here, with a hefty, tightly controlled bass and fine levels of detail. Whether in the massed choir or the individual voices, the 6 has an appealing crispness, and there's a lovely impression of togetherness and of a performance, rather than just a recording.

This is a great record player, but then the price with cartridge is creeping towards the £1000 mark.

LEADING RIVAL

Rega Planar 25 £619 ★★★★★
Another great-sounding Rega deck that's simple and effective.

Perfect partners

SPEAKERS

Mission 780

£300 ★★★★★
Twice our Product of the Year due to great build quality, engineering and performance.



AMPLIFIER

Sony TA-FB940R

£300 ★★★★★
Best Buy in 2000. Plenty of features and a natural, highly involving sound.



£700 to £999

Pro-ject Perspective

Price £700

SOUND

★★★★★

BUILD

★★★★★

FACILITIES

★★★★★

VERDICT

★★★★★

THE PERSPECTIVE HAS a main plinth made of Perspex – hence the name and the pair of gloves provided to avoid fingermarks while handling the deck – above which floats the main bearing assembly on a trio of damped supports. The whole shebang's levelled via three adjustable spike feet and a spirit-level located on the arm mount, while the arm is the by-now familiar Pro-ject 9. The price excludes a cartridge, but once again we used the £300 MC25FL, which seems a very good match.

However, the really clever bit about the Perspective is its turntable drive system. There's a subplatter, onto which the main platter – made of composite with a layer of vinyl bonded on, and with a large screw-down clamp a la RPM 4 – is fitted. But the drive belt goes right round the perimeter of the main platter and is powered by an exposed motor out to the rear left corner of the plinth. And rather than hooking the belt up

and down on pulleys or having an electronic speed switch, the Perspective has separate motors for the two common speeds – 33.3 and 45rpm. Changing speed is a matter of disconnecting the drive belt and 16V AC power supply from one motor, undoing a thumbscrew under the plinth to release it, then lifting it out and bolting in the other motor.

Yes, this is a bit of a palaver, but it does allow Pro-ject to optimise the motors for the respective speeds, rather than having the compromise of the belt riding higher or lower. And it pays off in the assured, taut rhythmic ability of the Perspective, which is just as good pounding out driving dance tracks as it is with big complex orchestral pieces. There's that warmth and lightness of touch that vinyl's known and loved for, and the soundstage created is entirely natural and smoothly delineated.

We could easily get really into vinyl again with a deck like this. It sounds great and looks like the kind of exotica you see from firms like Transrotor and Clearaudio – but for a fraction of the price.

LEADING RIVAL

Audio Note TT1 £725 ★★★★★
Well built and sounds great. Will give your records a new lease of life.

Perfect partners

SPEAKERS

ProAc Studio

125 £999
★★★★★

These speakers stun with their sweet treble and agile bass.



AMPLIFIER

Linn Kolektor/LK85

£990 ★★★★★

A well thought-out combination that offers impressive flexibility and a solid sound.

