

The Most Significant Turntables

The Oct 2011 "The Absolute Sound" magazine had a probing topic. What are the MOST SIGNIFICANT turntables that have been built? It's a fun discussion because the mechanical nature of the set up of turntables takes it in much deeper water than speakers or amplifiers.

An advantage we dealers have over magazine guys is that a lot of *production turntables* go through our mitts. We don't just see one sample that was tweaked for a reviewer. We see PRODUCTION units go into the field. If they have problems due to construction or design flaws- we see them. We have to deal with customers to repair them and make them right. Since we've been around since the 70s, we also see how people "live" with their tables. Are they really happy with them? Do they keep them a long time?

In general, I think TAS has done a good job with their choices of speakers and amplifiers. They've done well with tables too. But as always, I think they've missed a few!

To begin, here is their list:

AR XA (1961)
Linn LP-12 (1972)
Sota Star Sapphire (1981)
Goldmund Studio (1985)
Thorens TD-124-TD-160 (1957)
Garrard 301 (1954)
Panasonic SP-10 (1970)
Oracle Delphi (1979)
Well Tempered (1979)
Walker Back Diamond (1991)

My Alternative List

Rega Planar 3

Holy mother of turntables! How can you leave the Rega off this list?! While the AR was a fine budget table for the 60s/early 70s, NOBODY has served the working man better in turntables than Rega!! To have this left off the list is missing the forest through the trees!

Of the eleven reviewers to list turntables, only three mention Rega. That tells me 8 of the 11 reviewers are not paying attention to the things *the buying public* cares about. Such things include price, performance, ease of set up and RELIABILITY! Does it drift out of adjustment?!

No table is more straight forward to set up than a Rega. For many years Rega has had its own cartridges with 3 point mounting system. The set up is according to Rega's wishes with no after market protractors, gauges or scopes. And I can promise you they work properly, with no hassles for many years. Belts are readily available and solve the majority of "service problems."

As you look at Rega's competition on this list from the early 70s till today, only AR was in the working man's price range. While the AR was nice for the 60s, by the 70s it was a jiggly pile of nuts and bolts compared to a Rega! The SP-10 was a rumble machine!

Connoisseur BD2A

I understand why the BD2A is not on their list. Yet, I wish it was. It had more rumble than a "fine" turntable would have and wasn't built solidly like Rega. But it ran well under \$200 and didn't have the dancing platter-arm interface issues that AR owners had to deal with. AR didn't even use a

cuers for years and the butter fingers among us would lower the stylus to the record with the platter and arm gyrating in different directions like a load of Jello!

B&O 4000

This was B&O's first tangential arm table. It looked mucho sexy and played pretty well. The B&O cartridges always sounded "dry" which certainly limited where you could go with the table. Yet we sold many to people that wanted automation and respectable sound.

Rabco ST-7

For the mid 70s the Rabco ST-7 was a fine turntable. I didn't like it as well as the Rega. But it had a low mass arm and was a nice choice for some of the lighter cartridges like the Win strain gauge and later the Sonus Blue.