



IN SIGHT

- 1 20mm-thick acrylic platter
- 2 8.6in carbon fibre/aluminium tonearm
- 3 Pro-Ject Pick-IT S2 MM cartridge
- 4 33, 45 & 78rpm speed selector



DETAILS

PRODUCT
Pro-Ject X1

ORIGIN
Austria

TYPE
Belt-drive turntable

WEIGHT
7kg

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
415 x 125 x 335mm

FEATURES

- 33, 45 & 78rpm
- 8.6in carbon fibre/aluminium sandwich tonearm
- Pro-Ject Pick-IT S2 MM cartridge
- Electronic speed control

DISTRIBUTOR
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Pro-Ject X1 £700

There isn't much Pro-Ject doesn't know about making mid-priced decks that punch above their weight, and this might be its best yet

Darling of the budget and middle ground turntable market, Pro-Ject sees its customer base consisting of passionate audiophiles unable or unwilling to pay high-end prices. The new X1 is tailored to cater for exactly that kind of demand – as Pro-Ject has it, a cutting-edge turntable that brings high-end analogue technologies to a more affordable price point.

It's actually the latest iteration of the company's first deck, the Pro-Ject 1. But as the P1 was a corker in its day, that's no bad thing. Keep it simple but build it well is a mantra that's served Pro-Ject well over the decades and so it seems here. Nothing fancy, just solid fundamentals and precise engineering executed with high-quality materials.

A substantial MDF plinth sits on three adjustable vibration-absorbing feet and houses a DC/AC generator board delivering clean and stable

power. The motor has electronic speed control for 33 and 45rpm and supports 78rpm playback, driving the hand-cut, heavy, non-resonant acrylic platter via a sub-platter drive system and a premium-grade main bearing. The light and stiff 8.6in tonearm is fashioned from carbon fibre and aluminium similar to the one on Pro-Ject's The Classic turntable (HFC 416) and can be fine-tuned for azimuth and VTA. Its TPE-damped counterweight claims to further reduce tonearm resonances.

Although optionally supplied *sans* cartridge for £599, the X1 gets Pro-Ject's Pick-IT S2 pre-installed as standard. The supplied Connect-IT E interconnect cable is a semi-balanced, low capacitance type optimised for turntable use. There are three finishes – walnut veneer or a classy eight-layer gloss in black or white.

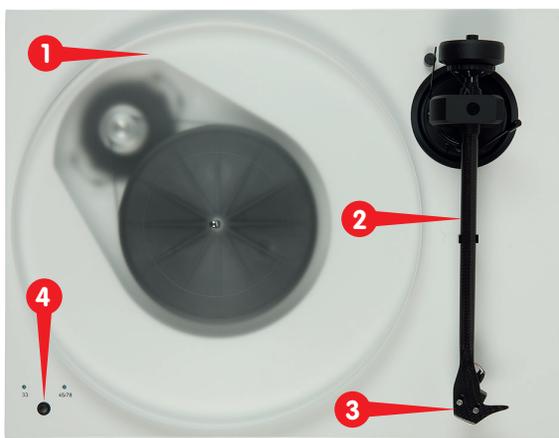
Sound quality

Just as the X1 doesn't look or feel like a deck that's been built down to a price, neither does it sound like one. It makes a very strong case for vinyl as a playback medium but, unlike the Cambridge Alva TT, doesn't sound quite as warm and silky, instead giving a more neutral and even-handed performance that's nevertheless amply detailed and serves all types of music well with a moreish quality that urges you to keep the records spinning.

Its innate naturalness is appreciated as Boz and co. once again make their moves on the mid-tempo *Rock And Stick*, the track's nicely crafted early

soul feel coming through strongly. Jack Walroth's harmonic chops sound particularly fine on the X1, the sharp metallic timbre of the instrument contrasting beautifully with the craggy sonority of Scaggs' vocal. At the same time, the Pro-Ject keeps the rest of the band's contribution layered and distinct in a spacious soundstage with particularly good depth.

Much the same level of composure, control and insight are apparent with *Missing*, which sounds supple and lucid as the loping dancefloor bass lays the foundation for Tracey Thorn's exceptional voice with its undertones of yearning and hurt. Last but by no means least, on the *Hello Herbie* album, Oscar Peterson's piano playing sounds as strong, precise and frighteningly flawless as it should while Herbie Ellis' lightning-fingered solos (when he's not playing rock-solid rhythm behind Peterson) are tracked with crisp precision ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Very grown-up and consistently enjoyable sound; sleek design and build

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Not quite as dynamic and expressive as some in the group

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★ **WESAY:** A simple but rewardingly complete and talented turntable

OVERALL

