



## LONG WHEELBASE

The Pro-Ject design isn't quite as large or as heavy as the Grado, but in some ways it's choosier about the tonearms it works well with because of how it sits once mounted to a headshell. Whereas the Grado has a lot of the body forward of the mounting fixtures, the Pick-IT DS2 sits further back than any other cartridge here. This means that there will be some tonearms where it won't physically clear the end of the armtube and some care will be required when considering this design for your turntable. Pro-Ject has at least ensured that the pins are well spaced and are fairly easy to hook up. Additionally, as a tall design, it's likely to require some VTA adjustment on most tonearms unless of course you already own a Pro-Ject turntable, in which case you can be confident of a great fit.



# Pro-Ject Pick-IT DS2 £525

This flagship moving-coil offering is big, both in terms of how it looks and its performance

### DETAILS

**PRODUCT**  
Pro-Ject Pick-IT DS2

**ORIGIN**  
Austria/Denmark

**TYPE**  
Moving-coil  
cartridge

**WEIGHT**  
9g

**FEATURES**  
● Polyamide body  
● Metal cantilever  
● Nude elliptical  
stylus

**DISTRIBUTOR**  
Henley Audio Ltd.

**TELEPHONE**  
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**S**ticking to a small number of budget phono cartridges in its range for several years, Pro-Ject has recently expanded its lineup to include a low-output moving-coil design. The Pick-IT DS2 has been designed by Pro-Ject, but is built by specialist Ortofon – which is not too surprising given the close relationship between the two over the years.

The specification is very much in keeping with the rest of the group. It features a nude elliptical stylus that is mounted in a cantilever of unspecified material. The coils that generate the output are made from 4N copper and the generator provides an output of 0.5mV, which is the highest of the three low-output designs here and should make the Pick-IT DS2 a little less demanding on phono stages. The only slight element of concern is the relatively heavy 2.2g tracking weight.

The body completely encases all the mechanicals and is made from polyamide, which has been selected for its strength and resistance to

resonance and interference. The process used for its creation is Selective Laser Sintering – essentially, using a laser to melt it into shape. This is among the largest and heaviest cartridges here (narrowly edged out by the Grado on both counts) and due to how it is designed, mounting it is not without its issues (see boxout).

The build quality is top-notch, though. It isn't the most visually dramatic-looking cartridge going, but everything feels carefully and exactly assembled. This is the most costly design here, but the cartridge build and the quality of the packaging all give the impression of money being well spent.

### Sound quality

Once mounted, the Pick-IT DS2 is whisper quiet at idle and seems resistant to both surface noise as well as dust and debris on the record. When you start listening to it, the word that crops up in my listening notes time and time again is “composed”. Unlike a few rivals here, it doesn't really get ‘stuck in’ to *Prince Of Darkness* instead feeling more like it is letting things happen organically. This means that the tonal realism of the various instruments is excellent while the space around them is very well conveyed, although some of the timing and immediacy that is present elsewhere is less readily apparent here. It isn't that the Pro-Ject feels slow, just more relaxed.

It does pick up the pace a little for *Rock & Roll Doctor* and the basic snap and fun of this recording is conveyed

effectively. Once again, attention is drawn to the excellent tonal realism and the effortlessly open and expansive presentation. This ability to find scale really pays dividends with *Legend In My Living Room* and it unpicks this dense presentation in a way that some other models struggle. It does this while finding an edge and emotion to Lennox's vocals that eludes some other models here.

Having got a great deal right so far, the Pick-IT DS2 then proceeds to slightly miss the point of *Monsters Exist*. Its ability to deliver scale together with excellent bass isn't open to question, but some of the savagery of the music simply isn't there with it. Once again, the way it reproduces the music has you feeling more like a spectator than a participant. There's no shortage of refinement however, which suggests that the Pro-Ject will be an effective partner for less than perfect pressings ●



## Hi-Fi Choice

### OUR VERDICT

**SOUND QUALITY**  
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Open, airy and refined sound; well made and equipped

**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
★★★★☆ **DISLIKE:** Lacks a little excitement and drive; size

**BUILD QUALITY**  
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Works well with a variety of turntables and offers a very refined and appealing sound

**FEATURES**  
★★★★★

### OVERALL

