

APPLE CHOICE Group test

Bluetooth turntables

Stream your vinyl wirelessly



Group test

Reviewed by
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ON TEST...

- > 1ByOne H009
- > Audio-Technica AT-LP3XBT
- > JBL Spinner BT
- > Pro-Ject T1 Evo BT

Record players have undergone a true renaissance in recent years, with listeners appreciating the analogue warmth and depth of the sound produced by vinyl, especially in this era where almost everything seems to be digital. It's far from being a fad – vinyl absolutely has its own character that's quite unlike any other medium. While serious audiophiles might opt for a large and expensive separates system, a Bluetooth turntable provides a more affordable and flexible way to enjoy the sound of vinyl.

Since a turntable connects directly to your Bluetooth speaker, it gets around Apple's lack of support for higher bitrate codecs and so transmits much more data. Remember that these are turntables first and foremost, with Bluetooth bolted on – the engineering all goes into the physical design and the quality of the cartridge and stylus. They all also have RCA connectors for hooking up to separates or other audio hardware, should you wish. The Bluetooth element provides extra flexibility or even a way to use them without any other hi-fi.

How we tested

> After assembling each turntable and making a Bluetooth connection to our wireless speakers – a pair of Edifier S3000MKIIs – we played a selection of records ranging from classical through pop and rock, all with different musical characteristics. We also tested connecting a pair of Sony WH-1000MX6 wireless headphones to each turntable and auditioned the same vinyl through them. We assessed any extra features a turntable may have as well as ease of use and general build quality.



Things to consider...

1 Codec support

While most wireless turntables support aptX Hi-Res audio Bluetooth streaming, you will want your speaker to also support at least Codec standard, otherwise audio could be downsampled during transmission.

2 Phono stage

If you do plan to connect the turntable to separates or other hardware, you might consider adding an extra phono preamp module to ensure maximum quality.

3 Assembly

While not wildly complex, turntables do require a little assembly and care in a way that digital sources do not. Cartridges eventually expire, so be prepared for that.

4 Build quality

Much of a turntable's performance stems from the design of its components. Generally, the price you pay reflects the build.



1ByOne H009

> £219.99 > FROM 1byoneaudio.com

1 1byone's H009 is something of a different prospect to the others on test. It's a self-contained record player with built-in speakers that *can't* send signal out over Bluetooth, but *can* receive Bluetooth audio from other devices to play back on its own speakers. That will put some people off, although it's worth noting it also has a 3.5mm aux input, so it's a good shout for legacy device owners. There's some set up of the belt and tonearm required - detailed in the instructions. It can send wired sound out over RCA in phono or line modes.

The Audio Technica AT3600 stylus can be replaced as can the belt, and it has a power output of 2x18W from the speakers in Bluetooth mode or 2x5W in phono mode. These small speakers aren't going to bring the house down but they do a decent job. In wired mode the turntable does better, though you're getting an attractive all-in-one model here rather than an audiophile one.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Built-in speakers
 - ⊕ Affordable
 - ⊖ No Bluetooth audio output
 - ⊖ Sound is OK
- ★★★★★

Audio-Technica AT-LP3XBT

> £280 > FROM audio-technica.com

2 Audio-Technica is hugely experienced in pro audio and hi-fi, and its seriously affordable AT-LP3XBT is designed to be easy to use. The start, stop and speed buttons are simple, and the hydraulically damped arm prevents accidental dropping of the needle. The tonearm has a removable headshell and the AT-VM95C cartridge is compatible with any VM95 Series stylus, so you can easily choose one that suits your tastes.

Supporting aptX, the turntable connected easily to our speakers and provided a

clean and accurate sound, as it did through its RCA (phono) connectors thanks to the built-in switchable line/phono preamp. While its design is a little pedestrian, this is a great-sounding turntable that's simple for newcomers to use and excellent value. For crystal clear sound at a reasonable price, this is a good way to go.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Very easy to use
 - ⊕ Sensibly priced
 - ⊕ Compatible stylus options
 - ⊖ Design is pretty basic
- ★★★★★

Bluetooth turntables **APPLE CHOICE**



JBL Spinner BT

> £349.99 > FROM uk.jbl.com

3 JBL's first foray into the turntable world certainly looks the part, with a striking design that's the most fun of all the models on test. Once it's put together (carefully following instructions), you'll find the aptX HD support produces a noticeably more detailed sound than regular aptX – as long as your speaker also supports it. You can toggle automatic stop/start of the platter, and there are options for preamp on/off depending on whether you're using an external preamp. The onboard preamp does a decent job, though a dedicated unit would sound more powerful.

The cartridge is an Audio Technica AT3600L which comes pre-installed and aligned, and can be upgraded should you wish. The pairing process is basic – with no screen you have to just bring them together in the right mode. Sonically, the Spinner delivers a perfectly pleasing sound that's maybe not as detailed as some but will be suitable for the majority of regular listeners.

VERDICT

- ⊕ aptX HD streaming
 - ⊕ Cool design
 - A little pricey
 - Some setting up required
- ★★★★★

Pro-Ject T1 Evo BT

> £479 > FROM project-audio.com

4 Pro-Ject's pedigree in the turntable world is excellent, with many of its models scaling true audiophile heights. The T1 Evo BT comes in high gloss black, white or walnut with no plastic parts and great attention to both physical and acoustic design. Its glass platter and relatively heavy chassis paired with a light tonearm lend it a distinctly premium feel, as does its classy look. Perhaps more than any other model on test this looks and feels like a really high-end record player.

The Ortofon OM10 stylus is pre-installed and aptX HD streaming is supported so

after a little set up you're up and running, with the turntable delivering a rich, deep and gorgeous sound stage that reveals plenty of detail across its Bluetooth connection and the physical line and phono outputs – a phono stage is included. This is a beautiful turntable with a gorgeous sound and the addition of a Bluetooth option just adds to its overall flexibility.

VERDICT

- ⊕ Gorgeous sound
 - ⊕ Fantastic look and build
 - ⊕ aptX HD streaming
 - A little pricey
- ★★★★★

APPLE CHOICE Group test



THE WINNER

Pro-Ject T1 Evo BT



The best way to experience your record collection

And so to the 'victor of the vinyl' in our turntable group test... We like the ease of use, price and solid sound of the Audio Technica AT-LP3XBT and it's well worth considering for anyone looking to get into vinyl on a budget.

JBL's Spinner BT is the most fun model on test, and looks super cool, though for the price, its sound is perhaps not the most detailed. 1ByOne's model is certainly interesting and rather different to the others, making it a good choice for

those low on space or who want an all-in-one. Pro-Ject's decades of turntable excellence shine through in the T1 Evo BT. Although it's the most expensive player on test, it's among the company's most affordable models, with a

superb finish, premium acoustic engineering and a vibrant and rich soundstage both over wireless and wired connections. It's also a turntable you'd be proud to display - either at the heart of a hi-fi system or separately, playing wirelessly.

> How do they compare?



> Specs	1ByOne H009	Audio-Technica AT-LP3XBT	JBL Spinner BT	Pro-Ject T1 Evo BT
Price	£219.99	£280	£349.99	£479
Website	1byoneaudio.com	audio-technica.com	uk.jbl.com	project-audio.com
Codec support	N/A	apt-X	apt-X HD	apt-X
Stylus	Audio Technica AT3600	AT-VM95C	Audio Technica ATN3600L	Ortofon OM10
Colours	Walnut	Black	Black/grey or black/orange	Gloss black, satin white or walnut
Dust cover	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Automatic	No	Yes	Yes	No
Phono stage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
> Overall	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

Note: The final verdict scores reflect the overall opinion of a product and are not necessarily an average of the criteria listed in the table.