



The Ingenium shares the same design philosophy and features as AVID's more pricey designs

AVID HiFi INGENIUM P&P TURNTABLE



£1,250 avidhifi.com

High-end audiophilia at an extremely attractive price. What's not to like? asks John Pickford

AVID HiFi design and manufacture some of the finest audio equipment available anywhere. Their Acutus Reference turntable is a world-class vinyl spinner with a price tag that reflects its best-of-the-best status, yet puts it out of the reach of mere mortals such as I. The Ingenium P&P (Plug & Play) represents the entry into AVID's world of high-quality vinyl replay and while £1,250 is not exactly pocket money, it does buy you a turntable/tonerarm/cartridge package that will show a clean pair of heels to almost any other in this price range.

Don't be misled by the Plug & Play status of the Ingenium. Although it doesn't require a painstaking set-up necessitating specialist alignment tools, it does have to be assembled – you can't simply pull it from the box, plug it in and start playing records. Fortunately, assembly is simple, with easy-to-follow instructions. Stanley knife in hand to open

the box, I start my stopwatch and precisely fourteen minutes and thirty four seconds later, the stylus drops into the groove of my first selected record.

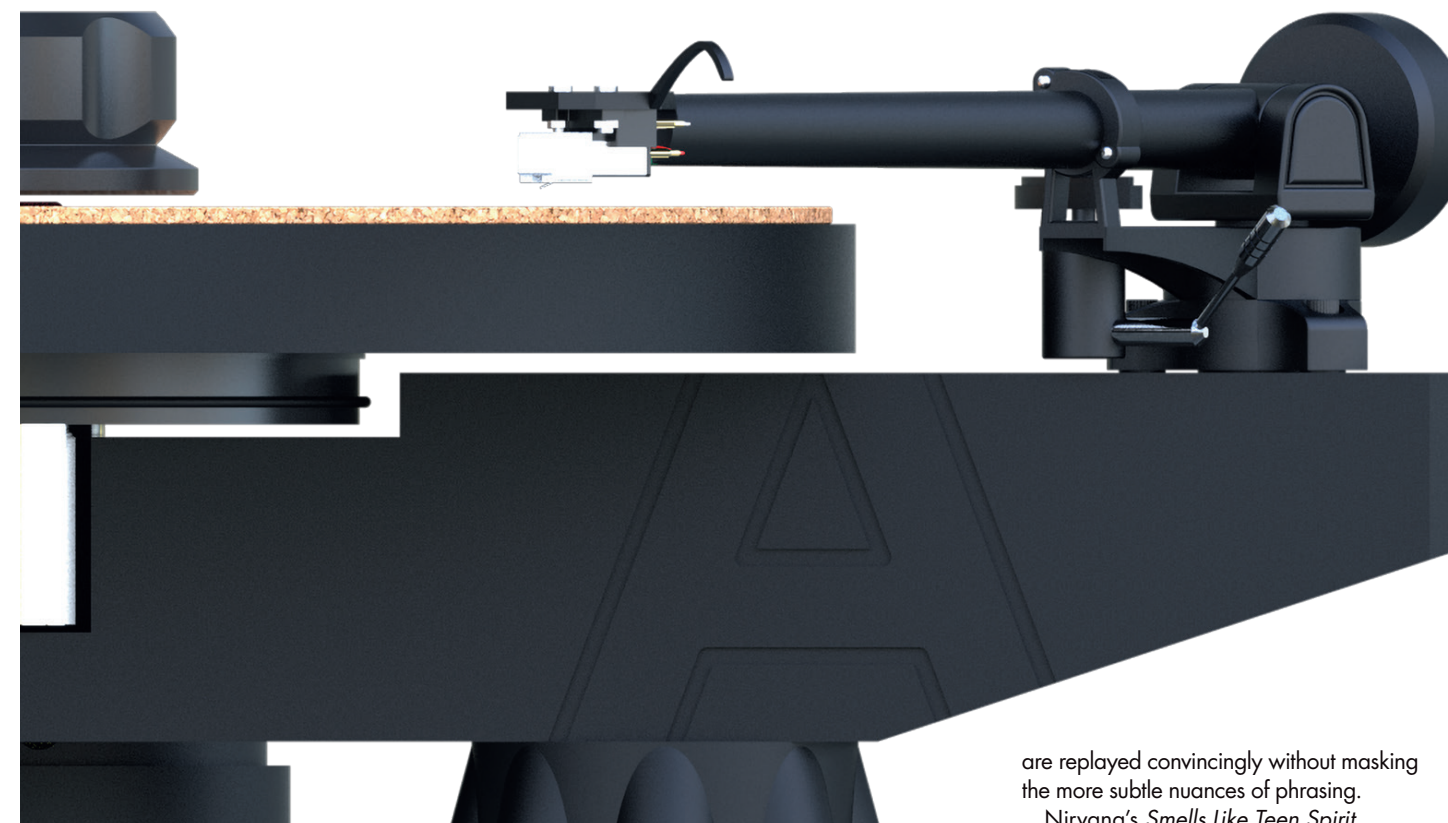
For anyone baulking at the idea of assembly, envisaging the nightmare of putting together flat-pack furniture, allow me to quote briefly from the instructions: "Using a twisting action, gently push the counterweight onto the rear of the tonearm until it reaches the stop and cannot be pushed further. The tracking weight is now correctly set." Simple.

THE INGENIUM OFFERS MORE THAN A GLIMPSE OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE COMPANY'S PRICIER MODELS

What you will find in the box is the chassis fitted with the tonearm and cartridge; tonearm counterweight; hub/bearing assembly; motor; platter; drive belt and bearing ball. You also get a weighty record clamp, which is usually the preserve of much costlier turntables.

The platter is relatively lightweight, however, as this needs to be removed to manually adjust the drive belt when switching from 33rpm to 45rpm, this is no bad thing. Some turntables feature glass platters, and while they are heavy and solid, I still have my reservations about the sonic properties of glass.

The tonearm and cartridge appear to be 'off the shelf' items, though if I've identified them correctly, they are quality products, which have no doubt been honed by AVID to achieve their ultimate potential. The arm in particular is a beautiful, tactile tool and while an arm lift is integral, those who prefer to cue by hand will enjoy the contours of the finger lift.



Only in the cabling does the Ingenium display its low-cost status. The output leads are generic yet perfectly functional, while the mains cable incorporates a chunky on/off switch that wouldn't be out of place on a table lamp.

With the power switch in hand, I set the deck spinning and listen. I'm met with near silence from the outboard motor, even with my ear pressed up close to the unit; however, with the switch still in hand I can feel its power by way of a low-level vibration. Lowering the stylus into the groove of my first disc test, I am encouraged by the initial sound. It's remarkable how the particular clunk of stylus interfacing with vinyl can indicate the tonal character of any turntable set-up.

Playing Cat Stevens' *Miles From Nowhere* (Tea For The Tillerman, 1970) immediately reveals the Ingenium has all the foundations of serious vinyl replay nailed. The double bass is both deep and detailed with no discernible overhang or one-note boom, while the acoustic guitar is richly textured with transient attack and body in perfect proportion. Vocals, too,



are replayed convincingly without masking the more subtle nuances of phrasing.

Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* (Nevermind, 1991) can sound unpleasantly shouty on mediocre equipment, yet the Ingenium replays it with ample punch and drive to convey all the slam and visceral energy that weak-kneed players fail to deliver.

As an affordable route into AVID HiFi's brand of high-end vinyl replay, the Ingenium offers more than a glimpse of the performance of the company's pricier models. And while an upgrade of the cartridge somewhere down the line will improve the turntable's ultimate performance, it's clear the money spent on manufacture has gone to all the right places. The real ingenuity of the Ingenium is that the whole package is far greater than the sum of its parts; this is no-frills, high-end audiophilia at an extremely attractive price.

PROS VERDICT CONS

FLUID, WEIGHTY BASS
CLEAR, DETAILED TREBLE
MUSICAL INSIGHT
EASE OF SET-UP
VALUE FOR MONEY

NOTHING AT THE PRICE

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