Subject: New Turn Table - Sota Moonbeam
Posted by gofar99 on Thu, 26 Apr 2012 01:31:15 GMT
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Hi Everyone, I just got a Sota Moonbeam turntable and thought I would give a short report on it. Sota is an American company that has been doing some rather exotic turntables for years. They specialize in vacuum hold down ones. Think in terms of very expensive. To cater to those of us that are not made of gold they have introduced two that are more conventional and a lot less costly. The Moonbeam is the least costly at retail of $750US. At first glance it looks both rather odd and crude. Really it is not when you start to examine it closely. The first impression is that it is on stilts. It has three tall (5-6cm) adjustable screw in feet. Also the platter (acrylic) is raised above the pilth by the thickness of the sub platter (perhaps 2cm). The board is quite large (about 45cm wide, 35 deep and 4 thick). Several finishes are available (see their web site http://www.sotaturntables.com/newtables/moonbeam.htm ). It is a composite of about 7 layers. The tone arm is a variant of a Rega. The overall look is spartan, but sort of European in style. There are no flashing LEDs, no auto start - stop and so on. It is all manual. I installed a Dynavector 10X5 (with a ruby cantilever and line contact stylus by Sound Smith). It took a little fiddling to get the anti-skating dialed in. This seems to be an issue with some Rega arms. I finally settled on a setting of 1 (gm?) with a tracking force of 2gm (recommended by Dynavector).

Speed accuracy is right on according to my strobe. The motor is a 24 pole AC one designed for computer use. It is quite sufficient to drive the TT. It is belt drive.

The sound from the combination was excellent. Gobs (new high tech term) of detail. Very quiet both in operation and when the stylus was in an empty groove.

My only beef is that the supplied (and in this case wired internally) RCA cables are bit on the cheap side. This is also a common feature of many OEM Rega arms and can be fixed if wanted.

A nice thing about the TT is that it will accept anything a Rega will. I am considering an upgrade for the future of a "Moth 251" or an "Origin Live" arm for it.

A good if not particularly inexpensive turntable, worth a look if you are in the market. Now I only have three others that are gathering dust.

Subject: Re: New Turn Table - Sota Moonbeam
Posted by gofar99 on Thu, 21 Jun 2012 18:50:39 GMT
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Hi Everyone, I did go for the Origin Live Alliance arm. Quite nice and a simple swap. Really a major improvement. The arm is designed for low resonance and high compliance. I unfortunately dinged my Dynavector 10X5 so I can't tell how really great the arm is until Soundsmith sends it back. In the mean time I'm using a Grado Reference Platinum. For all you vinyl lovers out there who have heard Grados you probably are aware they seem to sound warm and bottom heavy.

Not so in this arm.  Clean and well balanced is what I'm getting now.  I have never heard a Grado sound like this and I have used them for many years.  The OL folks are doing something that others seem to miss out on.  The arm is about $375 incl shipping and somewhat resembles a Rega.  I am sure given the proximity of OL to the Rega plant that many of the parts are made by Rega.  The build is entirely different though.  The OL arm uses (according to them) a sort of knife edge design, but has bearings (  ).  It is  designed to be "loose" and not tight like many other arms.  They say in big bold print not to try to tighten it up.  What ever they do it works extremely well.

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Subject: Re: New Turn Table - Sota Moonbeam
Posted by Bill Epstein on Thu, 28 Jun 2012 11:03:25 GMT
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gofar99 wrote on Thu, 21 June 2012 14:50 I'm using a Grado Reference Platinum.  For all you vinyl lovers out there who have heard Grados you probably are aware they seem to sound warm and bottom heavy.  Not so in this arm.  Clean and well balanced is what I'm getting now.  I have never heard a Grado sound like this

It must be broken

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Subject: Re: New Turn Table - Sota Moonbeam
Posted by gofar99 on Thu, 28 Jun 2012 19:20:01 GMT
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Hi, Uh yeah.  Or at the very least tamed.

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