
Subject: Buying a record player

Posted by [Elerie90](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2018 02:40:12 GMT

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I've been thinking about getting a record player (turntable?) for a while now, and I think I'm finally ready to go for it. Are there any brands and/or models you recommend I check out? Any I should steer clear of?

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2018 14:06:58 GMT

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You can't go wrong with a Rega turntable. VPI also makes nice tables, and their new Cliffwood table is very affordable. The Technics SL-1200G turntable is good too. It's a direct-drive turntable, which sort of lost favor in the last couple of decades, but probably shouldn't have. It's the best drive type, in my opinion.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Jungle](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2018 19:50:32 GMT

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Sorry to butt in on your question, Elerie, but I saw that you weren't sure whether or not to call what you're looking for a record player or a turntable. I'm starting to doubt myself now. I've always assumed these terms are synonymous, but is that the case?

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Elerie90](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2018 20:36:52 GMT

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Thank you for the recommendations, Wayne! I'll have to give those a look. I'm intrigued by the Cliffwood table since you used the magic word, "affordable." I've had a couple of people recommend Panasonic turntables. What are your feelings about that brand? What caused the direct-drive turntable to lose favor? I'm sorry for all the questions!

No problem at all, Jungle. I'm curious about that as well!

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2018 21:04:36 GMT

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Record player and turntable are the same thing in this context. I've seen other kinds of "turntables" in other industries, but in audio, they're record players. Seems like people called 'em record players in the 1950s and 1960s, but more and more called them turntables after the 1970s, especially when used in a high-fidelity stereo. So "turntable" may be more of an "audiophile" word.

Anyway, as for the (Panasonic) Technics direct-drive tables, they were pretty popular in the 1970s and 1980s. But by the 1990s, CDs started becoming more popular and a lot of people stopped using vinyl. So most manufacturers stopped making turntables. The low-end and midrange products were first to go, and pretty soon even the high-end was pretty limited.

High-end gear is usually belt drive because it can be manufactured in small quantities, which is a necessity for high-end products. There were some very good direct-drive turntables, but they were mass-produced and so when turntables started slipping in popularity, most manufacturers stopped making them because the market couldn't support their required quantities for production runs.

One notable exception is the Technics SL-1200. It got a reprieve probably mostly because DJs used them. So that model has been in production since 1972, with only a brief pause between 2010 and 2016. It's ironic to me that Matsushita (Panasonic) maintained that product offering all the way up to 2010 - well over a decade after the "digital revolution" of audio - and then finally killed it off after analog and vinyl was making a huge comeback. But they quickly realized that and brought it back in 2016.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Mon, 26 Mar 2018 21:31:52 GMT
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Hi, Recently there is some confusion among folks just now wanting to get into vinyl. A turntable is usually a device that plays the record...but it needs external amplifiers and speakers. A record player however (most new ones are junk BTW) is self contained. There are numerous brands and levels of quality of each. Vintage gear also comes in both types however there were a number of rather decent record players in the 70's and 80's. Panasonic, Zenith, GE etc. For vintage gear however it is buyer beware. There is a lot of misrepresentation on the web about condition, value and quality. I see many listed as vintage, collectable, near mint condition and so on at outrageous prices. Most are not as advertised. If you see something you think you might want...ask about it on the [vinylengine.com](#) forum. The folks that know all about playing vinyl hang out there. It is a friendly site as well.

BTW I only have 6 turntables at present. You can never have too many if the bug bites you.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [ABtoJayZ](#) on Tue, 27 Mar 2018 17:45:10 GMT

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gofar99 wrote on Mon, 26 March 2018 16:31

BTW I only have 6 turntables at present. You can never have too many if the bug bites you.

Ha, only 6 turntables...and my friends think I'm out of control because I have two and want to buy a third. I'm sure it won't stop there either. It's been fun to learn more about turntables while I'm researching ones that are for sale. What all do you own?

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Elerie90](#) on Tue, 27 Mar 2018 18:33:09 GMT

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Wayne, thank you for explaining the difference (or lack thereof) between the two terms. Also, thank you for going through the history of the direct-drive turntables in a way that's very easy to understand. Poor Matsushita. At least they were able to make a comeback only six years later. Still, it's surprising that they held on that long and then gave up right when the tides were changing.

Bruce, thank you for expanding on the difference between turntables and record players (as well as the warning about not buying any new record players). Would you suggest not buying vintage gear online then? I'll have to give that website a look. You must be a regular over there with your six turntables and all!

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Sun, 17 Jun 2018 14:08:52 GMT

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I prefer direct drive tables. But not the knock off's to the Technics 1200. I used a Rega prior and it was prone to feedback and speed variation that made piano's seem to go out of tune and vocal fluctuation's. Quartz controlled direct drive has rock steady speed and in the 1200 case, heavily damped in the plinth to help prevent feedback getting fed back into the tonearm. The market for used or vintage tables is hot these days. But, good deals can still be had. For the novice, I think the Technics SL-Q line of table's offer quartz drive and idiot proof means of cartridge alignment called p-mount. Simply, the cartridge plugs into the tonearm and secured by a mounting screw. No other alignment required other than adjustment of the VTF, (vertical tracking force) and anti skating adjustment, (force exerted on the stylus as it travels across the record). These table's can usually be bought for a relatively reasonable price. It's true that buying used can be a crap shoot. I still think you've got dealer odd's going for you.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Azuri](#) on Tue, 19 Jun 2018 17:02:13 GMT

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Belt driven units have inherent quality for the reasons Wayne gave. And I think that may be the underlying reason for the uptick in the interest in vinyl. People are starting to want quality more, over the cheap, novelty type mass produced record players.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Rusty](#) on Tue, 19 Jun 2018 17:53:15 GMT

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Amazingly, the new Technics 1200 G and GR have the same specifications as the old steel wheel. The technology developed decades prior has not been significantly bettered. And the boutique and standard belt drives of today can't match it. They can't economically produce such quality without prices comparable to buying an automobile. The VPI Classic direct drive goes for 30K. The few other exclusive low production dd tables are similarly priced. That Technics could revive and produce a refined version of the 1200 for a couple of grand speaks of the economy of scale a large company can wield in production cost. With the revival of vinyl the market is full of a lot of very ordinary products. Chinese direct drive and belt drive of moderate quality aimed at the entry level market. It just depends on what your priorities are and enthusiasm are for how much you pay and what you get for it.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [gofar99](#) on Tue, 19 Jun 2018 21:36:49 GMT

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Hi, I don't know if I buy all that. The cost of building a good turntable in the 70's vs now are most likely equal if you allow for inflation. I would expect the motor/control assembly that I use in one TT (came from a Dual 701) would cost easily \$1000 to duplicate today. The plinth, arm and cartridge double that figure. However, I am quite picky about performance and as I mentioned earlier have three turntables in the main system and three more on standby. (Dual, Empire, Sota, Transcriptor, Pro-ject and Philips) I believe it is not necessary to spend mega dollars for good performance. Rega and Pro-ject (and others) make quite nice and well performing turntables. Some are quite inexpensive. Unless you are really well off financially and are seeking the 99.5% of the range you need not pay huge dollars. You get nearly the same performance at much lower prices. I suggest you browse the vinylengine.com forums and see what is available and how well regarded it is. Just my 2 cents.

Subject: Re: Buying a record player

Posted by [Floyd](#) on Wed, 18 Jul 2018 22:02:10 GMT

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gofar99 wrote on Mon, 26 March 2018 16:31

BTW I only have 6 turntables at present. You can never have too many if the bug bites you.

Six turntables? Now that's just plain greedy!

I remember once asking a guy how many motorcycles he had, and when he answered "Twelve", I thought he had misunderstood the question. He hadn't. Where he kept them all, I can't imagine.
