



AVID

tōne ★★★★★

Diva 2 Turntable

\$3750 (excludes tone arm and cartridge)

Unchanged in principle for more than 100 years, Thomas Alva Edison's great contribution to home entertainment has continued to be refined to a point where the turntable has become a dramatic fashion icon, as well as being the definitive reference audio replay device – despite the myriad digital pretenders to the throne.

My first encounter with the high-end turntable manufacturer Avid was through the Volvere, profiled in *Tone* 74. That stunningly crafted and beautiful-sounding piece of audio porn captivated me with the effortless way it went about making music, and proved that great looks can kill.

Just a few months on and an invitation was extended to audition the entry-level model in the Avid range, the Diva 2.

And what a stunner it is. Bearing a distinct family resemblance to the more expensive model, the Diva misses out some of the Volvere's features such as the suspended sub chassis, heavyweight platter and brushed satin metal 'bling'. But otherwise, the Diva 2 is a serious vinyl player indeed – the presence of an outboard power supply and integral disc clamp more than underlining its high-end aspirations at a far more affordable price than the luscious \$8500 Volvere.

It was a rare sunny day in Auckland when I turned up to Shore HiFi on Auckland's North Shore to view and listen to the Diva 2 in combination with the new Naim Nait XS integrated amplifier, these components in turn connected to a pair of Sonus faber Auditor M stand-mount loudspeakers.

This group of components certainly had bucketloads of hi-fi

credibility, but the brooding Diva 2 atop Naim's naimframe rack was the obvious centrepiece of the system, its black skeletal appearance complementing the rack of Naim electronics perfectly.

Finishing off the Diva 2 was a tone arm by boutique Japanese manufacturer Jelco, while the superb Lyra Dorian moving coil cartridge provided the essential conduit between platter and eardrums.

This was certainly not an entry-level system as most of us know it. I would hazard that 90 per cent of us would see this setup as a Shangri La in terms of audio achievement, and by no means did the Naim/Avid/Sonus faber group sound like a bargain basement option, either.

First disc onto the Diva 2's MDF platter was Ernest Ranglin's *Memories Of Barber Mack*, a delightful instrumental journey through the world of jazz-tinged ska and calypso music. The album has excellent sound quality and a dynamic bass register, and the Diva 2 produced a stellar effort with an extremely pacy and detailed performance. Tuneful and warm sounding, the Diva/Jelco/Dorian combo filled the room with warmth and melodic involvement.

Jimi Hendrix's posthumous *First Rays of the New Rising Sun* on 180g vinyl showed that the turntable is a very competent rocker as well, with great attack and dynamics, excellent detail retrieval and nimble, easy to follow bass performance. I had the impression of the system acting as a cohesive unit, with each component doing its part in recreating the musical event.

The bandleader of the system is without a doubt the Diva 2, its ability to extract the music from the groove being the prime mover in creating the excellent musical experience I experienced during the audition.

The Diva 2 must be an essential audition for those looking to purchase in this price bracket. ■ GARY PEARCE

TECH SPECS

DRIVE: Belt
SPEEDS: 33.3 and 45RPM
PLATTER MASS: 2.5kg
TONE ARMS: Std cut for SME (adapters available for other types)
SUSPENSION: Triple layer three-point elastomer
POWER SUPPLY: Separate control unit
DIMENSIONS: 450 x 140 x 390mm (W/H/D)
WEIGHT: 14kg

PROS

✦ Gorgeous appearance and fluid musical performance

CONS

✦ Not inexpensive, but you definitely get what you pay for

VERDICT

As beautiful to look at as it is to listen to, the Avid Diva 2 is a serious turntable that should provide years of listening pleasure

CONTACT

www.nadist.co.nz

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