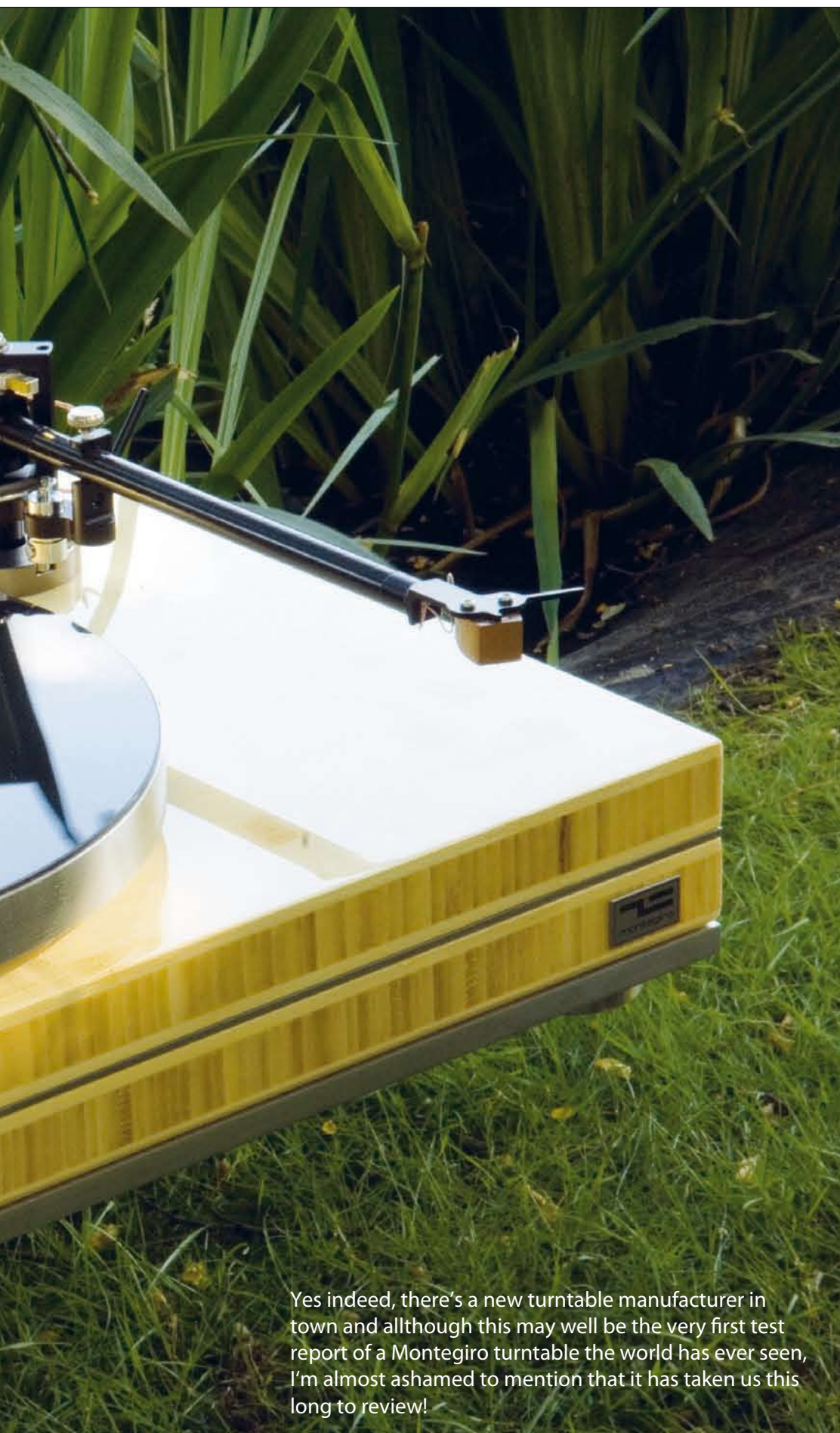


Local History





Yes indeed, there's a new turntable manufacturer in town and although this may well be the very first test report of a Montegiro turntable the world has ever seen, I'm almost ashamed to mention that it has taken us this long to review!

Sources

Pickup :

- MFSL C3.5
- Grado Statement Master
- Jan Allaerts MC1B

Phonostage :

- Audio Research PH-7
- Clearaudio Balanced Reference Phono

Preamplifier :

- Vincent SP-T100

Final Stage/Power Amp :

- SymAsym

Speakers :

- Lumen White Silver Flame

Alternatives :

Turntables :

- Clearaudio Statement / TT2 / Goldfinger
- Simon Yorke S10 / S7.1 / Jan Allaerts MC1 MK2



Played :

Hugh Masekela
Hope

Rainbow
On Stage

Ricki Lee Jones
It's Like This

Eric Clapton
Unplugged

Firstly the bad news, before you set your heart on this turntable (which could understandably happen within the blink of an eye) the least expensive model of the Montegiro Legno with Vivid Two tonearm will set you back a modest €9,690. As unpleasant as that may be, it is by no means the end of the pecuniary flagpole, the model smiling out at you from our photo, equipped with a 'Da Vinci Nobile' tonearm costs a meagre €14,450. Ouch! All that and we are dealing here with a petite, moderately compact and not necessarily earth-shattering design. Could this be a good idea? Allow me to illuminate, if I may, a little on the origins and the evolution of this turntable and perhaps we will see that any concerns we may have had are unfounded. Here you will find professionals at work, professionals who know exactly what they are doing. When we delve a little deeper and see that there is no production company called Montegiro; this is the conceptual name used to label all the hi-fi activity of a company sporting the slightly less spectacular name of 'Dattenberg' (I hope the boss Andreas Dattenberg will forgive me!) although, admittedly it is followed up with the additional title of 'The Creative Factory'. Andreas Dattenberg founded his company around 24 years ago and had, until relatively recently, almost nothing to do with hi-fi. From the very beginning Dattenberg has been based in Hattingen situated at the south bank of the River Ruhr in Germany's Ruhr region.

This in itself is nothing special; however for me it is, as I also come from there. As Dattenberg first opened its doors its main line of business was a plastics wholesaler and at that time the seventeen year old Holger always bought his Plexiglas there for his varied creations. Many years have since passed and it's been long time since I was last shopping there in Hattingen, this however, doesn't seem to have sent Dattenberg spiralling into bankruptcy. On the contrary, the company has since moulded itself into a renowned shop fitter and trade fair construction company. This is due to its comprehensive machine hall where all imaginable custom-made products can be created and not just in plastic anymore but also in wood and metal. I will not be at all surprised that over time those taking a keen interest in the company won't just be customers who until now have simply purchased their material there but also a considerable amount of well-known turntable manufacturers. Therefore, you can imagine that a multitude of wood, metal and plastic parts from leading turntables will be manufactured on CNC machines in Hattingen. The knowledge of at least how to create turntable parts was already there. Carsten Drunk, the man responsible for operational business at Dattenberg was also someone to whom the subject of hi-fi and turntables was a great passion. So it is no miracle that Dattenberg has developed into a turntable manufacturer. All this happened quietly and secretly without me knowing a thing about it. In essence it only became clear at the forefront of this year's High End trade fair who might have been in a position to take the centre stage there. You must believe me; I was so astounded that I was in Munich before the morning's first coffee was served at the Montegiro stand. Now you might be forgiven for thinking that these are a couple of brazen lads who only after acquiring the know-how from their customers are now simply trying to use it in order to increase their capital. I assure you, this is not the case.



Stainless Steel Ensemble:
Rustproof material is an essential component of the Montegiro turntable. Pictured here are base plates, intermediate layers and adjustable feet.

On any of the four Montegiro turntable models you won't find a single part that you have seen anywhere else. The 'Legno' is second from bottom within the Montegiro model hierarchy. In relation to the price I'll avoid calling it the second smallest model. You will surely agree with me that what we have here is an indisputable beauty. A device that is undoubtedly a turntable and yet somehow different from the others. Better proportioned. More coherent. There is a very good reason for this: Dattenberg have engaged a highly renowned industrial designer who has been responsible for the unique styling of the range. The differences to typical devices designed purely with thoroughbred hi-fi people in mind can be instantly seen. The Legno is predominantly constructed from two materials: stainless steel and wood, in this case Bamboo. The first provides its ample weight of 30kg and the second for its unique design. Bamboo wood isn't simply cut from large sheets, (the basic form being thin tubes) many vertical bamboo strips have to be pressed in order to craft the material that has been used here, the top and underside have been finished with a covering layer. This doesn't just look damn good; it also provides excellent stability and low vibration. The basis of the Legno consists of these two layers with a thin stainless steel plate sandwiched between and with another 1cm plinth on the base. The finish of the wooden surface is breathtaking. The last time I've seen such a thickly coated layer of impeccable clear varnish was on the

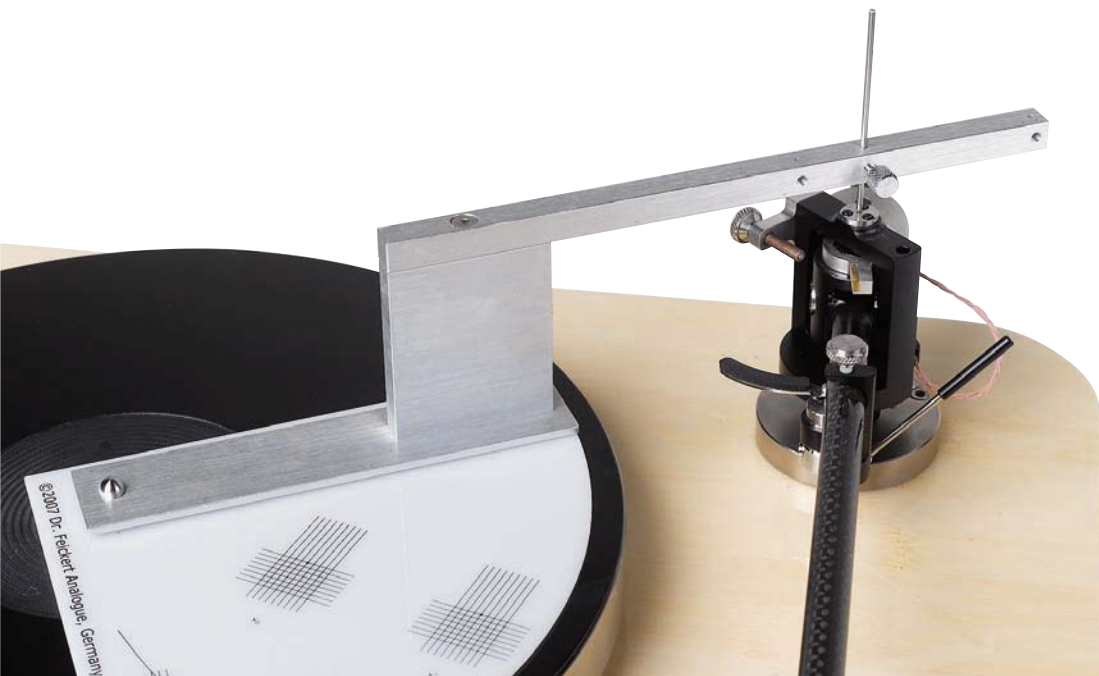


Provides sufficient weight: The connector effectively weighs down the motor housing.

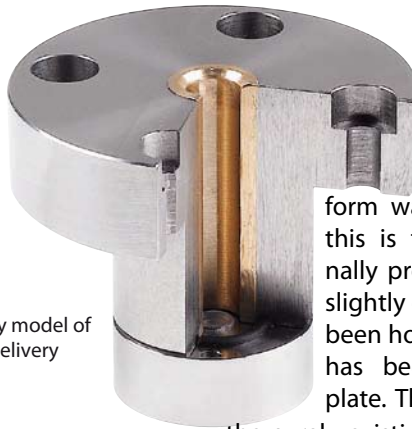
casing of our Lumen White's and that's really saying something! This almost perfect turntable base sits on four adjustable spiked feet, custom made from high grade stainless steel, naturally. The motor is positioned in a rounded cavity towards the back; we'll get to that soon. The platter is conventionally designed with its axis rising from the plate and the bearing sleeve inserted into the chassis. Which in this case means; a bronze sleeve is pressed into a stainless steel flange through the two bamboo plates and is bolted firmly to the base plate. The bearing shaft is not mounted directly into the plate but has its own 'interior plate' which serves in addition, rather as flange, on which the main plate is positioned. Incidentally, the bearing shaft is notably thinner than is normally seen nowadays. One can see yet again that this is the work of professionals; a thinner shaft makes less noise and in this case doesn't require a thick axle for stability and as a result allows the platter to remain relatively thin.



That fits: The motor's circuitry is just as preciously packaged as the drive unit itself.



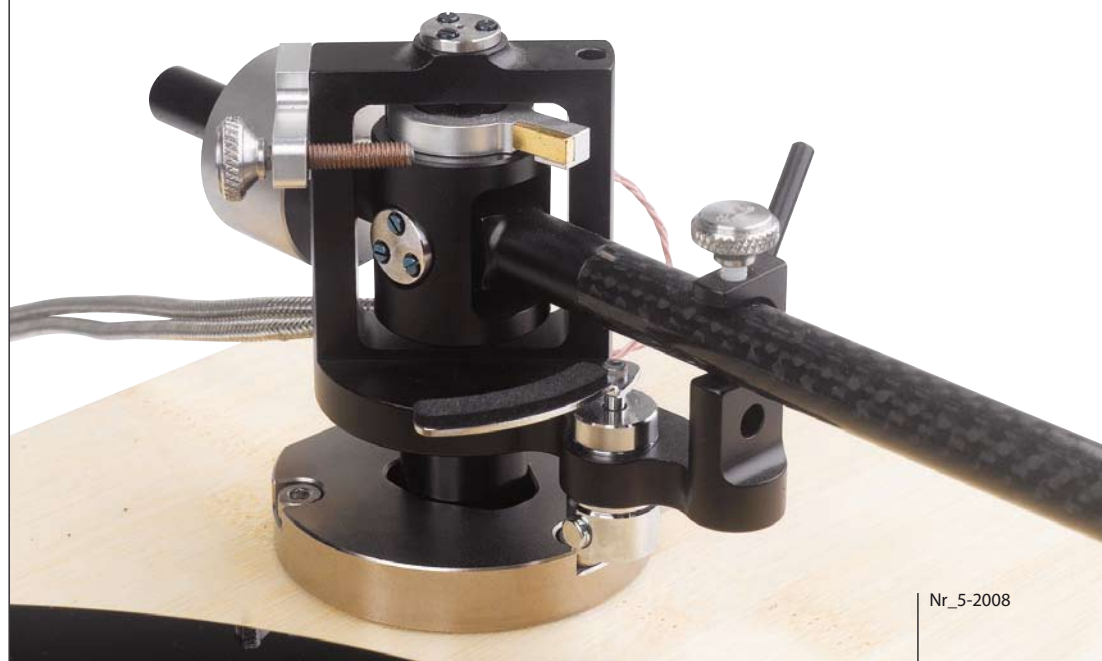
Adjustment of the Da Vinci tonearm is child's play due to a specially designed alignment jig from Dr. Feickert



No Secrets: Montegiro even included a cutaway model of the platter in the delivery

That is made from – you guessed it – stainless steel; additionally, much of the material here has been machined until its final form was created. The reason for this is that the platter is not externally propelled but from an internal slightly offset collar. This in turn has been hollowed out and the opening has been capped with an acrylic plate. This in turn reliably reduces the surely existing harmonics. This construction sits on the axle's flange; this alignment, as with Linn & Co, together with the thin acrylic turntable mat, results in further resonance suppression and damping, there is no 'slipping' here. The latter, in my opinion is not exactly the wisest of options; centric milling for the acrylic mat is principally the right idea, however it looks a little rough and needs far too many machine-hours. Drive: The motor is housed in the aforementioned plinth and is, naturally, encased in stainless steel. It is a synchronous design which is driven by an outboard high-end motor controller; even this housing is a feast for the eyes and is designed to fit perfectly with the styling of the turntable.

You can look at every corner and from every angle and all you will find is the very finest in perfectionism and craftsmanship. So, moving on to the tonearm and I'm so pleased that we ordered the test model fitted with the sinfully expensive Da Vinci arm and not with the 10.5 inch Jelco-Derivat 'Vivid Two'. The Vivid is without doubt a very fine tonearm, however, it would perhaps lose a little on an alter of a turntable such as this. This couldn't happen with the Da Vinci: the smaller brother of the tried and tested 'Grandezza'. One look and you would have the impression that it was precision crafted by Swiss watchmakers, which is exactly what is needed here. Just a few facts: What we're dealing with here is a 10 inch gimbal-lengthened arm. At the tip of the bearing is a hand polished ruby sphere as found in most top of the line models. Anti-skating is controlled by a magnetic mechanism and the arm-wand is made of carbon fibre. Effective mass? I'm not too sure, it should lie somewhere within the mid range – the tonearm seems to have no problem dealing with middle to hard styluses. In terms of workmanship the Swiss precision needn't hide itself behind this turntable and definitely not in terms of sound.



The Da Vinci Nobile is an exquisite example of the finest in Swiss precision engineering. Shown here: The mounting block with conical bearings and magnetic anti-skating



Provides Calm:
The synthetic insert
situated within the
platter prevents
harmonics

In all honesty I wasn't too surprised but the combination of Legno and Nobile together was simply fantastic. The precise adjustment of the sound to one's listening preference using the pick-up is extremely clear and easy. I have recently been stopped in my tracks by the Miyabi-Derivat 'C3. 5' von MFSL which in this field offers up a unique synthesis of accuracy and musicality that, until this test I haven't experienced before. This combination sounds so unspectacularly right, so unimpeded and so unconstrained that I can not avoid inevitably thinking of the benchmark setting Simon Yorke S10. We find ourselves undoubtedly in a terrain where hi-fi virtues fail to play a role and where pure sensuous experience of bass and high tones, perfect low frequencies and focusing has been victorious. Sit down, listen and allow yourself be whisked away! This newcomer from my home town: I must admit, leaves me full of pride.

Holger Barske

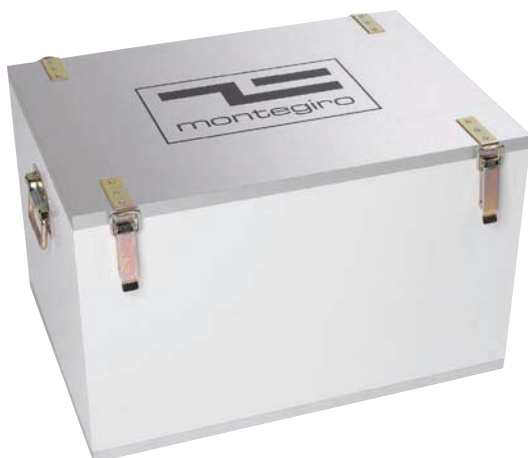


Montegiro Legno / Da Vinci Nobile

- Price 14.450 Euro
- Supplier Dattenberg GmbH, Hattingen
- Telephone 0 23 24 / 9 33 20
- Internet www.audiotra.de
www.montegiro.de
- Guarantee 10 Years
- Measurements (B x H x T mm)
445 x 170 x 350 mm
- Weight 30 kg

Unterm Strich ...

» ... What a debut. The first offering from Montegiro is a tonal sensation that leaves the technical aspects of music listening behind. Pure beauty and unadulterated sound aesthetic reign here.



Box? Of course not! –
the Montegiro comes in a made
to measure transport case.

A tribute to your ears



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