

Rega RP1 £230



With 40 years in the business, Rega knows a thing or two about making great affordable disc spinners

DETAILS

- PRODUCT**
Turntable
- ORIGIN**
UK
- TYPE**
Belt drive
- WEIGHT**
4.2kg
- DIMENSIONS**
(WxHxD)
450 x 120 x 360mm
- FEATURES**
 - 33 and 45rpm
 - Phenolic resin platter
 - Rega RB101 tonearm
 - Rega Carbon MM supplied
- DISTRIBUTOR**
Rega Research
- TELEPHONE**
n/a
- WEBSITE**
rega.co.uk

If you were to distil down the essential elements of what makes up the perfect budget turntable, this is pretty much what you'd end up with. The RP1 is simplicity itself, but don't think for a minute that no thought has gone into the design. Basically, it's a slab of MDF, nicely painted and finished, with a hole drilled in the middle for the main bearing. The AC synchronous motor also bolts in from underneath, and there's the fine Rega RB101 tonearm affixed on the other side. This is, of course, the blueprint for the more expensive Rega designs, but money has been saved simply by doing things a little less fastidiously. Still, the Rega feels well finished and nicely screwed together by the standards of the rest of the group, which isn't necessarily saying much!

As per the classic Rega mould, speed selection is done by moving the belt on the two-step pulley. It's cheap and highly effective, but many won't like the faffing around – and it feels crude compared with the likes of the Thorens or Audio Technica offerings. The turntable comes fitted with a

pre-aligned Rega Carbon cartridge, so set-up is incredibly easy. It's not quite as 'plug and play' as the Thorens, but it's not far off, and much less fussy than the Pro-Ject. The deck sports a black felt mat as standard, and there's the option of a number of racier hues for this – and the deck itself.

Sound quality

Despite being very much a budget offering, the RP1 sounds distinctively Rega – which can only be a good thing. Compared with all others in this group, there is more of a sense of what is actually going on in the record group, rather than what the turntable is turning the original recording into.

This package is well able to impart the power and grip of the bass guitar in the REM track, for example, carrying the phrasing far better than any deck here except the Audio Technica. It is also exceptionally good rhythmically, giving a sense of musical flow and progression to the song where others like the Thorens sound a touch floaty and unstructured.

Its midband is sufficiently neutral for the listener to really hear into the recorded acoustic, and this makes for better depth perspective than any of the other decks here, even if the left-to-right soundstage isn't quite as expansive as the Pro-Ject. Tonally the baby Rega doesn't stray too far from the company's 'house sound', which is to say quite lean yet smooth – Kraftwerk's *Tour de France* isn't quite as sumptuous as it sounds on the Genie, but still sounds nicely balanced and even, too.

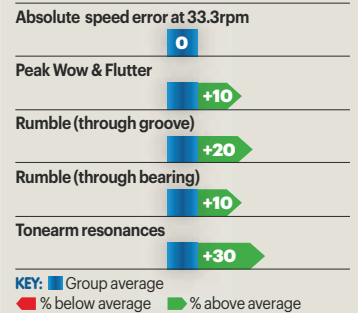
Moving on to the rock of REM and the RP1 feels in its element, giving a crisp, dry, stable sound without any nasties that certain other decks here are guilty of. Really rather detailed, it

ON TEST

Despite trading a lighter plastic platter for the RP3's glass version, the entry-level RP1 offers a very similar speed stability and rumble performance. Absolute speed is fractionally fast here at +0.18% (inaudible, but a feature of all Regas) while peak wow matches the RP3 at 0.09%. Flutter is very low and rumble – measured through the groove – is only a dB behind its bigger brother at -68.3dB. The RP1's bearing, however, is not so quiet, registering -65dB (DIN-B wtd) thanks to some breakthrough around 200Hz.

The new Rega RB101 tonearm is similar to the RB303 in performance terms with an 11g effective mass and rigid tube, seemingly uncompromised by the plastic headshell, offering a well-defined main resonance at 150Hz followed by other models at 400-960Hz at lower amplitude. Play is minimal and friction <10mg in both planes. It's the best arm in this month's test. **PM**

RESULTS AT A GLANCE



carries the vocals very sensitively, and really catches the mood of the music well. Its bass is excellent by the standards of the group; not as strong as the Audio Technica, perhaps, but supple and tuneful. It shows the deck's fine timing off to great effect, just as it should be. It is only on the Herbie Hancock track that it's lack of warmth or romance makes the song seem just a tad too matter of fact. Still, it doesn't throw out vast tracts of detail that most others here have simply glossed over. Overall, the Rega RP1 is the most complete performer here – it's not quite as warm or wide as the Pro-Ject Genie, but it still turns out to be a real class act.

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Smooth, pacey sound; decent finish; excellent arm; nice cartridge
- VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Overall it feels a lot cheaper than the Rega RP2
- BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** A fantastic starter turntable package, Rega hasn't lost its touch
- FEATURES**
★★★★★

OVERALL

