



TURNTABLE OF THE YEAR Naim Audio Solstice



It might seem surprising, but in its 48 years – many of which were spent dominating the vinyl frontier of the UK audio scene – Naim Audio has never made a turntable... until now! While the company has made several phono stages, a tonearm and even a power supply for a turntable, Naim used turntables and cartridges made to other manufacturer's specifications for almost half a century of making all things audio.

That all changed on the longest day of the year in 2021, with the launch of the appropriately-named Solstice. A complete, turn-key limited edition turntable, arm, MC cartridge, phono stage and power supply (which even comes with a special edition LP from the Naim label), the Solstice is designed to Naim's uniquely music-oriented specifications and built by turntable

experts Clearaudio. But this is every inch a Naim design, in look, build, and performance. Solstice marks the rebirth of the legendary Aro unipivot tonearm, for example; the new version of the arm features a slotted headshell and a new, integrated (and functional) lift/lower arrangement. Obviously, all the components that make up the Solstice are supplied as a complete turntable, but this limited-run turntable package does potentially pave the way for future turntables, arms, cartridges and more from Naim Audio.

In our test, Alan Sircom thought the turntable was a consummate music maker in the manner of classic Naim products. This sense of rhythmic bounce happened fast, "it took longer to write this sentence than it took for the Solstice to make its mark; a foot-tappin', gormless smilin', music lovin' mark." While it's not simply some pastiche of past glories and a modern-sounding deck, it maxes out on pure musical joy, "Sure, it's more even-handed as befits the more 21st Century approach to music replay and also the way Naim sounds today... but it's also got that 'put a smile on your face' love of music that permeated really well thought-through 'chrome bumper' Naim products of yore." +

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