

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

SEPTEMBER 2009 £4.99

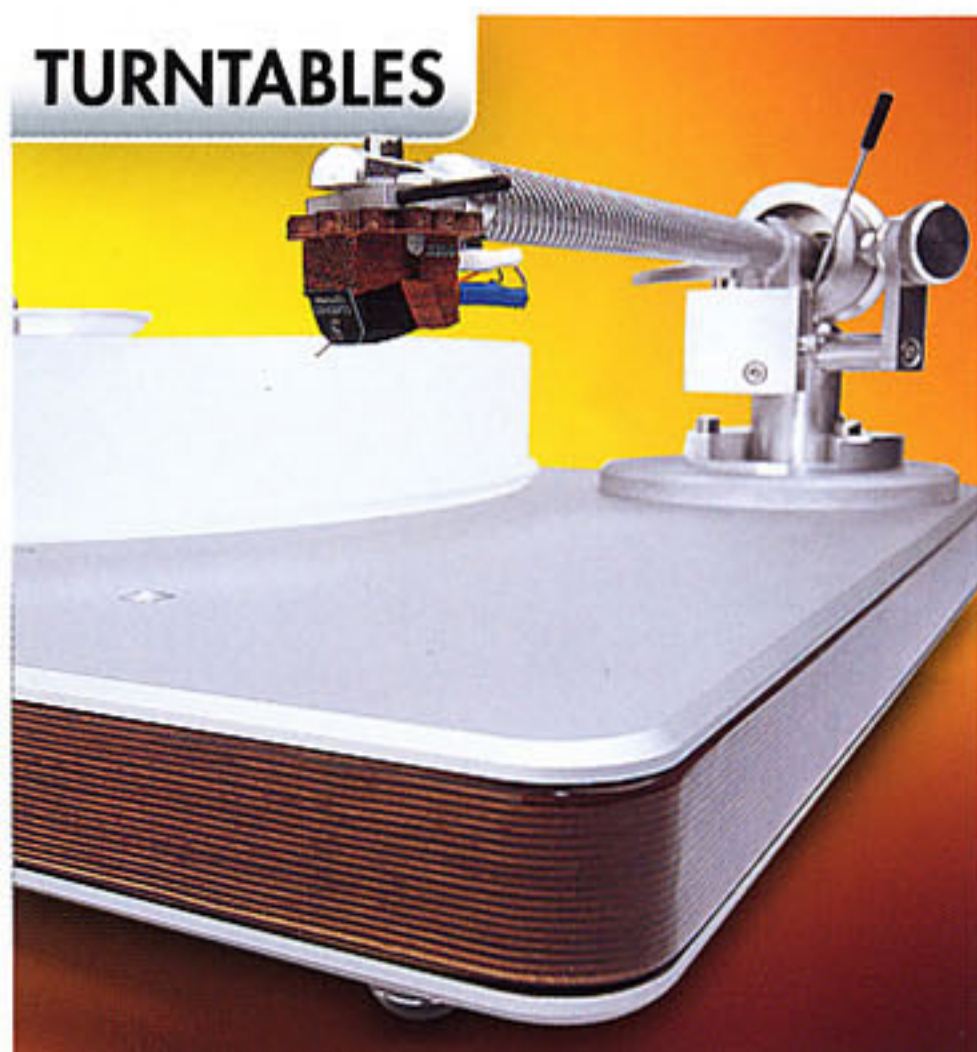
ULTIMATE GUIDE TO HIGH END ENTERTAINMENT

SPEAKERS

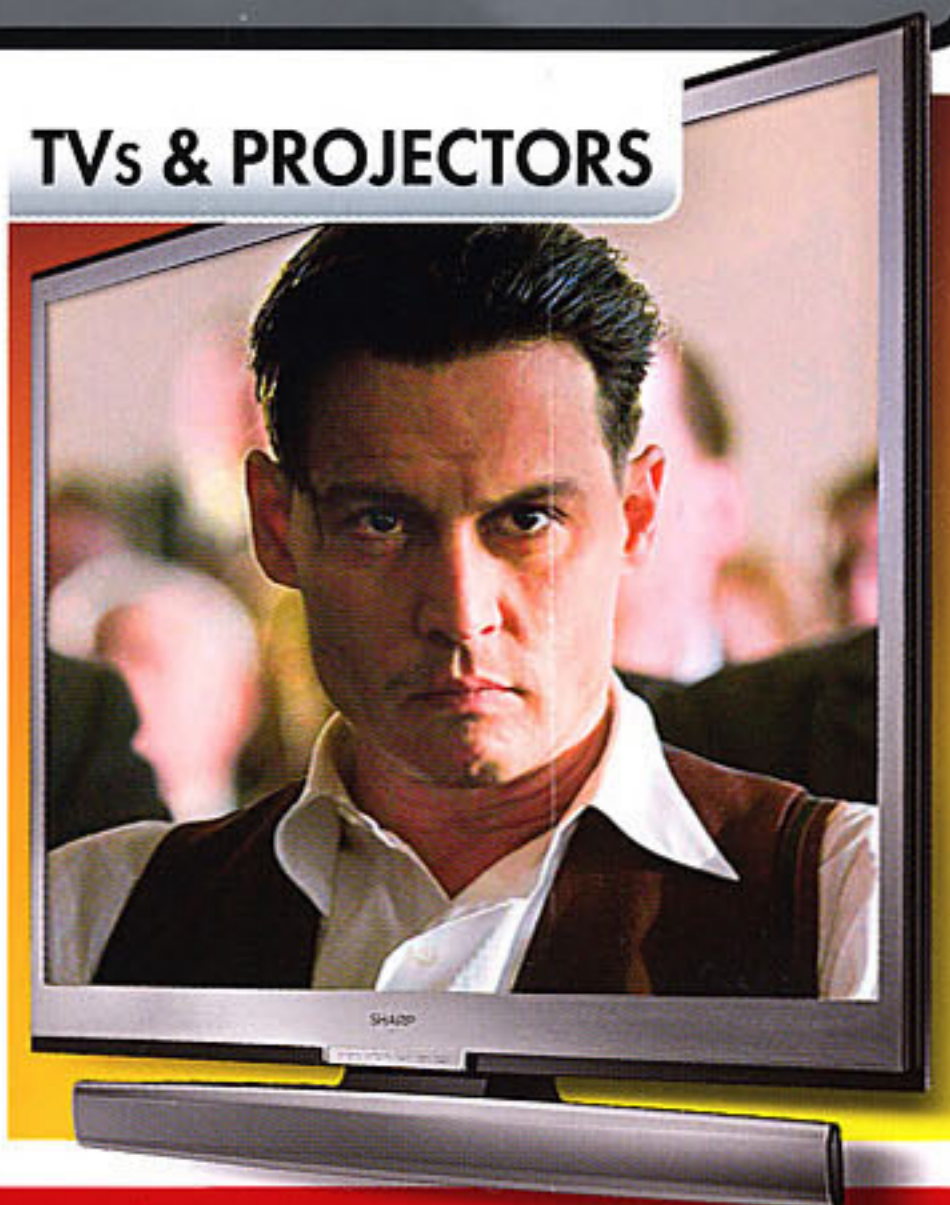


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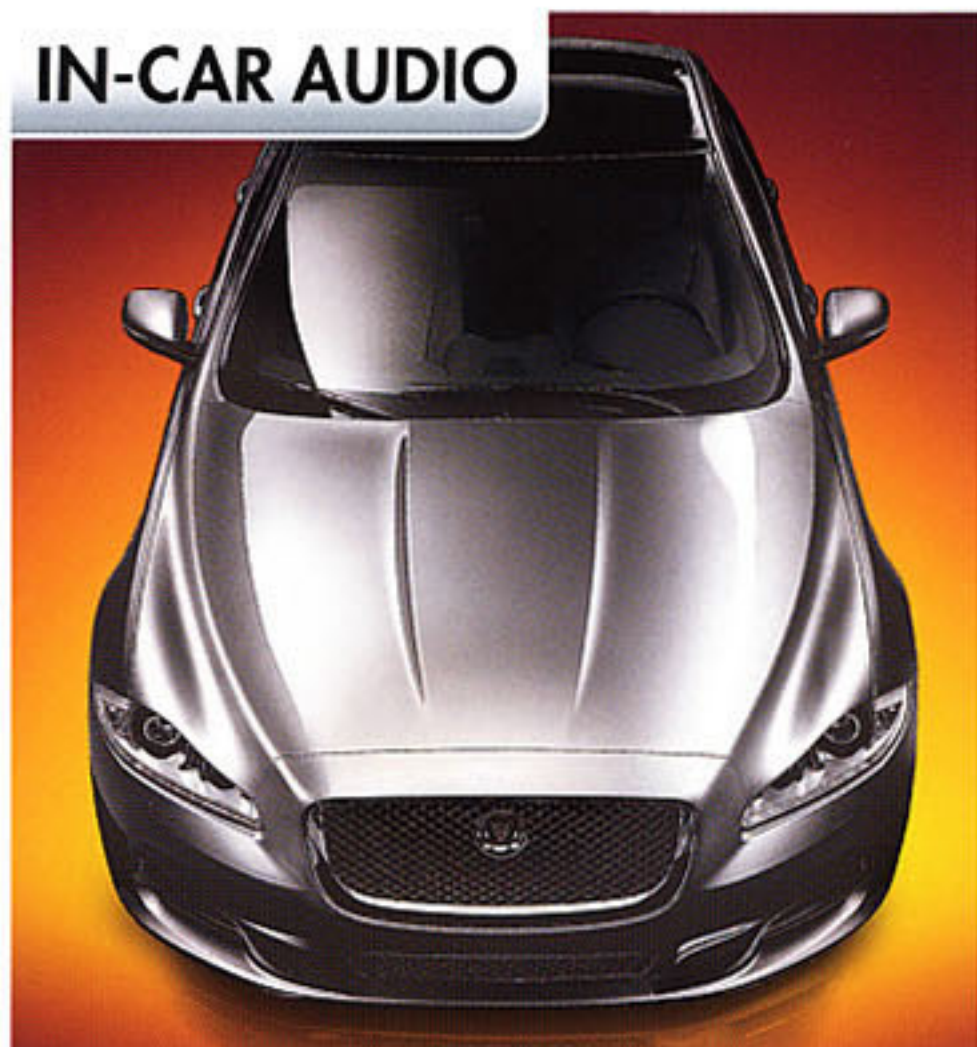
CD PLAYERS



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Clearaudio Solution AMG package



£2375

CLEARAUDIO IS ARGUABLY the dominant force in high-end turntables. This German company makes the widest range of top-end decks, and supports them with a bewildering array of arms, cartridges and accessories.

There are far more expensive Clearaudios than this, but this package is still very much a full-fat version of what the manufacturer can do.

The Solution is a family of products, with each version upgradeable to the next. The £1460 AMG marks the middle ground of the series.

Beauty more than skin deep

The excellent Satisfy tonearm is an advanced version of that found on the Award-winning Emotion deck. Here it has a carbon-fibre arm tube and single-piece wiring from cartridge to amp. Completing the package is the Melody moving-coil cartridge, with an ebony body and 24-carat gold coils.

The brand name has it spot on: this turntable is a very clear, insightful and pure-sounding product. Take what might be the finest instrumentation ever put onto vinyl – Nick Cave's *Babe*,

↑ FOR

Open, fast, plenty of detail, huge and focused soundstage; cost-saving with the package

↓ AGAINST

Bass lacks punch; needs more rhythmic drive; polite sound

→ VERDICT

This is a great deck that's easy to admire, but a little harder to love



I'm on Fire – and this deck separates the instrumental jumble out deftly, finding space between notes that many can't. This deck is fast, too. There's no sense of it hanging on to notes once they've faded, all of which produces a clipped,

**“This deck is fast:
there's no sense of it
hanging on to notes”**

precise and superbly well-timed presentation. Switch the musical menu to something a little more grand, and the Solution package shifts gear too, producing a sound of immense

depth, scale and space. Flaws? Sadly, there are some. This Clearaudio is a little restrained for our tastes. It hasn't got the punch to satisfy with the likes of Nirvana, or the bass power to deliver Bob Marley and The Wailers' *Stir It Up* with great conviction. Timing isn't that surefooted, either.

That said, we can see many going for the Solution's clean sonic presentation, and even more falling for its looks.

SPECIFICATION

Speeds 33¹/₃, 45 **Man/auto/semi op** Yes/no/no
Phono amp No **Tonearm/cart** Yes **Belt/direct drive** Yes/no **USB** No **Suspension** No **Finishes** Acrylic **Size (hwd)** 14 x 50 x 40cm

www.clearaudio.de

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