



Michell TecnoDec £2,000

The longest-running turntable in the test is more than capable of mixing it with any rival at the price

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Michell TecnoDec
ORIGIN
UK
TYPE
Belt-drive turntable
WEIGHT
4.6kg
DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
490 x 85 x 310mm
FEATURES
• T2 9in tonearm
• Acrylic platter
• Separate AC motor
DISTRIBUTOR
Michell Engineering

This is the only turntable in the group where the quoted price reflects a different specification to the others. It can be purchased minus an arm, but it is also available with a T2 tonearm (a debadged Rega 303/330) and a Goldring E3 cartridge for £2,000. For the purposes of the test, however, the Goldring has been unlimbered. This means that not only is it one of the least expensive models in the roundup, but the Michell is also the only one that can work out of the box. The TecnoDec itself is essentially unchanged from when it began production some 20 years ago. It combines design thinking from the

GyroDec and the older Syncro to create an unsuspended turntable where the large DC motor is separate to the rest of the chassis; being placed against a cut out on the left-hand side. The bearing is inverted and self-lubricating and spins a platter made of acrylic and impedance matched to the motor. It's also one of only two models here where adjusting the speed control requires the belt to be manually moved.

The result is visually simple to the point of basic, but the quality of the materials and the manner in which they are finished is enough to give the Michell a high-quality feel. Of particular note are the feet. They look normal enough, but they provide the TecnoDec impressive resilience to external interference. As standard, there's no dust cover, making this the only model in the group with no protection as standard – although a cover is available as an option. There is also an uprated power supply and clamp available to boost performance and the board will accept any Rega mount arm, giving the Michell an extremely high amount of future 'stretch' in the design if you see yourself wanting to take your vinyl front-end even further.

Sound quality

The likelihood is that you won't be rushing to make any changes to the TecnoDec, though. With the painless setup completed, the performance it

offers is consistently towards the top of the group, balancing a considerable spread of different virtues. It manages to capture the space and scale of The Cinematic Orchestra very effectively, while the tonal realism is consistently good. The Michell is also extremely capable at extracting some of the fine detail that some other turntables here struggle to resolve. Switch to Blondie and the TecnoDec has no trouble delivering the ballistic edge that *Hangin' On The Telephone* really needs to shine. The Michell has an urgency that gets you engaged with the track on an emotional level. The nuances it finds in Clem Burke's drumming and the snarl and aggression it captures in Debbie Harry's vocals makes this comfortably the

With a balance towards the top of the group, there's little need to upgrade

best performance in the group. The speed of the turntable doesn't adversely affect its showing with Morcheeba, either – it's able to find the flow of the track while once again doing a fine job with vocals. It even unearths details in Skye Edwards' breath control that remain largely inaudible on any other deck. It's only with Kraftwerk that any fractional weakness makes itself felt. The Michell does a good job of giving you a feeling of the size of the venue and that detail retrieval helps with crowd noise as well. Where it's slightly less assured is the bass response. The low end it delivers is fast and detailed, but there are other turntables here that can find a little more out-and-out depth. Once again, though, the timing and drive that the TecnoDec delivers really helps to engage and pull you into the performance as a whole

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR verDiCT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★	LIKE: lively, energetic performance; build; excellent value
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★	DISLIKE: limited bass; manual speed change; no dust cover
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★	WE SAY: The TecnoDec remains a formidable performer and brilliant value at the asking price
FEATURES ★★★★★	
OVERALL ★★★★★	

