



IT KEEPS RUNNING

In the STEREO listening room, Linn's turntable-legend ran in the ultimate „Klimax“-version. Rarely has vinyl played like this!

Imagine this: the VW Golf would still look more or less the same today as it did when it was first introduced in 1974, but it would be available in three distinct versions, which differ in their chassis, engine and many small details and the top model would compete in the class of Porsche, Ferrari or Corvette. An absurd idea? Well, but that is exactly how it worked out with the LP12 turntable, by means of which the Scottish manufacturer Linn once began its history and whose fame will probably outlast it – and it was even released one year earlier than the Golf. I bet that at a time when all their smart streamers have long since stopped playing it will still be steadfastly going about its rounds.

The analog icon seems to belong into an entirely different era. In 1973, its year of birth, the World Trade Center was inaugurated in New York, which was reduced to rubble by the insanity of this world. The LP12, however, was not affected by the passing of time. On the contrary: in the 45 years of its existence it did not grow old, but increasingly valuable – and better. The Scots ensured this with countless new parts and “upgrades”, from which even a first-generation LP12 can profit. A quite unique feature and a real argument in favor of the Linn, which can grow with the demands of its owner. Try planting the current GTI turbo engine into a Golf!

The timelessness of the LP12 is based on the fact that its simply brilliant and

TEST-COMPONENTS

Turntable: Transrotor Rondino nero with tonearm 5009 and MC-scanner Figaro

Phono preamplifier: Brinkmann Edison

Pre/Power Amplifier: Accoustic Arts Tube PreampII-MK2/AmplII-MK3

Speaker: B&W 800D3

Cable: HMS Gran Finale Jubilee/In acoustics 2404 (NF/LS), JIB Silver Galaxy (Phono)

brilliantly simple fundamental concept has never been touched. This essentially consists of three coil springs holding a metal profile on which the plate and the tonearm are mounted. This way, external vibrations are kept away from the scanning process.

Linn founder and music lover Ivor Tiefenbrun, who “surprised” his newlywed wife with a hi-fi system instead of furniture for their first marital home,



▲ In the Radikal unit, the supply voltages for the motor and preamplifier are generated with the utmost meticulousness. The switching power supply is located on the left.



▲ The Phono-Pre Urika sits in the grey aluminum box on the trampoline base plate and receives the signals via a short path.

realized that the sound was better when the turntable was in the neighboring room, i.e. less affected by the disturbing direct- and **impact noise** from the speakers. This is how the idea of a spring-loaded, decoupling sub-chassis was born, which, of course, needs to be precisely adjusted for optimum performance.

This is all the more complex as the turntable reached the editorial office in three separate boxes as a kind of construction kit. Here, you'll have to sweat you can enjoy your success. The device being disassembled into its individual parts is the exact opposite of the frequently cited "Plug 'n' Play"-philosophy often advocated in the analogue industry: the solid wooden frame and base plate, offered in five different versions, the pickup together with arm, even the springs and parts of the speed control, the motor, the plate bearing and all kinds of small parts were there individually. Even if you are experienced with turntables, we, therefore, advise you not to set up your LP12 by yourself!

For this you need an experienced professional, i.e. a trained Linn dealer. In our case Rainer Pohl from the hifi studio of the same name and STEREO PREMIUM PARTNER in Bodenheim near Mainz did the job. He had brought the obligatory assembly shelf with him, into which the LP12 can be clamped and thus worked on from all

sides. If you know how it's done and what it takes, the assembly is no witchcraft. However, the final adjustment of the springs – the sub-chassis should swing evenly and exactly up and down, without tendency to wobble – requires an expert with sure instinct and sensitivity. This work is necessary and identical for all versions of the LP12.

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LOTS OF EFFORT AND CLEVER SOLUTIONS CHARACTERISE THE „KLIMAX LP12“

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If you visit Linn's website, you can get an overview of its numerous equipment variants – there are three sub-chassis boards alone – and individually compose your LP12. In practice, however, this should remain the exception, as the Scots offer three sensible combinations in accordance with their quality gradations as "Majik", "Akurate" and "Klimax" versions, the latter being equipped only with the finest parts, whereby the prices range from 3485 over 8570 up to the 22,225 Euros, which was the price of our test model. This one is also available

2490 Euro cheaper, but then the high-precision "Radikal" power supply and control electronics are not enclosed in the Klimax cabinet, which is milled from full aluminum as in our test model, but in the less elaborate Akurate line cabinet. It has, however, identical specifications, wherefore the difference in sound is supposed to be negligible.

In view of the mighty price it has to be considered that we are not only talking about a complete turntable, which has been thoroughly developed in all details. In addition, it has its own "Urika" phono preamplifier on board, which has been precisely adapted to Linn's top "Kandid" MC-cartridge and is connected with the shortest possible signal path. Thus the Klimax LP12 has to be connected, like a tuner or a CD player, to the high level input of an amplifier. The Urika-Pre is firmly connected to the trampoline and disappears entirely in the belly of the turntable when it is mounted. It offers a pair of balanced and unbalanced sockets for the supply cables to the subsequent amp. Taking other highest quality drives with tonearm and adding a pickup and phono preamplifier of adequate quality, one arrives in similar price ranges as the LP12, which features best equipment as standard.

In fact, the Klimax is packed with visibly invested effort and clever detail solutions, all of which cannot be listed here as that would by far exceed the scope of this article. Therefore, reference shall only be made, for example, to the titanium arm

KEYWORD

Impact noise:
In contrast to direct noise, which acts on an object via the air, impact noise primarily means the high-energy bass waves that propagate across the floor.



▲ The Keel sub-chassis board is the most solid in the Linn portfolio. It is milled from one piece. Struts increase its stiffness.



▲ The sub-chassis is suspended from three coil springs. In order to achieve an exactly piston-shaped swinging, these must be precisely adjusted.

The Majik and Akurate-LP12 have a 24-pole synchronous motor. This complex direct current type is reserved for the Klimax version. ►



Rainer Pohl is a Linn dealer and LP12 specialist. Here he sets up the test model and nudges the plate to check its swinging behavior. ►



tube of the “Ekos SE”, whose high-precision bearings are embedded in a stainless steel block. The “Kandid” MC is fastened to the headshell with the Linn-typical interest in tightest possible connections, using three instead of just two screws. Further is has a light but stiff boron needle carrier, on which a diamond with a superior “Micro Ridge” cut is applied naked, and that is manufactured according to Linn specifications by a specific person from the Lyra-circles. The DC motor is located in a cabinet that effectively dampens residual vibrations, while the rigid “Keel” sub-chassis-support prevents any **relative movement** between the tonearm and the optimally balanced turntable that would interfere with dynamics or detailing.

This is, in fact, exactly what “Linnians” love about their turntable. If they rave about the performances of their LP12 with

an enraptured expression on their faces, the naturalness and flirty liveliness of its depiction would usually be the center of attention. Of course, the Scot draws its sound images spatially and three-dimensionally, according to its respective quality league. However, that’s not the reason why anybody buys an LP12. Instead that is because he/she has heard or experienced that it understands what “life” means and transmits exactly that, hence effortlessly igniting the spark between the musicians immortalized on a record and their listeners. Where there is smoke, there, famously, has to be fire, and without substance no such nimbus could be maintained for decades.

Let’s not make it so exciting, and after all it’s already the x-th LP12 that comes

to our ears, albeit the best. It’s impressive to see the Scottish evergreen in analogues top form (see box), which also answers the question why the hundred thousand times sold turner still is highly relevant.

KEYWORD

relative movement:
If plate and arm twist against each other, this inevitably leads to losses of subtle information.

It is his agility and his finger-snipping timing that immediately captivates, but has nothing to do with nervousness. On the contrary, the LP12 succeeds in developing its dancing virility, its rhythmic urgency in front of a leaned-back fundament of serenity, even demonstrative tranquility. It seems as if the turntable played on two different levels.

That is incredibly fascinating, especially if you don’t analyze it, but simply listen. Perhaps this is the reason for the thesis of many Linn lovers that the LP12 is one of very few turntables which – keyword



▲ A marking on the inside of the plate and an optical detector close to the engine ensure precise speeds. They were perfectly accurate!



▲ The Kandid-MC is fixed with three screws, which increases the connection to the headshell and at the same time determines the overhang. Adjustment? Not required!

legend status – has a feeling for melodies and uses it for musical experiences whereas other turners appear profane and distanced. Be that as it may, what is already laid out in the more simple Majik LP12 is driven to perfection by the climax – without any tricks. In the measurement lab, the Scotsman, which is controlled by an optical system, held the 33.33 or 45 rpm exactly on point.

Of course the big LP12 also captivates in calmly flowing passages with fervor and

expression, but it pleases all the more when there is a lot happening on the imaginary stage. Like for example in Diana Krall's gripping Paris concert. There the LP12 let the piano tones soar in the fast opening title and drove the rapidly articulating singer to the, uh, Klimax, as if it were enjoying itself while, still, never losing track of even the smallest detail from its wide-angled perspective. Simply wonderful!

The freshness and joy of playing benefits not least from a slightly bright tuning, which is visible in the frequency diagram of the Kandid and which creates an additional shine, however also gives sharp S-sounds a bit of a biting character. Probably Linn doesn't even aim at this. The increase is more likely due to a deliberately weak damping of the needle carrier in order to ensure maximum impulsivity.

Nevertheless, it had long been clear that this was one of the best turntables we had ever seen, which qualified him for top records. Like the explosive 45-version of the famous Carnegie Hall concert by Harry Belafonte. With an almost frightening presence, the entertainer pulled off his show in "Matilda". The exuberant space was perfectly organized, individual actors were precisely outlined. In the depth you could hear the singing and enthusiastically swaying audience. That was pure live feeling and the volume control moved further and further towards the right. Klimax LP12? Absolutely fantastic!

Matthias Böde

LINN LP12 IN DIGITAL: SACRILEGIOUS OR AMBITIOUS?

As a perfect solution for Linn systems, the Scottish company offers the Phono-Pre "Urika II" for 3270 euros, which digitalizes the scanned signals in the high bit standard of 24 bit/192 kilohertz and leads them out of the LP12 via a LAN cable. Even the RIAA equalization is done digitally. What looks like a sacrilege in pure analogue theory apparently works fantastically in practice and clearly raises the turntable icon above its maximum analogue level. The comments from Linn dealers and customers who have switched are unanimous evidence of enthusiasm. However, to enjoy this, you need a Linn „Exakt“ system. In case of doubt, the D/A conversion then takes place directly in its active loudspeakers. This means that the „digital“ LP12 is outside the general framework, which is why we chose the highest quality analogue version for our test.

LINN KLIMAX LP12

Price: from 19735 € (five veneers in oak, cherry, black ash, rosewood or walnut; surcharge for „Klimax“ power supply cabinet: 2490 €)

Dimensions: 45 x14 x36 cm (WxHxD)

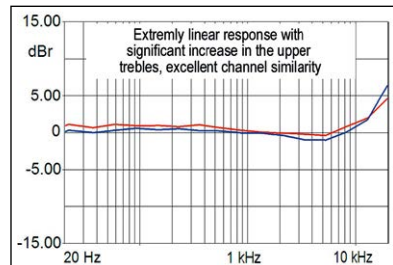
Warranty: 5 years

Contact: Linn

+44 141 307 7777, www.linn.co.uk

Linn's long matured and equipped with the very best ingredients Klimax LP12 is a high-end musical statement! In this form the complete turntable is not too expensive despite its high price.

LAB MEASUREMENTS



FEATURES

Fully equipped, including Urika phono preamplifier, Ekos SE tonearm, Kandid MC cartridge, Radikal power supply and phono cable.



STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY 100%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE

★★★★☆
VERY GOOD