

Music in its veins

MoFi's UltraDeck plus is black as a raven. However, while playing it gets red cheeks. STEREO met a record player that has musicality running through its veins.

Matthias Böde



A promise but also a commitment at the same time: some of the guys who have for decades been responsible for the "Half Speed Master" re-releases of famous albums in ultimate vinyl-quality have had their hands on the MoFi turntables. In fact, the "Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab" enjoys legendary status amongst record listeners and has once spurred the reissue wave.

So the Americans should have a pretty good idea of how music is supposed to sound. For the technical implementation of their two turntables, of which the here tested

UltraDeck is the larger one, additional help in the form of analog guru Allen Perkins from Spiral Groove was sought. He not only determined the choice of materials, but also the production processes and even fine-tuned the resonances of the aluminum enclosure of the matching MM-scanner, which was supplied by the Japanese specialist Audio-Technica.

It is called "UltraTracker", offers an elliptically cut diamond and costs on its one nearly 550 euros. As a set with the UltraDeck, however, it only increases its price by

The people from the „Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab“ should have a good idea of proper sound!



KEYWORD

Inverse bearing

The tilt point is at the top instead of at the bottom. The plate does not stand on top of the bearing, but hangs in it. Thus the center of gravity is lowered, which avoids tumbling and disturbance.

200 Euro – that’s a bargain you should’nt miss. Especially since there is absolutely no reason for that, because – thanks to Perkins! – the MM fits seamlessly into the general sound concept.

Before we devote ourselves to this concept, a few more words about the MoFi and its seemingly simple "deck". In fact, this consists of an MDF/aluminum sandwich, whereby both materials are supposed to complement each other ideally in their characteristics. The chassis rests on four trapezoidal arranged feet with springs that filter out vibrations surprisingly effectively.

These feet can also be found in the smaller StudioDeck, however, here they are tuned differently, since the big brother is heavier. Its plate is also made of the low-resonance plastic Delrin, but the one on the UltraDeck is thicker, and instead of a Teflon mirror, it comes with an especially abrasion-resistant ruby for the inverse bearing, which is lubricated with special grease.

The ten inch long aluminum tonearm has high precision needle bearings for vertical movement. The round tonearm bearing enclosure is made of metal instead of plastic. There is no scale on the counterweight, but a white line on the rear arm tube. Bringing the weight very close to where it is supposed

to bet set with the optimal support force of close to 20 Millinewton for the StudioT-racker. This works quite well, but we still recommend the use of a precise tonearm balance during assembly.

Other than that there is little to be considered, apart from the correct phase position at the mains input (see diagram) – otherwise it sounds narrow and flat. The pickup was precisely pre-assembled, and the included phono cable is better than most usually included cables. Nevertheless, we recommend to replace it with something "proper" at some point.

You can't really make any mistakes while operating the turntable. There is only one yellowish illuminated on/off button, that starts the belt of the same color with a soft squeaking. The speed is selected by running the rubber belt on the smaller (33,33) or larger (45) pulley.

The UltraDeck, which gets a "plus" attached as a complete set with the mentioned MM-cartridge, doesn't want to distract from listening to music in any way. That would be quite difficult anyway, because the rather reserved looking turntable quickly turned out to be have a sure musical instinct in our listening room. The UltraDeck plus played the live version of "Chocolate Girl" by the



LITTLE ONE

In many details, for example in terms of its pickup, MoFi's StudioDeck plus is constructed simpler than the larger model. However, it nevertheless captivates with musical impetus and exuberant joy of playing. Complete price: around 1300 Euro.

TEST DEVICES

Turntables: Acoustic Solid Classic Wood MPX, Music Hall mmf-9.3SE

Phono preamp: Brinkmann Edison, Clearaudio Basic V2

Integrated amplifier: Mark Levinson No.585.5, Symphonic Line RG14 Edition

Loudspeaker: DALI Epicon 6, Fischer & Fischer SN470M

Phono cable: Silent Wire NF5 Phono



The anti-skating of the ten-inch arm works via weight and thread. A white line indicates the position of the counterweight (top left). The dark yellow belt must be placed by hand on the other pulley in case of a change of speed (top right). The feet have a spring mechanism that is matched to the weight of the UltraDeck. Since they are not adjustable in height, the turntable should be placed on a horizontal surface.



The UltraTracker features an Audio-Technica MM-pickup. Its aluminum body has been tuned for resonance (above). The included phono cable (below) is better than usual.



cult band Deacon Blue as broad as expansive, generously traced the dimensions of the concert hall, diligently separated the shouts from the audience from the foreground, and let frontman Ricky Ross act full of joy and life.

The MoFi's well contoured, but above all bulbous and full bass and the almost wasteful handling of timbres helped it a lot. Both give the performance opulence and taste. For long-fingered nitpicking you got to search elsewhere. This turntable is straightforward and brings to full glory what is already started in the StudioDeck.

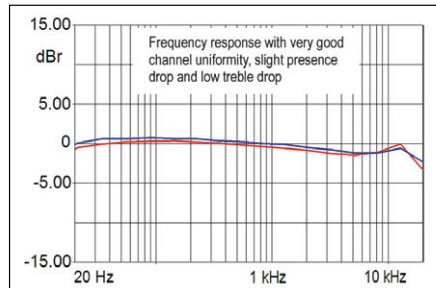
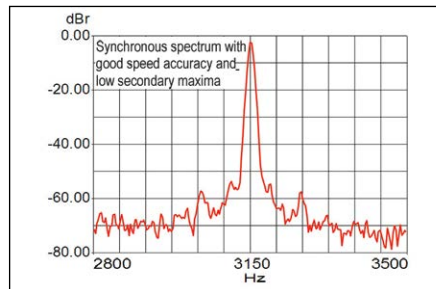
The fact that all of this happens without uncleanliness or exaggerations increases the fun of the rightly called UltraDeck. With a lot of verve it threw itself into the fortissimo-turmoil of Chadwick's orchestral suite "Jubilee", however without losing sight of it. It turned out to be a tough rocker during the hard riffs in Rush's "Jacob's Ladder". Generally: the more groove there was in the music, the stronger it seemed to play out its talents. Nevertheless, it also gave introverted singer/songwriting a fitting and intimate touch. It really has the music in its veins, the bigger MoFi. ■

MoFi UltraDeck plus

Price: around 2200 €
 (complete with MM pickup MoFi UltraTracker)
Dimensions: 50 x11 x37 cm (WxHxD)
Warranty: 2 years
Contact: Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab
 www.mofi.com

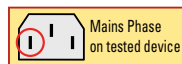
It is apparent that this turntable comes from a manufacturer with a musical background and was co-developed by an analogue specialist. The sound is extremely fluid, colorful and relaxed, and the reproduction is pleasantly „non-technical“. The very good MM pickup completes the round MoFi package.

Measurement results



Output voltage: 5,6 mV
Tracking force: 18 mN

Lab Comment



The frequency response of the MoFi pickup is balanced. The turntable impressed with its high speed accuracy when measuring the very small synchronous fluctuations. That is important, because the UltraDeck has no fine adjustment for the speed. The rumble measurement (not depicted) also showed very low values, which confirms the quality of the drive.

Features

Antiskating, spring-loaded damping feet, dust cover

The large MoFi has rich sound images whose impetus and energy are fascinating



ON TOP

Together with the UltraDeck we also received MoFi's 370 gram „Super Heavyweight“ plate puck that is filled with granulate. The rack and damper specialist HRS developed this, and it made the sound more sonorous, cleaner and smoother, and on top of that provided even more order in the spatial reproduction – also with other turntables. Price: around 250 Euro. Strong recommendation!

STEREO-TEST	
SOUND QUALITY	77%
PRICE/PERFORMANCE	
★ ★ ★ ★ ★	
OUTSTANDING	