

Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT UNCOVERED

Turning heads

Origin Live's new **Sovereign turntable** spins a performance that's worth its weight in gold: are you ready to hear records like never before?

TURNTABLE
ORIGIN LIVE
SOVEREIGN

★★★★★
£ 3850

FOR

Timing; detail; wide soundstage; musical, punchy bass; emotional

AGAINST

Set-up is a little tricky, and the instructions don't help much

VERDICT

This is a sublime turntable – it might cost a lot of money, but it sounds better than the CD players at anywhere this price

TECH SPECS

SPEEDS 33¹/₃, 45 RPM
ELECTRIC SPEED CHANGE Yes
MANUAL OPERATION Yes
TONEARM INCLUDED Yes (for £970)
CARTRIDGE INCLUDED No
BELT-DRIVE Yes
SUSPENSION Yes
COLOUR Black

WE VINYL JUNKIES belong to a fairly bizarre sub-culture: everything we do revolves around our love for the black stuff. Whether we're buying a house or looking for new clothes, the first thing to cross our minds is records – as in “will I be able to fit my records in here?” or “if go shopping with my partner can I go vinyl-hunting, too?”

Every now and again a turntable like the Origin Live Sovereign comes along to make us realise that not all addictions have to be bad. In fact, the Sovereign actively feeds your listening habit – well, once you've struggled through putting the package together, anyway. The deck comes without a tonearm or cartridge, so we added Origin

“This deck has the power to stop a herd of wildebeest with its authority – yet it can also bring a grown man to his knees in tears”

Live's Encounter arm (£970) with the £150 Goldring 1042 cartridge. A few misleading details in the assembly instructions left several members of our test team scratching their heads like chimps in a zoo. However, if you're spending four grand on a deck, you're entitled to ask for a decent set-up tutorial from your dealer.

Giggles turn to gasps

This Sovereign turntable is machined with millimetric precision, the only downside being that the adjustment bolts are hidden from view. Some lurk underneath the feet, so when fine-tuning is required the whole turntable needs to be moved, which is

annoying. However, overall fit and finish are superlative, the styling speaks for itself, and sonically, the deck has stellar abilities.

How stellar? Well, the first slab of vinyl to hit the deck had us giggling like helium-addled hyenas. That soon turned to awe as the Sovereign revealed its true colours, leaving us with jaws so slack that any self-respecting redneck would have been proud. With all forms of music it remains effortlessly composed, giving tremendous insight into the original recording's emotion.

Detail levels stun, revealing subtleties we had never noticed even in some of our personal faves. The separation of instruments is fantastic too: the sound appears to be huge and beautifully spread through the vast soundstage, while bass is deep, tuneful and punchy.

The Sovereign even manages to change its mood to suit the music being played. One reviewer stated, “My God, I feel stoned” when listening to Portishead's *Dummy* set, yet when listening to the new single, *Popper*, from Christopher & Raphael Just we felt compelled to have a dance. Timing is also impeccable, and the beautifully expressive midrange makes it easy to get carried away – so you often find yourself singing along with your eyes closed while everyone stands around having a good laugh at you.

Start saving for a Sovereign

We can't recommend this Origin Live deck enough: it has the power to stop a herd of wildebeest with its authority, yet it can also bring a grown man to his knees in tears. We desperate vinyl junkies will always insist the black stuff sounds better than CD, and this turntable will prove that to anyone who listens to it. Start saving!

Some of the fine adjustment bolts (below) are hidden from view, which can make fine-tuning a fairly tricky process

