



Red alert

This scarlet spinner provides a convincing package for first timers and those returning to vinyl alike, says **David Price**

The original TT2 from Edwards Audio – an offshoot of Talk Electronics – was essentially a modified OEM design made for low cost, ease of use and mass appeal for vinyl fans going back to black and newbies alike. Now though, it sports some meaningful tweaks, which give it extra character of its own.

The SE version offers a number of revisions; for example the original had a basic painted MDF plinth, whereas the Special Edition gets a 25mm full-gloss finished affair that's a big improvement in looks and feel – and it should translate to a fractionally better sound, too. It comes in a choice of gloss black or white, with the red you see here as a special order (at no extra cost). The plinth houses the same 230V AC synchronous motor supplied by Allied Motion, which has powered so many

disc spinners in the past. One key improvement is the aluminium subplatter with ground stainless steel shaft that runs down through the precision-made brass bearing housing to a 5mm ceramic bearing. It spins an inhouse machined 18mm acrylic platter, driven by Edwards Audio's 'Little Belter' blue belt, said to be an upgrade over the standard Rega belt. It sits on three rubber isolation feet.

The deck comes complete with a pre-fitted TA202 tonearm, and there's a choice of fitting your own cartridge or buying a cartridge with the deck from your dealer. Kevin Edwards managing director says he prefers the Goldring 2100 or 1006 – adding that the latter is warmer and the former more detailed. The arm is now hardwired to RCA phono sockets fitted on the back of the deck, which makes swapping cables easy should you be so inclined. There's also a

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Edwards Audio TT2SE

ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
Belt-drive turntable

WEIGHT
6.5kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
465 x 390 x 120mm

FEATURES
● 33 & 45rpm
● Edwards Audio TA202 tonearm

DISTRIBUTOR
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separate earth terminal, which is a major improvement on the stock Rega tonearm on which the TA202 is based. It also sports a specially made brass rear stub assembly. The deck comes with a range of options, including a new external speed control box which is claimed to give lower wow and flutter, allied to better ease of use thanks to its switchable 33/45rpm speeds – normally you have to move the belt. There's also an ISO1 mains isolation filter.

The emphasis is on quality, affordability and ease of use then – but the TT2SE doesn't comprehensively tick all the boxes. Obviously, it's a manual deck, which we hardened vinylists will think is a pushover to use, but we shouldn't assume newcomers will. Secondly, the lack of electronic speed control as standard may be a turn off for some prospective purchasers – most won't know how to, or indeed wish to learn, how to change the speed. Third, the deck does require some careful positioning to give its best. Frankly, you can't just plonk it on the floor and expect it to sound fantastic. Instead, you need to site it as far away from your loudspeakers as is practical, so as to isolate it from acoustic feedback – it, like any unsprung deck, isn't very resistant to this.

The first duty of any turntable is to spin the disc at a steady speed, to do

it quietly without producing any noise, and to avoid picking up any other unwanted vibrations from the outside world. This, of course, is easier said than done, but for any record player to be worthy of the name hi-fi it needs to make at least a decent attempt at this. The Edwards Audio TT2SE doesn't put a foot wrong here, and even if you come from a considerably more expensive turntable it won't embarrass itself.

Sound quality

Tonally it is smooth – few turntables are not these days – but it still does well considering its relatively modest price. Bass is taut and lithe with no excess padding or overhang, so there's never any sense that the music is being slowed down by a bottom end that is too heavy for the rest of the music. Moving up to the midband, and again it needs to be applauded for its air and space – there's a good deal of information coming through, and it's set in a decently wide stereo soundstage with has accurately placed images.

Kraftwerk's *Computerwelt* is most enjoyable with a fine sense of width and depth. Moving up to the treble, and the synthesised hi-hat sounds are crisp and well resolved with a good deal of atmosphere.

All of which makes for an enjoyable and relatively fuss-free sound, without any particular rough edges. Indeed this turntable is quite matter of fact in its manner and just gets on with the job without editorialising too

much. I spin up some classic eighties pop in the shape of The Smiths' *The Headmaster Ritual* and am greeted with a vigorous and propulsive sound, throwing out the kick drum, bass guitar and snare work very energetically. The deck manages to pick its way through the murky mix and communicate the beautiful multi-layered guitar parts courtesy of Johnny Marr, and carry Morrissey's voice with an intricacy and subtlety

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that's unexpected at the price. All good fun, but one is always aware that the deck has a slightly 'lean' tone – there's little of the rich, opulent warmth that some would expect from vinyl. The fact that it's not particularly coloured will be seen by many as a good thing, but some may want to run it with a warmer-sounding cartridge like Goldring's G1042, for example, for a more sumptuous sound.

Although pretty consistent across a wide range of programme material, the TT2SE is happiest with classical music. Cue up a beautiful piece of piano music such as Debussy's *Submerged Cathedral Prelude*, and the basic speed stability is such that you can absorb yourself in the performance. Piano is notoriously

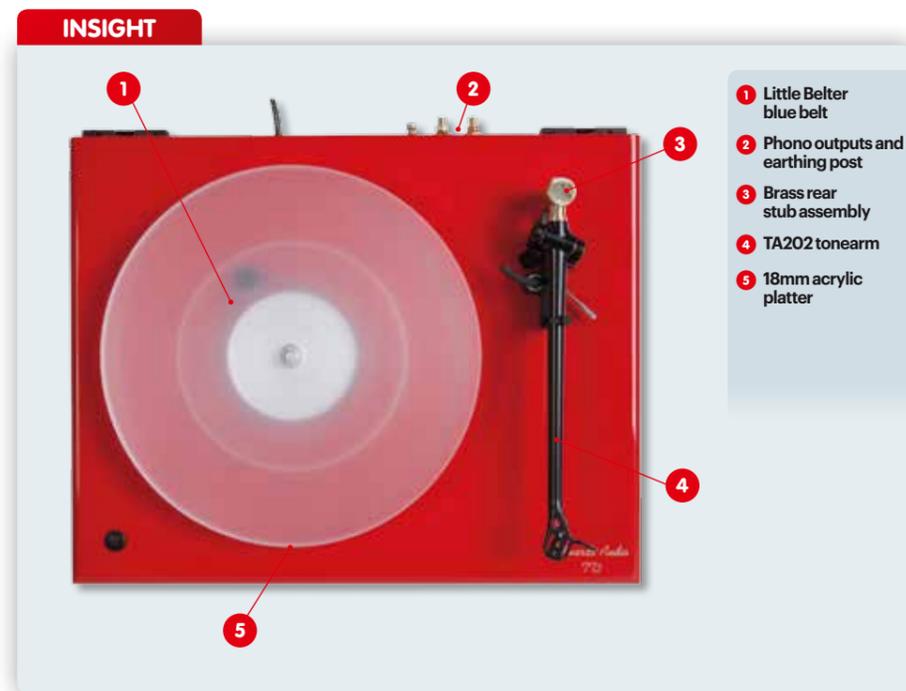
difficult for turntables to reproduce, yet it is able to convey an unexpectedly solid and stable rendition of the piece and gets the job done well. The music sounds beautifully spacious too, which is one of the lovely aspects of listening to classical music on vinyl.

It also does a fine job with jazz, but as with rock music its tonal leanness is more noticeable. This turntable is great at getting into the musical groove – it really relishes the slippery rhythms of Dave Brubeck's classic *Take Five*. I love the way that it clearly signposts the delicate dynamic accenting on the ride cymbals, for example, and ties this to the bass drum work beautifully. It sets up a large and surprisingly deep recorded acoustic, going way beyond the confine of the speakers, too. Yet I'm still left thinking that just a little bit more sweetness wouldn't go amiss with the fitted G2100 cartridge. The matter-of-fact sound doesn't colour things quite as vividly as some jazz fans might like, but in respect of dynamics, rhythms and detailing it proves to be just the job.

Conclusion

Edwards Audio began life modifying other people's record decks, but is now largely self-sufficient and manufacturing in Britain. This turntable is a clear evolution from, and development of, the company's earlier fare and there's the sense that the brand is really finding its feet now. The TT2SE is a highly capable yet affordable turntable that represents excellent value for money. It brings a useful extra option for relatively cash-strapped analogue addicts, offering a subtly smoother and more stable sound than equivalently priced rivals. It's also a very nice thing to look at and use in its own right and should provide many years of fuss-free operation. Better bet on red ●

That gorgeous gloss-red plinth has solid audio properties as well as looking the business



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★

FEATURES
★★★★★

OVERALL
★★★★★

LIKE: Confident, stable, musical sound; fine build and finish

DISLIKE: Nothing at the price

WE SAY: Great upgrade to a fine budget vinyl spinner