



David Price has a ball with Rega's latest P3-24 turntable, Marantz's new PM8003 amplifier and Monitor Audio's just released Radius 90HD loudspeakers...

Green Party

What I love about vinyl is that – assuming you've got the right combination of components – you can get a remarkably musical sound for a relatively small sum of money. And so it is with this, my weird but wonderful Rega, Marantz and Monitor Audio combination...

I've designed this system to be just as I would like it were I starting out on the hi-fi path afresh and wanted to take the vinyl route. First, Rega's P3 turntable needs little introduction to vinylistas. For me it is one of hi-fi's true classics. In its latest incarnation it's called the P3-24 and comes with a fancy gloss finished plinth available in a wide range of colours, including what I like to call 'Rega Racing Green' you see here!

Coming in at £586 (with 15% VAT, and my review sample also sports a £107 Elys 2 cartridge), the P3 is simply a beautifully finished slab of painted and lacquered phenolic resin laminates, into which is fitted

a high quality bearing and a 24 pole AC synchronous motor (as used in the company's more expensive P5 and P9 turntables, plus many more) with clever control circuitry to reduce vibration and an outboard power supply unit that conditions the electrical supply with a synthesised low distortion crystal controlled ac input, plus electronic speed control.

The P3-24's plinth has one other important cut-out – the mounting for the new Rega RB301 tonearm. This is a modified version of the very famous RB300, which has been modified for superior sonics. An improved vertical bearing housing has been used, which gives improved rigidity in the tonearm's mounting, reducing the stresses in the main 13mm bearings, say Rega. This assembly is topped off with the improved RB700 bias housing phono cable.

Second in the chain is the £630 Marantz PM8003 integrated. At its core is a large bespoke toroidal transformer, used to drive audiophile-grade circuitry inside, including the

latest generation of Marantz HDAM (Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Module) op-amps. The current feedback amplifier features symmetrical circuit topology, a copper-plated chassis and rear-panel to reduce signal-degrading electromagnetic interference and offers the lowest impedance grounding to every section of the amp. An additional heavy bottom plate reduces vibration.

The result is a claimed 70W RMS per channel into 8 Ohms, which is just about enough for the partnering Monitor Audio Radius 90HD speakers. Usefully for some (but not for me), the Marantz has simple bass and treble controls, although I kept these at arm's length, preferring to keep the Source Direct function switched in. There's also an Amp Direct mode for operation as power amplifier only (for bi-amp mode or extension of A/V-Receiver), and most importantly here – a good moving magnet phono stage.

Last but not least are Monitor Audio's £350 Radius 90HD loudspeakers. At 198x125x140mm,

