

= Rega Planar 3 =

The Rega Planar 3 , together with its successors , the P3 and RP3 , is a well @-@ known budget audiophile turntable by British hi @-@ fi manufacturer , Rega Research available since 1977 . It was a belt @-@ drive deck that broke from convention , by employing a solid plinth in lieu of the compliantly @-@ suspended chassis or sub @-@ chassis used in many quality turntables since the early 1960s .

The product has lived through several guises and name changes , any of which are often referred to simply as " Rega 3 " . It is highly influential , and has made its small British manufacturer 's name synonymous with hi @-@ fi turntables , and gave the company the widest brand recognition in this product sector in the US . Its relative simplicity and affordability made the Rega 3 a " bedrock of analog playback for well over 30 years " .

= = History = =

The record player has been through four principal guises : Planar 3 (1977 ? 2000) (2016-) , P3 (2000 ? 2007) , P3 @-@ 24 (2007 ? 2012) and RP3 (2012 @-@ 2016) . The first Rega turntable , the Planar 2 was launched in 1975 . This was followed by the launch in June 1977 of the Planar 3 . The two decks are of identical design but built to different budgets . The Planar 3 turntable established itself as a " threshold " or entry @-@ level for high quality turntables . It became hugely popular and is one of the most well @-@ known turntables ever produced . A Planar 3 might take centre place in the system of many audiophiles as a " serious turntable " until they could afford the coveted Linn Sondek LP12 . It became a reference for simplicity and value , confirming Britain as an important player in the specialist hi @-@ fi industry .

= = = Design = = =

Rega went against conventional wisdom of the time , preferring to make their decks lightweight and rigid as a means of controlling unwanted resonances . Their belief was that mass absorbs energy and results in lost music . In other senses , the turntables are deliberately minimalistic and neither require nor justify any ' tweaking ' by users , except adjustment to the vertical @-@ tracking @-@ angle (VTA) of the cartridge . It is a belt @-@ driven design incorporating a driving ' sub @-@ platter ' mounted in a high quality oil @-@ lubricated bearing , which is fixed directly to a medite (MDF) plinth supported by three simple rubber feet . A heavy glass platter sits atop the sub @-@ platter , which is driven by a mechanically @-@ isolated 24V synchronous motor through a rubber belt . A 2mm @-@ thick mat sits on top of the glass platter . The turntable is without suspension , and the rubber feet provide limited mechanical isolation from floor @-@ transmitted vibrations . A perspex cover is provided for some isolation against airborne vibrations . The record deck is single speed ? it runs at 33 rpm , and the user must physically remove the platter to reposition the drive belt to play 45 rpm records .

The two major changes to the Planar 3 during its life were firstly the inclusion of the higher quality Rega RB300 tonearm in the 1980s , and the change to a new AC synchronous motor more recently . The motor , which had been tuned for lower vibration , allowed for the elimination of the old motor 's compliant mounting .

= = = = ' RB ' tonearms = = = =

The Planar 3 comes factory @-@ fitted with a RB300 tonearm whose one @-@ piece die @-@ cast aluminium @-@ alloy tube is the core of all Rega arms . It has higher @-@ tolerance bearings , a decoupled counterweight , a coil @-@ spring ? type tracking force adjustment , and higher @-@ quality interconnect cables compared to the RB250 fitted to the Planar 2 . The P3 @-@ 24 , (launched in 2007) was fitted with a RB301 , which had a new anti @-@ skate mechanism , external tonearm cable , an improved vertical bearing and a new three @-@ point attachment to the plinth

instead of a single pillar .

Considered by some to be classics , the Rega tonearms are regarded as offering high value by many reviewers , in the context of the price of the deck . Its high price ? performance ratio made the RB300 popular for use with other manufacturers ' decks , including , for example , the Linn Sondek . It earned its place as the most widely used OEM tonearm on the market .

= = = Comparison with Planar 2 / P2 = = =

The Planar 2 was supplied with a RB250 tonearm as against a RB300 on the Planar 3 , and is available only in black finish . Earlier models had a glass platter , wood surround @-@ frame plinth and S @-@ shaped arm ; Rega changed to using a fibreboard platter on the P2 which it describes as being " CNC machined HDF which is then metalised [sic] , giving a platter with good mass and accuracy . " Compared to the Planar 2 , the Rega Planar 3 has a thicker , heavier plinth ; the drive motor is mounted on the plinth using a rubber suspension for improved isolation . The glass platter is also thicker , as is the felt mat .

In 2003 , Lim Juan of The Star speculated that the revised P2 looked " a lot less substantial than its ancestor " , because of cost @-@ cutting . Whilst the platter of the costlier Rega decks , P3 and P25 , continued to be of glass , reviewers derided the fibreboard platter of the P2 as " not inspiring much confidence " . The plinth , which the Rega website described as a low mass particulate core sandwiched by highly rigid phenolic laminates , " looks like any plain cheap medite board " , according to Lim . The badly @-@ toleranced medite platter proved unpopular with prospective buyers so Rega reverted to glass platters for a while , until the P2 was discontinued in 2005 .

On the discontinuation of the P2 , the P3 became Rega 's entry @-@ level record player until the company relaunched the P1 in 2006 (at \$ 350 including arm and cartridge) to compete with offerings from Music Hall and Pro @-@ Ject . In late 2006 / early 2007 , the P2 was resurrected once again , with different platter ? thicker than before at 22mm , and weightier . When giving their verdicts , audio reviewers often advised readers to pay a little extra for the P3 over the P2 .

= = = Evolution = = =

The Rega Planar 3 was updated and renamed the P3 in 2000 , and started being made available in a range of bright colours . The P3 @-@ 24 , in the name of the 24 @-@ pole AC synchronous motor used ? same for the costlier P5 and P7 decks , was released (in 2007) . A separate power supply drives the " very low vibration " motor directly mounted on the table . The P3 @-@ 24 may be used with an optional external power supply designed for the P7 that gives a stable voltage to drive the motor and which allows for two @-@ speed operation (33 and 45 rpm) without requiring manual speed change . The plinth of the P3 @-@ 24 and more recent models , constructed of laminates with a 0.9mm phenolic resin skin instead of MDF , is custom @-@ made by a Scottish kitchen cabinet supplier .

In superseding the Rega P3 @-@ 24 with the RP3 , Rega made improvements to the bearing , arm , and plinth . Rega co @-@ founder and chief designer Roy Gandy realised the plinth could be made lighter if thicker bracing was installed at key points to make the structure stronger and stiffer . It was found that after a 2mm @-@ thick brace was incorporated on the top and bottom of the plinth , the phenolic skin could be dispensed with . The RB301 tonearm fitted to its predecessor was changed to the RB303 , which has a cast alloy tube that offered greater rigidity and better control of resonance .

= = Reception = =

= = = Sound quality = = =

Ross at Vinyl Asylum regarded the original Rega 's overall sonic presentation as " much more

refined than a typical Dual " (referring to the Dual 505) or similarly priced Japanese record players . He found fault , however , in a number of parameters , such as average transient response , not enough sense of depth , a higher than expected noise floor , and some slurring of musical notes and details ? such as individual voices among a small group of singers .

In the mid @-@ 1980s , Sam Tellig wrote in Stereophile that the Rega 3 " is a good @-@ sounding turntable and a good value ? at the UK price ... it 's a miracle that the Rega sounds as good as it does " compared with the apparently better built Harmon @-@ Kardon T60 . From a sound quality viewpoint , Tellig noted " a very dynamic sound with powerful , punchy bass ? the table conveys the music 's excitement ... [but with] too much emphasis of the mid- to upper @-@ bass [and] tends to sound a little muddy in bass detail " . He added that the deck 's pitch instability was audible " every so often , particularly with woodwinds " . Szabady , in Stereo Times , also agreed that musical expressiveness was the classic Planar 3 strength ; its weaknesses included occasional speed inconsistency and slurring of heavily modulated bass transients .

HiFi Choice said in 1984 that the Planar 3 sounded " nicely musical in a balanced and coherent manner . Presentation of detail was considered well above average " ; in 1992 it asserted that the Rega Planar 3 has been " a long time leader " under £ 250 . Michael Fremer wrote in December 1996 that " while the 2 did nothing really wrong , the 3 offered somewhat deeper and tighter bass , better dynamics at both ends of the scale , a better sensation of ' quiet ' , and smoother overall performance " . Considered on its own terms , the Rega 3 was " quiet , dynamic , free of obvious tracking distortion or other supposed analog problems , extremely well @-@ balanced top to bottom , offers very deep and reasonably tight bass " . In comparison with the \$ 9000 TNT Mk.3 / Immedia RPM , recordings sounded " more like a recording and less like real life on the Rega 3 " .

Brent Burmester said in Audioenz in 2005 that , compared to the already discontinued Rega 2 , the Rega 3 is " tauter , faster , just a little quieter ... and better in all the dimensions in which the P2 is already strong . My only niggle was the slight hollowness invested in the lower @-@ midrange " . Burmester described the P3 sound as " dynamic , expressive ... fresh and enthusiastic feel , not quite but nearly weaving the illusion that you 're sitting in the third row of the auditorium or the engineer 's booth at the recording studio . [It] sounded ' newer ' , more together , sharper , more focused . It 's a contemporary sound , not a million miles from well sorted CD players of three times the price " .

Writing in Secrets of Home Theater and High Fidelity in 2012 , Jim Clements said of the RP3 that it has " several meaningful advances over the P3 @-@ 24 [that] help the RP3 operate with low background noise and an innate ability for detail retrieval . This table also conveys above average dynamic shadings while providing a solid foundation to support the whole frequency balance of your cartridge . " Writing in The Absolute Sound , Wayne Garcia appraised that " the RP3 is sonically superior to its predecessor in every way . " Stereophile said it " retained the P3 @-@ 24 's fast , forgiving sound , but added tighter and better @-@ controlled low frequencies " .

= = = Popularity and accolades = = =

The Regar Planar 3 is one of the better @-@ known turntables in the history of hi @-@ fi . Jim Clements said that the Rega 3 in its various incarnations " is probably one of the best @-@ selling turntable lines in the history of the world " . Audiogon notes that " the Planar 3 or the current P3 it has remained a bedrock of analog playback for well over 30 years " . Techradar notes that " Few hi @-@ fi components have lived longer or exerted greater influence than Rega 's Planar 3 turntable " . Jeff Dorgay said that " P3 is not only the ' table that put Rega on the map in the US but the one that gave the company the widest brand identity " .

The P3 @-@ 24 was both a " Joint Analog Source " and a " Joint Budget Component " for 2008 . In 2012 , the RP3 won Stereophile 's " Analog Source Component of the Year " and What Hi @-@ fi ? voted it Product of the Year in the category of Best Turntable £ 500- £ 750 .