

MONO *STEREO*

REVIEWING THE WORLD'S FINEST AUDIO PRODUCTS



MEDITERRANEO
TURNTABLE
REVIEW BY MATEJ ISAK



GOLD  NOTE
il suono italiano



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For those of you who have followed my ventures for some time, You know that I hold great appreciation for Gold Note, a high-end audio manufacturer from Italy. I actually cherish the brand, which under the vision and leadership of Maurizio Aterini, has managed to achieve an important and inspiring position in the high-end audio market. Their clear focus and dedication to creating genuine Italian products goes well beyond the norm.

This is demonstrated by their Mediterraneo turntable, where they present the company's core qualities, created with strong Italian DNA that's spread across the complete product portfolio.

Some claim that analog is in the midst of another revival, others may believe that records have fallen out of fashion. Nevertheless, the present interest for analog is not to be neglected for a multitude of reasons. An appreciation for vinyl records invites new people to our beloved, niche industry. We need more products like GoldNote that add extra value and that are appreciated by people who may not be accustomed to high-end audio products.

ITALIAN DNA THROUGH AND THROUGH

The subject of an analog front end is often brought up in my conversations and correspondence. With newly introduced music lovers, more and more people are in search of a trouble-free, synergistic analog front end that has stand-out quality without the hassle and complication.

Consequently, with the rise of the records sales, we're witnessing a fresh generation of music enthusiasts with new blood. These enthusiasts recognize higher quality products and upper-level sonic reproduction, yet they might neither have time nor the will to go through a complicated turntable setup.

On my last visit to the Gold Note factory, I proposed the idea of a complete Gold Note Package to Maurizio Aterini, Gold Note Founder & CEO, — and he liked the idea. After my return home, we set the review schedule with Gold Note's Marketing/Communications Manager, Marie Greggers, and soon after the analog package arrived at Mono and Stereo Headquarters.



MAURIZIO ATERINI,
FOUNDER & CEO

The analog package setup included a beautiful Mediterraneo turntable in



a statement gold foil finish with a B-7 Ceramic tone arm along with the Mono & Stereo Editor's Choice awarded: Tuscany Gold cartridge. As I had requested, everything was pre-set, cartridge and tone arm. I wanted my experience to be the same as any customer would experience without in-depth knowledge of record player setup and all of its associated paraphernalia.

Following the enclosed manual, the setup was easy, trouble-free and most importantly easy enough that it wouldn't scare any novices away... After about 15 minutes of careful setup, the full-blooded Gold Note analog ensemble was ready to play. I use the Gold Note Tuscany cartridge daily as my reference cartridge, so there were no extra efforts needed to get familiar with it. The two new items in this analog package that I was very excited to discover were the stunning Mediterraneo turntable and the B-7 ceramic tone arm.

But before touching upon the aural luxuries, let me address the technical sides of these two new items. It's important to highlight the many technical features that might otherwise escape the reader's attention.

MEDITERRANEO: PURE ITALIAN SPIRIT

Gold Notes nucleus is most intimately connected with analog, looking back at almost thirty years of R&D — yet it might not be immediately evident how much effort and time went into the Mediterraneo project and Gold Note's turntable platform design.

The Mediterraneo is the epitome of pure Italian spirit, but it's also a technically profound record player. Aterini and the Gold Note team have spent an immense amount of time to hide all of the technical proficiencies under a highly chic outer shell. Gold Note's vinyl development journey started over 25 years ago. Their deep affection and passion for analog and vinyl drive the company — these emotions are embodied in every Gold Note creation, particularly in their turntables. Their passion drives the brand to design every detail with great care and attention, striving to create the most fascinating source of music possible.



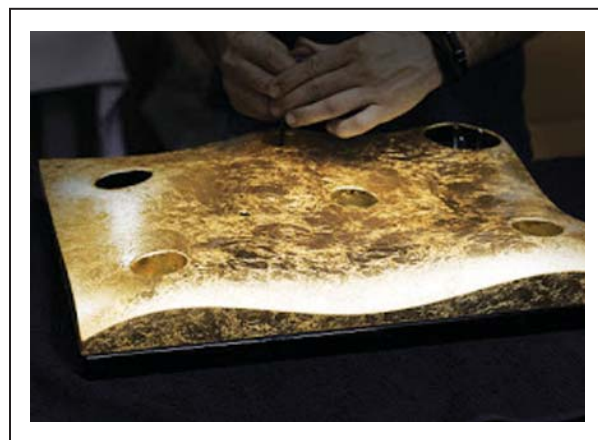


The Mediterraneo is the pinnacle of Gold Note design: A creation that redefines the traditional design of turntables through innovative shape, technical solutions and quality materials merging tradition and technology to achieve the best musical experience.

INSPIRED TUSCAN ORIGINS

The Mediterraneo shows Italian flair and distinction in its strong Tuscan origins; combining beauty with the greatest attention to technical perfection. Manufactured by local craftsmen in Tuscany, the Mediterraneo is fully hand-made: designed with a 60mm curved plinth made of aged Italian Walnut chosen for its exceptional elasticity, strength, and high-density. It is coupled with a 20mm board made of polished acrylic and finally reinforced with a 3mm stainless steel layer to lower the frequency resonance.

Every detail of the Mediterraneo enhances the turntable's ultra rigid structure, and the result is refined technical innovation achieved through elegant, smooth lines.



BEAUTY AND INNOVATION MERGED IN CREATION

The power supply of the 12 volt Swiss made synchronous motor guarantees the best audio performance possible. Electronic 33/45rpm controls and fine speed adjustments are automatically stored in the controller memory even when the turntable is unplugged from the AC. Thanks to Gold Note's proprietary power control generator, based on a Quadra-Core micro-controller, the Mediterraneo can reshape the AC wave and minimize all vibrations while improving torque power for the greatest dynamics and resolution.

The new hourglass shaped pulley is made of polished aluminum and allows the belt to spin as smoothly as possible, reducing the wow and flutter along with the rumble. This helps extract the finest details from the groove for maximum enjoyment. The 60mm platter spindle/bearing system is made with exceptionally engineered materials including the best-hardened chrome steel, polished bronze housing and ceramic ball bearings, all to



guarantee a fantastic audio performance and ultra-low noise. The recessed platter bearing, housed in the acrylic board, keeps the platter as close as possible to the structure, increasing its rotational stability and speed precision.

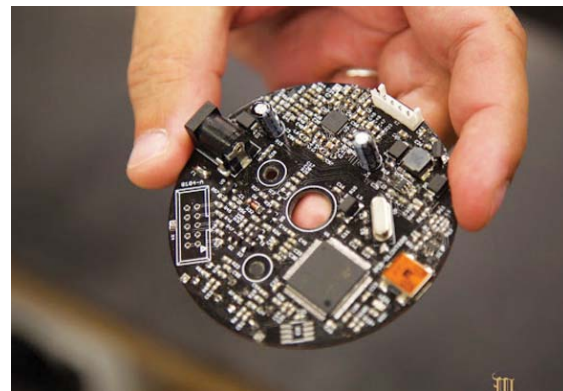
With a 45mm high-mass-platter made of black Sustarin - a unique material based on the POM polymer, it's both rigid and highly dampening at the same time. The Mediterraneo is extraordinarily efficient at reducing vibration and preserving rotational stability.

DAMPENING STRUCTURE WITH TRIPLE PLINTHS

The Mediterraneo has a triple plinth design that features a 60mm wooden base in Italian Walnut hardwood slats and a 20mm board in polished Acrylic. The structure is then further reinforced by a 3mm thick stainless steel layer to improve its exceptional dampening quality and stability. The plinth is available in three classic Italian finishes: Walnut hardwood, black lacquered MDF, or 24k gold foil.



INNOVATIVE POWER CONTROL



The Mediterraneo is powered by Gold Note's best proprietary control system developed on quadral-core micro-controller and enhanced with an audio converter: this power control reshapes the AC wave to perfectly drive the 12V synchronous motor and cancel all vibrations while improving motor torque to deliver the greatest dynamics and the finest details.

HIGH MASS DESIGN PLATTER

The high precision 45mm platter made of Sustarin and the bearing/spindle system are perfectly matched with ultra-strict tolerances. The spindle is made of hardened and chromed steel, the 4.3mm bearing is made of ultra high precision German ceramics. These materials guarantee the best and smoothest rotation lowering the noise even more.



HIGH PRECISION SYSTEM

Featuring a 60mm long platter bearing/spindle with the best coupling tolerance available on the market: the spindle is made of the hardest carbon rectified steel to achieve perfect fluidity. The bearing system is made of polished bronze with 1/100 mm tolerance to guarantee the smoothest platter rotation.

SMART BUNDLE

Ready to play out of the box, the Mediterraneo bundle includes a dedicated Gold Note B-7 tone arm and a high quality custom acrylic dust cover (easy to remove with proprietary hinges). Also included in the package is the high-quality external power supply, the PST-1, with grounded IEC plug allowing you to use your favorite AC power cord to ideally tune audio performances.



B-7 CERAMIC TONE ARM



A well-designed tone arm should perform at its best with every cartridge while keeping things simple and effective — Add high quality materials along with Italian elegance and you'll have the B-7 Ceramic tone arm.

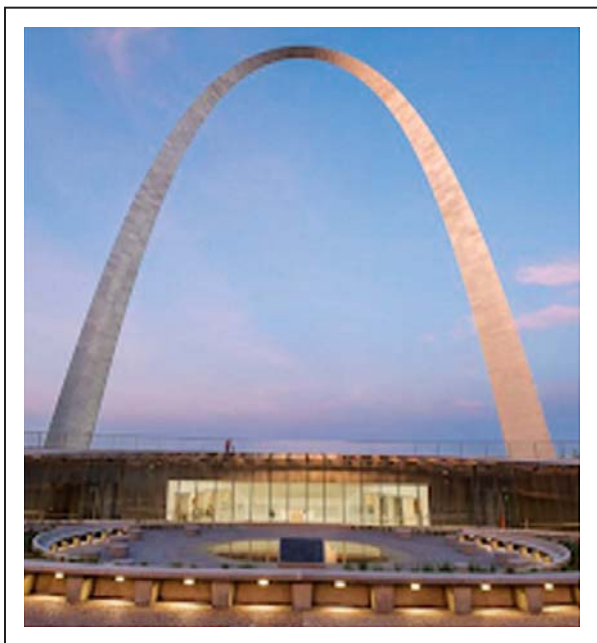
Inside Gold Note's B-7 Ceramic arm you'll find four high precision micro-ceramic ball-bearings manufactured in Germany by GRW. These ball-bearings are treated singularly and sealed to preserve their integrity and extreme precision, a crucial factor to enable noiseless functionality which will let you enjoy every single nuance in your records. This tone arm has an effective length of 242mm with a 19mm overhang, making it easy to install on any turntable. The Azimuth is adjustable through a pair of 2mm micro bolts to set up the shell perfectly. The rear arm wand is dampened with silicon spacers to reduce unwanted vibration and handles a finely machined stainless steel counterweight to set up most phono cartridges (up to 15-gram mass). The vertical ultra-low friction ceramic ball-bearings are pivoted through stainless steel bolts. Manually adjusted, the horizontal movement is driven by two micro ball-bearings directly inserted in the main rectified pivot. With a 23mm diameter arm shaft, the B-7 can be secured on almost any turntable, improving performances and everyday pleasure.



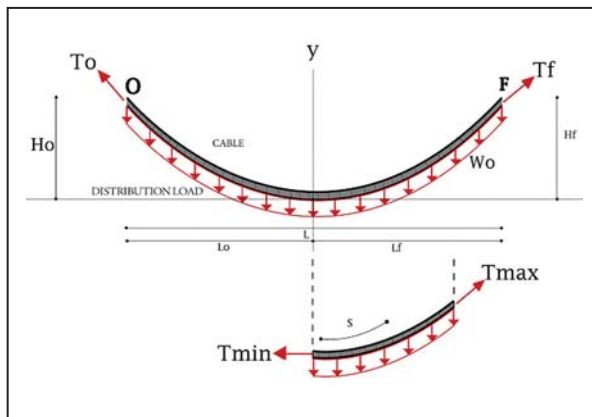
THE CATENARY CURVE ?

There are many unique features related with the Mediterraneo turntable, one that is particularly interesting and intriguing is the Catenary Curve. What is the Catenary Curve and why it is so important and intimately connected with the Gold Note Mediterraneo turntable ?

The characteristic element that combines the chassis of Gold Note turntables and electronics is the use of curved surfaces that enable the creation of very rigid structures. Structural rigidity is a key point in achieving better sound because it dampens vibrations and limits unwanted resonance. In Gold Note products, curves are not only a stylish element to give personality to the items, they

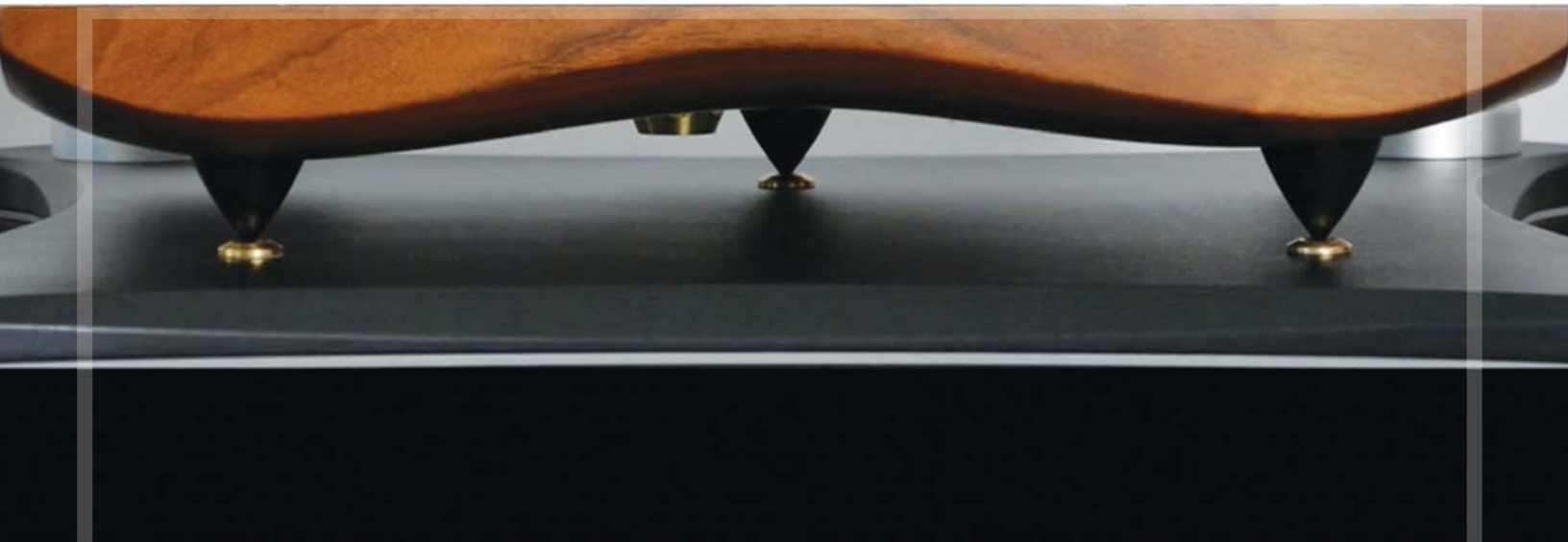


also have technical benefits that improve the sound performance. In addition to the traditional design to get more a rigid chassis, the guiding concept of Gold Note products is inspired by "Resistance by Form" in which geometry always requires two operations: 1. The attribution of curvature, and 2. The removal of material from the neutral geometrical plane. Applying the Catenary Curve to a form in design is obtained by a chain hanging on the two ends and loaded only by its own weight.



INNOVATIVE FORM FINDING

For the distinguished design of Gold Note's 'Italian Turntable' series we introduced a 'Physical Form Finding' calculation, in which a specific custom algorithm recreates the deformation of surfaces subjected to physical forces such as pressure and gravity. The shape of the Mediterraneo, Giglio and Pianosa turntable plinths are therefore obtained by treating the surface like that of a sail of a boat, the geometry is composed of Catenaries, entirely subjected to tensile stresses, being turned upside down and enhancing the compression resistance and providing the best structural rigidity.



THE CATENARY CURVE IN GOLD NOTE ELECTRONICS

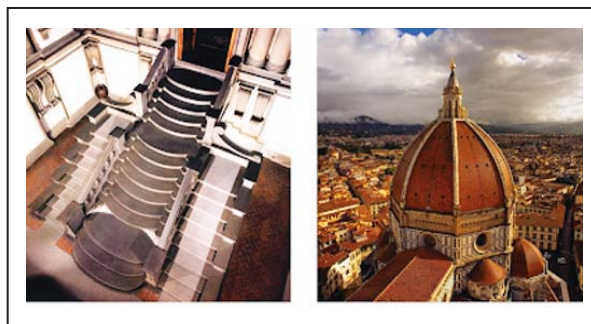


The Catenary Curves are also present in all Gold Note electronics, visible in the cooling cuts while the “Resistance by Form” concept is different compared to the one used for the turntables. In addition to the high standard of the Gold Note electronic chassis made with thick steel and aluminum panels, the lack of parallelism between the slots allows the damping of unwanted resonances while increasing the structural rigidity at the same time. In fact the milling cuts are designed with a Slipforming drawing in order to cancel the different frequencies resonating with each other.

RENAISSANCE FLORENCE A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

Because Gold Note is from Firenze (Florence), the development of Gold Note’s audio equipment is inspired by the history of art, particularly the Renaissance, a time of great innovation, a time where art and technology combined to create timeless wonders. Gold Note’s founding philosophy combines the best of two

seemingly opposing worlds: Contemporary innovation and consolidated tradition. In the sixteenth century, Florence was the most important place for the merger of fine arts with technology, the time where Filippo Brunelleschi created the wonderful dome of the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, the heart of the city.

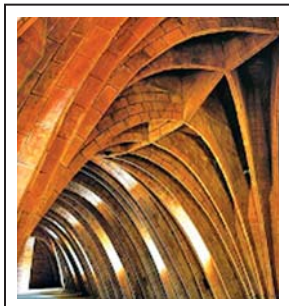


Here, the master artist and engineer Michelangelo Buonarroti, with brilliant intuition, introduced the Catenary Curve for the first time. For its beautiful shape and for its unique structural qualities, Michelangelo created some of his most extraordinary works using the Catenary Curves. He designed and constructed the staircase in the vestibule of the Laurentiana Library — which inspired the elegant progression of lines and levels in Gold Note’s signature audio racks. The ‘Santa Trinita Bridge’ next to the Ponte Vecchio Bridge, also displays the classical inspiration for Gold Note’s elegant yet powerful lines. Michelangelo designed the arches of this bridge based on the Catenary for the first time when all mathematical features about it were completely unknown. Gold Note designer and architect Stefano Bonifazi was inspired by the genius of Michelangelo in the design of all Gold Note products.





A MATHEMATICAL CHALLENGE



A few years after Michelangelo's famous Florentine bridge, Galileo Galilei was the first to mathematically develop the Catenary Curve in his "Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences" (published posthumously in 1638) as a solution to a static problem: "How to cut a supporting beam to lighten it without compromising its resistance" — Correctly asserting that the beam evolution should look like a reversed chain hanging from its ends. Galileo originally seemed to assign this as a Parabolic curve design. In reality, delving further into his writings, Galileo is aware that the Parabolic and that the Catenary curves are only similar, the Parabolic word was used as an approximation of the Catenary only. However, none of his contemporary scientists noticed it, calling that concept the "Galileo Error" which became the subject of discussion among scientists across Europe. In 1690, Jacob Bernoulli rediscovered the mathematical equation of Michelangelo and Galileo.

In 1691, the Dutch scientist Christiaan Huygens started solving the problem of the Catenary curve eventually described by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Johann Bernoulli, later becoming one of the most efficient curves used in many engineering & architectural creations. An extensive use of it was made by architect Antoni Gaudì in his works, and more contemporary examples are the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, USA or the 'Le vele di Calatrava' in the complex of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC



It's all about music with anything Gold Note related and the Mediterraneo is no different in this regard. Weeks of evaluating this Tuscany/Mediterraneo combination has proven to encompass all of the attributes that make the Gold Note brand so distinguishing. In my extensive listening journals, there was one remark that frequently stuck out. THE MUSIC FLOW! The smooth integration of the Mediterraneo, B-7 Ceramic and the Tuscany Gold cartridge performed as I've expected; effortless and spontaneously engaging. The mesmerizing intercommunication was constituted as ad hoc! This was quickly identified with Michael Frank's Burchfield Nines (1978, Warner Bros). This album was produced by Franks's long-time friend and collaborator Tommy LiPuma and mixed by the one and only Al Schmitt! It's a rare gem that shows a mellower side of Franks at his best and with a sonic scenery that perpetually encourages revisits.



Coming from the analog era, Burchfield Nines, is one of those albums that are designated to be played in the analog domain. There is something very ceremonial yet most highly enjoyable when Franks's composing freedom under the Warner Bros. is partnered with the analog realms.

To fully experience the album's safe side of melancholy, the analog chain needs to be ready to let fragile energy from the cartridge come to life. With a minuscule signal, anything can go wrong at any point in the signal path. This includes the cartridge, tone arm and tone arm's cables, turntable, phono preamplifier, etc. The Mediterraneo and its associated components provide all of the needed properties for music to bloom candidly. It was a true pleasure to re-listen to this highly familiar studio album. The Mediterraneo never acted self-centered. Franks' music was served punctually and lively. If the overall voicing of an analog front end is accented at any particular frequency, the Burchfield Nines becomes un-involving & ready to skip. The Mediterraneo's evenly distributed energy management has allowed for an intimate rendition. Powerful, sensuous and snappy!

The Mediterraneo, B-7 Ceramic arm and Tuscany Gold cartridge have a synergy and an ability to convey a palpable sonic canvas. This ability was further confirmed with 'Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie!' by Ella Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's silky voice & upbeat tempo were easily & promptly followed, escaping the variable pitch anomalies, that are too obvious even with some top tier turntables.

On this album, Ella Fitzgerald escapes the usual songbooks repertoire and larger orchestra setting with a smaller jazz band ensemble. This iconic album greatly captures the immortal classics and their renditions are fantastic, chiefly due to the great musicians' interplay. It is the Mediterraneo's ability to convey Fitzgerald's lustrous and melodic voice of quality, that leaves many other turntables disarmed with the much needed dense

lushness. No matter the price tag this is not an undemanding task and the Gold Note turntable ability to capture this vibrancy so abruptly is a sole attribute worthy of putting the Mediterraneo on everyone shortlist. Especially for those that are seeking a true musical focal point.

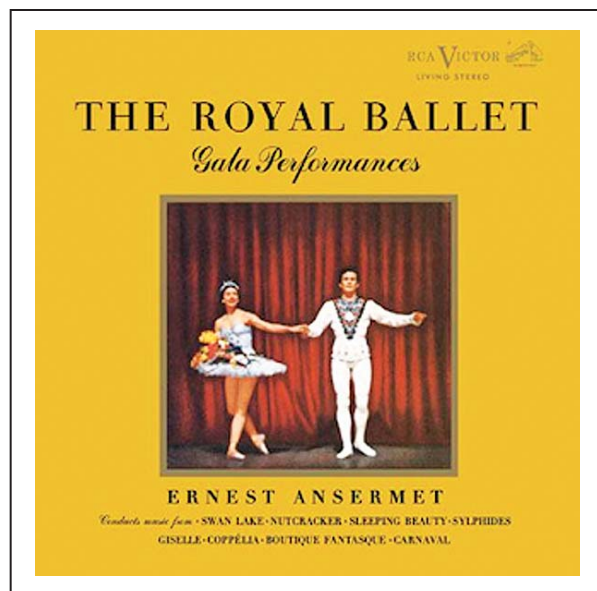
Beautiful David Bromberg - The 'Album Demon in Disguise' LP is among the rare treasures, that might not be so widely known. It's a high quality crafted record that defies the time with songs that are thoroughly perfected. Among yours truly favorites are the 'Diamond Lil'. A subtle observing of a wealth and libertine burlesque topic and as lyrical as it gets. On a well-set turntable rig, the music expands effortlessly and Bromberg's vocal is projected with an unusual clarity and presence. A mediocre record player will seriously underscore and muffle the presentation. A lot can be lost in the translation making the sound disenchanting and miles away from its essence.





The Mediterraneo's well-established quality reached out to deliver an antidote to the average opaque sonic projection of other tables. Bromberg's vocal gained the impressive three-dimensionality with a splendid amount of multiple layers, that expanded projection was way beyond what was expected and farther away from the Mediterraneo's price tag. It was adventurously joyous to explore all the subtleties of the record and non-expected believability of the Bromberg's vocal.

I thought I was expecting too much from Mediterraneo and that I'm reaching to far with expectations, especially as the Gold Note's flagship turntable is priced nowhere near where the usual tables lay in our industry. Yet... Partnered with the B-7 Ceramic tone arm and Tuscany Gold cartridge with The Royal Ballet Gala Performances, — to my surprise, this mighty combo has provided an impressive music delivery on a far grander scale.



The Royal Ballet Gala Performances' impressive wide-scale expanse is usually reserved to the upper echelon turntables. Not so with the Gold Note Mediterraneo and accompanying arm and cartridge. This particular pressing reveals closer to reality the scope, that is all about realistic impact.

Such a contrast ability is something to call home about and what truly sets the Mediterraneo above the competition.

While the Gold Note Mediterraneo can easily project a warmish tone when needed, it's also capable of delivering a non-romanticized portrayal of the music. When the orchestra collision hits its peaks it represents a most challenging momentum for any kind of turntable.

The Royal Ballet Gala Performances are known to be amongst the most realistic recordings when it comes to the sense of the hall's acoustics and the sense of being there for a live performance. It's one of the analog luxuries that fall into the mandatory must have records' list.

Last, but not least the Mediterraneo's qualities have fully expanded with Ernest Ansermet - The Royal Ballet Gala Performances (Analogue Productions RCA/DECCA Living Stereo AAPC 6065).

The Mediterraneo's capability to ensure such a grand scale of realism belongs to the upper leagues quite above its given price.

This dynamically challenging and high-resolution record calls for an upper-echelon performance to fully bloom.

The Mediterraneo is a gentle giant not being shy of showing its muscularity when needed — and then some!



MY CONCLUSIONS

The time flew so quickly with the Mediterraneo. The setup was in daily action for weeks. I liked and loved the easiness of operation, beautiful design and most importantly the aural results.

The Mediterraneo is a product that will inspire from the very first glance with its delicate shape. The gold foil finish is only a cherry on the top of the cake. While a walnut finish offers a bit wider assimilation with its surroundings, the gold foil finish adds an extra luxurious perception. A lot of people associate a vinyl setup with something exceptional and taking this into account Gold Notes curves and traditional gold finish unquestionably supplement its already well established artistic value.

Over the review period, I've tried the Italian analog combination with different phono preamplifiers. The resulting performance was not shy of sumptuous looks. A highly involving instantaneous act of easily established interconnection with the music was not only unchanged but further extended with the GoldNote PH-10 phono preamplifier that I've previously reviewed here. It was all about lock and load with PH-10 and connecting it with the Gold Note turntable, tone arm, and cartridge trinity is a no brainer.

I like how Gold Notes signature quality and unmistakable sonic potency is evenly distributed across all the brands products. The high-level products introduce sonic step-ups, regardless of the price, there is an underlying sonic quality that assures the brand's quality. This is unquestionably the result of decades of painstaking development and a clear focus to deliver something significant and relevant to the market.

Gold Note is among a few brands, that took the opportunity of high-end audio and luxury blending most seriously. There is nothing more valuable than the designated "Made in Italy" label when it comes to a handmade, highly desirable product. The Mediterranean geographic location and Tuscan origin makes it even more appealing.

The full blooded Italian Mediterraneo represents a noticeable exception in value on many fronts. Sonically, aesthetically and price-wise the Mediterraneo embraces all the right characteristics and makes this package very distinctive from the abundance of Deja Vu turntables.

It's all about pure and direct intake with the Mediterraneo, B-7 Ceramic arm and Tuscany Gold cartridge. There is something instantly intoxicating about the sound that this omnipotent package delivers. Similar to the exquisite Italian food and wine experience, with a Gold Note Mediterraneo you don't even think about mechanics of the enjoyment. You simply immerse yourself into a sensual fulfillment. It's not exactly easy to bypass the senses' logic guards, but the Mediterraneo slips to the logical control with lightning speed and in a blink of a second!

It's not uncomplicated to implement the technical aspects of such heritage seamlessly. It's even more perplexing to achieve concrete results and upper-level sonic performance. Too often these days we witness a wide variety of products with various technologies being implemented for the sake of technology. This can easily result in a lifeless and bland sonic delivery that spark little or no interest at all. On the contrary, the Mediterraneo delivers what it promises with lasting impact. Gold Notes Mediterraneo belongs to the products that proclaim quality very loudly and proudly. A heftier, double dose of the genuine Italian gene is boldly served via the Mediterraneo's aesthetic and sound appeal.



It's quite intriguing how different turntables can sound and this is due to the design choices and a not so easily digestible term; "the voicing". This is exactly why so many audiophiles and music lovers are not happy with their turntables. If the basic frequency balance is not anchored properly people start to find faults in tone arms, tone arm cables and cartridges. Opening this Pandora's box in most cases ends in all sorts of negativities. It can also completely end ones interest in analog.

That's why it's so crucial to get the fundamentals correct. Especially with turntable where every little thing matters. This is where Gold Note's heritage and experience kicks in. Having 20+ years of analog know-how is no slouch and Gold Note has repeatedly shown that the brand had mastered this domain extensively and the Mediterraneo represents this culmination of decades of experience. This analog trio warrants a loud applauding for the seamless integration and music reproduction, with the Mediterraneo being the very epicenter. For what it represents sonically, aesthetically and product-quality wise — I'm wholeheartedly awarding it with The 2019 Mono and Stereo Highly Recommended Product Award!

PRICING

- Mediterraneo Gold Foil with B-7 Ceramic \$ 8,499
- Mediterraneo Italian Walnut Hardwood with B-7 Ceramic \$ 7,899
- Mediterraneo Gold Foil (w/o tone arm) \$ 7,499
- Mediterraneo Italian Walnut Hardwood (w/o tone arm) \$ 6,899
- Mediterraneo Black Lacquer (w/o tone arm) \$ 6,299
- B-7 Ceramic \$ 1,999
- Tuscany Gold Cartridge \$ 8,699

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- Dimensions: 470mm W | 210mm H | 360mm D
- Weight: 20kg • Wow & Flutter: 0,1% • Rumble: -80dB
- Speed: 33-1/3 and 45 rpm +/-0,1%
- Speed changing: electronic with fine pitch control
- Transmission: 70 shore rectified polyvinyl belt
- Motor: 12 Volt High Torque synchronous externally powered
- Platter: Ultra Dead Design Sustarin® 45mm

POWER: PST-1 mains supply: 100/115/230V, 50/60Hz auto selection • Power consumption: 27Watt - 1500mA

POWER UPGRADE: PST-10 external inductive power supply for turntables \$ 1,099

FINISHES: LOWER PLINTH

- Italian walnut hardwood • Black lacquered MDF
- 24K Gold Foil (all 60mm thick)

FINISHES: UPPER PLINTH

- Black polished acrylic and s/steel 23mm thick

PLATTER: Black

METAL PARTS

- Black anodized aluminum • Optionally all silver



MONO  STEREO

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