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SPECIAL  
PUBLICATION

# High End Munich 2017

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CONTENT AND PHOTOS  
FROM HIGH END MUNICH



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**EDITOR** Stuart Smith

**CONTENT** Stuart and Linette Smith

**ADVERTISING SALES** Linette Smith

**WEBSITE** [www.hifipig.com](http://www.hifipig.com)

**E.MAIL** [Stuart@hifipig.com](mailto:Stuart@hifipig.com)

**TELEPHONE** +33(0) 297237078

Welcome to Hifi Pig's coverage of the High End Show that took place in Munich in May.

To anyone that has been, it's clear that Munich represents the pinnacle of what a Hifi show can be. To those who have not yet attended the show then we hope that this will give you an incentive to pop along for yourselves this coming year. Which brings me nicely on to the dates for the show in 2018...10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May are dates that you need to put in your diary right now.

Enjoy!

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**John Myles, HiFi World**

"If you're looking for a major jump in your system's performance, I'd suggest buying a pair of these instead of considering a hardware upgrade. Before you write this advice off to cable delusion, expectation bias, or the recent Mercury retrograde phase, please take note: I have never said this in TONE's 11-year history"

**Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio**

"Well, I have just stumbled upon a speaker cable that I'm very tempted to put in a class of its own"

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**TQ**

# Press Events and Product Launches At High End. Day One

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Being the biggest show of its kind in Europe many companies choose the High-End Show to launch new products. Here are some of the press events we attended on the first day of the show.



9 products of the year and most wanted components  
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# Dynaudio Special Forty Launch Event

Munich is always hectic and this year was no different for Lin and myself and so we were up bright and early to make sure we arrived on time for the first press conference of the day (of many) and the launch of Danish brand Dynaudio's brand-new 40th anniversary speaker – the Special Forty. Special Forty is a two way standmounter and features:

A brand-new tweeter: the 28mm Esotar Forty, exclusive to this model

A specially optimised, all-new 17cm woofer

Classic Dynaudio first-order crossover topology

Two high-gloss finishes: Grey Birch and Red Birch

The Special Forty's new tweeter and woofer both have extended frequency ranges to improve integration between them. The Esotar Forty's tweeter design means it can play down to the upper midrange – around 1000Hz – without adverse effects. It includes a precision-coated soft-dome diaphragm, ultra-powerful magnet, optimised airflow and Dynaudio's signature ferrofluid-damped aluminium voice-coil.

The woofer, which the company claim to be their best 17cm model yet, can handle frequencies up to 4000Hz thanks to the company's proprietary Magnesium Silicate Polymer (MSP) material and geometrically optimised one-piece moulded cone design. This uses the centre of the cone to reproduce midrange frequencies by coupling it directly to the voice-coil.

Dynaudio's engineers have taken great care to ensure this frequency overlap happens in the drivers themselves, rather than correcting or tweaking the signal in the crossover.

The crossover is derived from classic Dynaudio first-order topology – something the company has been continuously refining for decades. Select high-grade components and Dynaudio's 40 years of design experience have made it incredibly refined.

The AirFlow Basket, which holds the driver motor securely in place in the cabinet without transferring unwanted vibration, has specially shaped aerodynamic ribs to reduce internal reflections and help improve air move behind the cone without compromising the basket's stiffness or stability.



The woofer's hybrid magnet system sits inside the voice-coil rather than outside, in order to better immerse the voice-coil's aluminium wire in magnetic flux for more power and better efficiency. The magnetic energy is supplied by a powerful neodymium magnet, while a gentler ferrite magnet controls its direction to where it's needed most: around the coil.

The two exclusive finishes in the form of high-gloss Grey Birch and Red Birch lacquers which certainly highlighted the grain of the wood beautifully.

Frequency response (+/- 3dB): 41Hz – 23kHz

Impedance: 6 ohms

Sensitivity: 86dB (2.83V/1m)

Crossover: Two-way, first-order topology

Dimensions (W x H x D): 19.8 x 36 x 30.7cm

The Special Forty are €2999 per pair.



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## MURAUDIO

This wasn't really a press event as such but more of a private listening session with the Canadian company's Domain Omni PX2 loudspeaker. The PX2 is a really interesting concept and their catchline "Sound Is Everywhere" gives you an idea of what it is all about. On top of the cabinet there are three 120 degree electrostatic panels that give a 360 degree listening experience. Each of the electrostatic panels is made of tensioned mylar film that's ultra thin. Down below is a more conventional looking cabinet, only there are three bass drivers positioned around the 6.4mm cast aluminium enclosure. Prices for these speakers start at \$79 500.



Electronics used in the room were Moon by Simaudio, carrying on the Canadian theme, and all in all it was a really interesting experience. Ideally I'd have liked to have heard these in a real live room situation as the cabinets at High-End are really more suited to conventional speaker placement.

## BURMESTER

You couldn't really miss this brand as there was a Bugatti Veyron kitted out with their music system on their floor plus other luxury cars elsewhere in the show. They certainly had a lot to tell us and the very hot room was packed with people eager to see what was under the ominous white box on the rack. After a long speech by Dieter Burmester's successor (Dieter passed away in 2015) the box was lifted to reveal Burmester's first turntable. Needless to say it was kitted out in the company's familiar chrome finish that will appeal to some and not others...thought they call them their "chrome jewels".

The record player is around 30 000 euros, though for that you get a complete package including a built in phonostage, arm and cartridge.

Next up we had a rather impressive set of speakers that absolutely dominated the room. These were interesting and without going into all the tech spec, they have a normal mode and a live mode with the latter bringing a tweeter mounted on top of the cabinet into play. This really opened up the listening experience when they played Eric Clapton's live version of Layla. Prices are to be confirmed but when questioned they said "It will be a six figure sum and we hope the first figure will be a one" so expect them to be just slightly sub 200 000 Euros.



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# Auralic



superior level of transmission control, making today's ultra-high resolution digital music shine like never before.

Different from the I2S standard, the bi-directional Lightning Link opens the door to jitter-free operation of all the devices in your system. Clocking information from destination devices such as the VEGA G2 can drive the ARIES G2 timing for example, providing perfect data synchronisation. Lightning Link also carries system control data for everything from volume control to processor engine set-up, allowing all linked AURALiC devices to appear in a single, unified control interface.

Like all streaming-capable AURALiC products, the VEGA G2's expansive functionality and connectivity options are thanks to its native integration of AURALiC's custom-built Lightning Streaming technology. Lightning Streaming uses your existing network to create a dedicated music streaming environment capable of processing and streaming the highest resolution musical formats available, including DSD512 and PCM 32bit/384k.

Sirius G2 allows for DSD upsampling whilst Leo G2 is a very low jitter clock designed to boost the sound quality of the Vega G2.

All in all the new range looks very impressive on paper and sounded fab on the day.

An hour is a long time to be in a hot and packed room but Auralic's Xuanqian Wang was interesting, engaging and informative and the hour flew by whilst he introduced the new look Auralic products. The new range comprises the Aries G2, Sirius G2, Vega G2 and Leo G2.

The Aries G2 is a wireless streaming bridge which essentially means it's a streamer with a built in DAC and it really does up the game when compared to the previous model. The processor speed is 50% faster in the new model, memory and data storage are doubled, it will do DSD512, a true colour retina display is placed on the front, it gets a smart IR remote and has "smart" feet that balance the unit. The remote function is interesting as the unit will learn to operate from your existing remote so you don't have yet another remote control cluttering up your coffee table.

The Vega G2 DAC likewise improves on the original in every respect and, like the other units in the G2 range comes with something Auralic are calling the Lightning Link. Lightning Link is a low-jitter, bi-directional 18Gbps

coupling that takes advantage of high-speed HDMI-type hardware connectors to provide a



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# AVM

German brand AVM announced a whole new range of products at their press event.

The OVATION 8.2 line marks the flagship models of the company using the AVM 803 tube line stage that all OVATION 8.2 models share. This tube stage is based on AVM's own 803 tube in combination with an AC independent high-voltage generation.

CS 8.2 – All-in-One Streaming CD Receiver with 2 x 500 W

MP 8.2 – Media Player with HiFi Streaming, CD Player and DAC (384kHz/32bit & DSD128)

CD 8.2 – CD Player and DAC (384kHz/32bit & DSD128)

PA 8.2 – Fully modular analogue preamplifier (803 tube stage as an optional module). This looked to be a really cool product allowing users to have as many or as few modules as the need/wish.

SD 8.2 – Analogue preamp with HiFi Streaming & DAC (384kHz/32bit & DSD128)

In addition to the new and exciting product announcements from the OVATION flagship line, AVM announced the global launch of the AVM30 – the new entry-level line which AVM introduced in 2016 in Germany with three models as a limited edition to mark its 30th anniversary. In the Autumn of 2017 AVM will be bringing this range, with some very new models, to the rest of the world.

AVM30 models in brief:

MP30 Media Player with HiFi Streaming, CD Player and DAC (incl. DSD64)

CD30 CD Player and DAC (incl. DSD64)

CS30 All-in-One HiFi Streaming CD Receiver with 2 x 125 W



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# Wharfedale - Diamond Geezers!

As Wharfedale celebrates its 85th birthday, they have launched the newest Diamond series, Diamond 11. Since 1981, Wharfedale's Diamond speakers have served as the classic entry point to hifi, who hasn't owned a pair of Diamonds at some point in their life? We caught up with Peter Comeau, Wharfedale's Director of Acoustic Design for the launch of the Diamond 11 series.

Sporting improvements both inside and out, Diamond 11 represents the "most significantly enhanced Diamond series in years". The range comprises eight models: three stand-mounting speakers (Diamond 11.0, 11.1 and 11.2), three floorstanders (Diamond 11.3, 11.4 and 11.5) and two centre speakers for home cinema systems (Diamond 11.CC and 11.CS).

"The most immediately obvious change is a return to the elegantly curved cabinet sides made famous by the Diamond 9 and Diamond 10 ranges. The more recent Diamond 100 and Diamond 200 speakers had square-sided cabinets, but the Diamond 11 Series brings back the curves in response to global demand. The result is an affordable speaker range with a distinctly premium look and sound".

Improvements made to the Diamond 11 Series include:

New drive units across the range, designed and built in-house.

Bass/midrange drivers incorporate massive magnet designs, special ribbed baskets and advanced suspension to complement their woven Kevlar cones.

High-performance textile-domed tweeter sports an over-sized ceramic magnet and specially shaped rear chamber.

Redesigned crossover network.

Cabinet walls made from a sandwich of woods of differing density.

Curved cabinet walls enhance acoustic performance as well as the speakers' aesthetic qualities.



Bass loading via an improved version of Wharfedale's slot-loaded distributed port.

"Whereas most affordable speaker systems are based on drive units that are built down to a price, Wharfedale started with the premise that Diamond drivers should be aimed at performance. That is why the Diamond 11 Series sports advanced driver systems incorporating elements that normally only find their way into high-end loudspeakers. For example, the bass and midrange drivers use a basket with a network of ribs that maintain the rigidity of the basket while leaving a large open area behind the cone. The rigidity improves transient impact while the big open area reduces early reflections to cone and allows the generous, specially chosen internal cabinet absorbent to do its work. The Diamond 11 Series speakers also feature massive magnet designs to both raise sensitivity and ensure absolute control of cone movement over lower bass frequencies. In addition, the use of a specially shaped single-forged pole piece with copper cap controls the magnetic flux and ensures low distortion through the critical midrange area. Then there is the progressive suspension which features a lightweight foamed surround for an extended midrange response, in conjunction with a super-long-throw voice coil motor system. The woven Kevlar cone, a long-time favourite for Diamond designs, has been treated to provide a precise match to the new suspension elements. High-fre-

quency performance has been similarly enhanced with a newly evolved tweeter design. Again, an over-sized ceramic magnet system is used, with a copper cap for flux control. And, here, the pole piece is vented through to a specially shaped rear chamber.

For the Diamond 11 Series, Wharfedale's engineers have refined the multi-layer sandwich of woods of differing density to subdue the identifiable characteristics of the cabinet 'sound' and so let the drive units speak for themselves. Critical bracing of the cabinet panels, together with the curving of the cabinet walls to provide a non-boxy shape, have reduced resonances more than 25dB below the driver outputs. In addition, the cabinet walls are lined with a specially developed internal fibre.

The slot-loaded distributed port is a recent Diamond innovation, first introduced in the Diamond 100 Series in 2012, where the internal port tube opens into a slot formed between the cabinet and the plinth. Wharfedale has taken this slot one stage further for the Diamond 11 Series, profiling both ends of the port with a semi-parabolic entry and exit curve that linearises airflow through the port tube.

The Diamond 11 Series is available from July. All speakers come in a choice of black, white, walnut and rosewood.



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# KEF

Johan Coorg is a brilliant ambassador for the KEF brand is always engaging, informative and well aware that the last thing we want towards the end of a long day is to be talked at for hours on end.



Today KEF were launching the latest iteration of their highly popular Q Series of loudspeakers. This is the 8th version of a series that was originally launched in 1991 but the latest version uses tech and improvements trickled down from KEF's higher end products, whilst remaining very affordable.

There are six new models and these are aimed both at the two channel and AV users.

The new range sport a new low frequency driver with a new cone structure, new large roll surround and improved spider suspension performance. Of course the range also sports the company's Uni Q driver.

# Cor Blimey PMC



PMC is used the High End Show to introduce the "cor", the company's first consumer integrated amplifier and we met with Keith Tonge (Creative Director) and Oliver Thomas (R and D Manager) who were both very excited about what promises to be a great product for the brand.

The cor integrated is an amplifier that adds no sonic character of its own to the music the company say and given their studio heritage i see no reason to argue with them.

Designed and hand-built by PMC in the UK, the cor - the dictionary definition of which is: (anatomy) heart; (figuratively) soul, mind - is an integrated amplifier that works entirely in the analogue domain. The four unbalanced RCA analogue inputs are joined by one pair of balanced XLR inputs and a set of direct inputs that connect straight to the power amplifier. The cor integrated does not feature any digital inputs and is described as an analogue amplifier for the purist.

All the components were specified without compromise after extensive listening tests, including the black PCBs and the volume control, which, together with the tone and balance faders, are motorised using the finest technology from professional mixing consoles, and are remote controllable. Yes you read that correctly...TONE CONTROLS!!!

The audio signal passing through the controls remains entirely in the analogue

domain and, if desired, a defeat option routes the signal only via the volume control. Audio switching is via hermetically sealed, inert gas filled, gold plated relays for zero oxidation and better electronic isolation. Power output from the Class A/B design is rated 95 watts into 8 ohms and 140 watts into 4 ohms.

The cor also features a Class A/B headphone amplifier for personal listening.

The Darlington circuit provides short signal paths and builds on the work of Sidney Darlington at Bell Labs. The PMC designers auditioned many different configurations of transistor implementation before settling on the Darlington design, which they found provided the best transparency.

Each circuit block is linked by a balanced connection, locking spurious RF and EMI emissions out of the audio path and enabling each circuit block to reference its own local ground. The PMC custom designed 360VA power transformer uses MuMETAL® shielding to further reduce EMI, a specially formulated, military-spec alloy which absorbs up to 200 times more magnetic flux than steel.

The extruded aluminium remote control echoes the style of the amplifier and allows volume, balance or tonal adjustments at the touch of a button.

UK retail price of £4995, inc. VAT with Euro pricing TBC.

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# Mark Levinson - New Integrated And A Turntable

Harman's Mark Levinson introduced the № 585.5 Integrated Amplifier with Pure Phono module. The № 585.5 is the second integrated amplifier in the Mark Levinson 500 series range: an upgrade to the № 585 which adds the brand's Pure Phono capability and other new features while retaining the existing Precision Link DAC and analogue inputs. In addition to the Pure Phono module, the № 585.5 also includes an upgraded remote control and new three-piece extruded, machined, and anodized aluminum top cover which replaces the current single-piece top cover of the original № 585 and matches the appearance of all other Mark Levinson 500 Series products.

The Mark Levinson Pure Phono stage features fully discrete, extremely low noise gain stages, with RIAA equalisation implemented using a combination of active and passive filter circuits. Four gain settings, multiple resistive- and capacitive-loading settings, and an infrasonic filter are adjustable via the front panel or the remote control for virtually any turntable and cartridge.

In addition to the Pure Phono input the № 585.5 provides four analogue inputs, and six digital inputs, including asynchronous USB, optical, coaxial, and AES/EBU (XLR), to accommodate a wide variety of digital music sources, including 32-bit/192kHz PCM, as well as native DSD and DSD over PCM via USB. The № 585.5 also incorporates exclusive HARMAN Clari-Fi music restoration technology, which employs proprietary signal-enhancement techniques.

The № 585.5 also provides a subwoofer output with a selectable 80Hz high-pass filter for use in a properly implemented 2.1-channel system, and includes Ethernet, RS-232, IR and 12V trigger ports to facilitate its use in audio/video installations with integrated systems control. These features are also found in the № 585.

Its high-current Class AB power amplifiers and analogue circuitry utilise a 900VA custom toroidal transformer, and a dedicated SMPS power supply operates all the digital circuitry. Like the № 585, the № 585.5 delivers



ers 200 watts per channel into 8 ohms, and 350 watts into 4 ohms.

The № 585.5 Integrated Amplifier with Pure Phono module will be \$16,000. The № 585 remains at its existing price point of \$12,000.

Mark Levinson also showcased the № 515 Turntable that has been designed and built in partnership with VPI Industries.

The № 515 is based on a highly damped vinyl-wrapped MDF and aluminum sandwich main chassis. The chassis is supported by machined Delrin and Aluminium Mark Levinson feet with a vibration-damping polymer core. The 20-pound Aluminum platter rotates on an inverted bearing, which employs a hardened stainless steel shaft spinning in a phosphor bronze bushing.

The AC synchronous motor is mounted to a separate vinyl-MDF-Aluminum sandwich

chassis and housed in its own mechanically isolated enclosure. A triple belt drive system is used as opposed to the more common one belt design. A custom-designed, low-distortion analog oscillator and discrete, class AB power amplifier power the synchronous motor for accurate 33 and 45 RPM operation.

The № 515 features a gimbal-mounted, 3D-printed tonearm with integral headshell, stainless steel counterweight, and discrete internal cartridge lead routing. The tonearm is mounted to a rigid, machined Aluminium arm base featuring on-the-fly adjustable vertical tracking angle.

The № 515 turntable will be available either with or without a factory installed moving coil phono cartridge.

The № 515 turntable will be available from authorised Mark Levinson dealers worldwide in Summer 2017. Pricing starts at \$10,000 for the version without phono cartridge.

We had a listen to the whole lot through a pair of JBL speakers and it was brilliantly dynamic even in less than ideal surroundings.



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## Goldmund Announce New Amps and Pres

Goldmund used the High End show to highlight their new generation of analogue products and we popped along to meet Michel Reverchon for a glass of fizz and a bit of a chat. "They represent a milestone in the way amplifiers and preamplifiers are designed while they continue capitalising on the expertise Goldmund has developed over almost 40 years of research and development".

"This explains that their names remain the traditional "Telos" or "Mimesis", followed by the number of the previous series and the addition of the "NextGen" label to clearly differentiate them. The Telos 1000 NextGen, the Telos 2500 NextGen (below) and Mimesis 22 NextGen (second below) are thus our latest and extremely high-end products that perpetuate the Goldmund audiophile lines and tradition".

It all started with the creation of the new Telos 5500 that was designed to exceed the quality of the most powerful amplifier ever created by the brand: the Telos 5000. This new version was re-designed with many major technical improvements including its power supply that makes it more powerful than its predecessor. Its input stage is also com-



pletely different with both Analogue (RCA+XLR) and Digital (RCA) inputs as standard. The input circuit was also enhanced to allow silent switching and guarantee the stability when input mode and level are changed. The amplifier security has been "considerably perfected" in order to protect precious drivers from the extreme power the amplifier can deliver.

Goldmund say that the results were so striking that they decided to apply all these enhancements to their other top analogue amplifiers too. The Telos 1000 NextGen and 2500 NextGen borrow their power amplifier boards from the Telos 5500 and from the most powerful Goldmund speakers like the Apologue Anniversary by using the same circuit-board, the Goldmund 6209H. Both amplifiers come with a better input board in digital, better thermal grounding, and increased power for The Telos 2500 NextGen with its new 80 000 microfarad PSU power bank.



## Monitor Audio's New Silver series Loudspeakers



Last but not least we dashed over to the packed Monitor Audio stand to hear about the company's Silver series of which there was loads of models to suit pretty much any AV or two channel system. This stand was pretty packed and getting shots of the actual product somewhat difficult!

The range includes a couple of bookshelf models, three floorstanders, a couple of centre channel speakers, rear speakers and a sub-woofer.

The new Silver series uses technological advances from the top-of-the-range Platinum Series II and have a completely redesigned 25 mm Gold Dome tweeter and come in a wide range of finishes in real wood veneer, piano lacquer and contemporary Satin White finishes.

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One obstacle preventing any hifi achieve its true performance level is RFI, EMI and noise on the signal ground, which can all subtly modulate and degrade the noise level of the system. Even the equipment itself can contribute to the problem, especially the PCs, routers, and NAS

drives now typically part of an audio system. The new Grun Coherent Earthing System addresses these issues by providing an 'independent' earth for users of Mavros and Asimi Ultra interconnects with flexible Grun adapter options.

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# **Bird's Eye View Of High End Munich 2017 – The Year Hifi Got Sexy And Fun**

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Linette Smith gives her views on  
this year's High End in Munich and  
picks out some of her highlights



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# High-End Munich 2017

We have been making the pilgrimage to High End Munich for five years now. It is, quite simply, the greatest Hifi Show on earth. I love meeting people from all over the world, catching up with old friends and meeting new ones, this year I lost track of the number of people who grabbed us saying 'I know you from Facebook!' and it was brilliant to meet people that we knew 'virtually' in the flesh. High End Munich is one of those shows that can overwhelm you with its immensity. It's quite tricky to explain just how big a show it is...it's a beast! Every year has been incredible, but this year it just went up another level. It's kind of crazy, but just when you think the best can't get any better, it does, and this year High End turned it up to 11.

So what was it about this year's High End that made it so special? There was an energy about it, it was exciting, it was fun and it was sexy. Let's back up a bit here...Hifi has long had an image of being 'Audiophile', of being the realm of either lonely guys that looked like they crept out from under a rock, or corporate companies that just see it as a marketing exercise to promote their products. Neither of those things are particularly fun or sexy. Hifi is about music and music is fun and sexy. In recent years there are more young people getting into hifi, there are more women getting into it and there are more and more younger people and women in the industry. People don't want boring and dusty products, they want the gear to be sexy and desirable, they want it to make them feel special, from seeing it at a show to actually buying it and using it at home. The Hifi industry has 'wised up' to this and this year saw the perfect balance of gorgeous, stylish hifi gear, backed up with the technology and the know-how and many years of experience of making great hifi.

Let me give you an example. Take Gold Note, admittedly they are Italian so they kind of have an unfair advantage in the 'being sexy and fun' thing. Coming from a sunny place renowned for art, food, wine and cars with curves like supermodels does give you a head start. What Gold Note are doing is producing high end, serious hifi (we use their 5000€ Tuscany Red MC cartridge in our reference system) but far from being boring and elitist, they make their products desirable. The gorgeous black electronics, undulating speakers and stunning turntables that they had on show at High End Munich were things that you wanted to own even before you heard them. Tommaso and the team were stylish and enthusiastic, and they have their branding totally on point, without being boring and corporate.



Avantgarde Acoustic have been making very sexy speakers for a long time. We own their Duo XDs and can tell you they are some of the best looking and sounding loudspeakers around. However far from

being all hoity-toity about it, Holger and Beate and their team want to have fun. So they show their horns in bright, eye-catching colours, play a wide variety of music from pop, to classical and even some kitsch German yodelling folk music and then have a party. We walked in to their huge and packed room on Sunday to be treated to a live performance by Oded Kafri who leapt around playing drums and being very entertaining. It was brilliant, energetic and just so much fun, truly excellent!



If you were at the show, chances are you spotted our pink, Hifi Pig and VPI slipmats that we were handing out to people at the show. Mark Levinson unveiled their N°515 turntable (their first) created in partnership with VPI so it was only fitting that we got a shot of it sporting the VPI mat while we were at their press conference!



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Muraudio deserve a special mention. Thursday was an exhausting day. We had a lot of meetings and a lot of press events and it was very, very hot. How people on the top floor didn't actually cook I don't know! We popped into Muraudio's booth to have a listen to their omnidirectional hybrid electrostatic loudspeakers. These are really speakers that you could live with. Omni speakers seem to be the modern way to do hifi, how often do you really have time to sit in the sweet spot, having omnis means you can get on with doing what you have to and still get great sounds. We had a welcome chill out in a nice cool room listening to Daft Punk through the Muraudio speakers and Moon electronics.



Dynaudio always have a very stylish room. Chatting to Kala, she told me that their philosophy is always to focus on the music. Their black-all-over room provided the perfect backdrop to their loudspeakers including their lovely new Special 40 anniversary speakers. Even the standmount speakers packed a punch in their huge room when we heard them at the press launch on Thursday.



I've been very impressed by the AVM and PMC German/British alliance. PMC are now distributing them in the UK and the two brands work well together. AVM are uber cool and produce gorgeous audio-ophile products that are objects of desire. Their move to all in one boxes that stream music, play cds and make your cup of tea (joking) is really delivering what modern audiophiles want and their new AVM30 range is making it more affordable too. PMC's Pro-audio heritage just reinforces that they know what they are doing, both with their speakers and their new Cor amp. Together the two brands sound and look great.



Living Voice are very much the epitome of High End. Their room always sounds great, and so it should with them making loudspeakers that cost hundreds of thousands of pounds and matching them with electronics from the likes of Kondo which cost similar. However this year, and we were not the only ones to notice, their room was totally singing. The Vox Palladian system was visually beautiful, the sound had gone up to another level, from a level that seemed impossible to improve on from last year, it was totally captivating. Plus Kevin put on some dub for us, just showing that High End people don't just play classical on their very expensive systems....thanks for the experience guys!



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# High-End Munich 2017

Leema Acoustics from Wales were in a playful mood at the show, their booth was nice and chilled with their stylish and affordable gear plus plenty of guitars and of course, Shadwell the sheep on guard outside!



Aires Cerat was a very funky booth, someone had told us that it made them weep because it sounded so amazing, so we were really looking forward to it, they did not disappoint. One of the best sounding rooms we went in, we thought the sound was beautiful with an Enrico Datti turntable and Tellurium Q cables.



Volya introduced us to the Bouquet loudspeakers last year, with their beautiful Ukrainian folk art finish. This year it was the No Limit speakers, which looked like a huge pair of drivers, they sounded excellent too and certainly made an impact. Probably not as beautiful looking as the Bouquet but Volya had a team of very attractive ladies on hand inviting the public in to their booth to listen.



Pro-ject have really got it right. Their fun and funky turntables appeal to traditional audiophiles and that new, younger generation of audiophiles alike. With vinyl still being insanely popular (and getting more so) they have turntables for every level and pocket. As usual at High End Munich they had a spread of turntables in Hall 3 which were attracting a lot of attention.



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You really can't get more fun and funky than Kostas Metaxas's Metaxas & Sins brand. His Marquis headphone amplifier was being used on a lot of headfi stands and he had his new speakers on show. Kostas is really putting the fun back into hifi and he has plenty of cheeky ideas planned for the future.



When you get a room full of gear designed mainly by women then you get a cool and sexy room. Manger never disappoints and always gives a cool and coordinated room which is an oasis of calm. This year Daniella Manger partnered her speakers with Ulla Scheu and her turntables, plus Mola Mola.



CAD were partnered with Boenicke again and this year The Chord Company who were making their Munich debut (no, I couldn't believe they had never exhibited before). Again, really cool and stylish products for modern audiophiles and a great sounding room.



You could be forgiven for thinking that there is nothing fun or sexy about transformers, however, Lundahl had a very funky and colourful stand that caught my eye!



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# High-End Munich 2017

Goebel High End, who were partnered up with CH Precision and Kronos turntables, proved, just like Living Voice did, that extreme high end is not just for listening to the likes of Diana Krall on.....they played punk music for the audience, which was really very cool indeed.



Of course we had a Women in Hifi meet up on the Saturday, there were 18 of us this time, some of course couldn't make it as it was a very busy show. It was great to catch up, have a chat and a beer and make some new connections with other women in the hifi industry.



So that is just a few of my highlights, my Bird's Eye View of High End Munich 2017. It was an exceptional show full of wonderful hifi and some fantastic experiences, most of all it was great fun! There is much more coverage to follow from us as we explore the rooms and halls of this year's High End!



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CHORD  
Chord Electronics Ltd.

# Hugo<sub>2</sub>

Portable DAC/headphone amplifier



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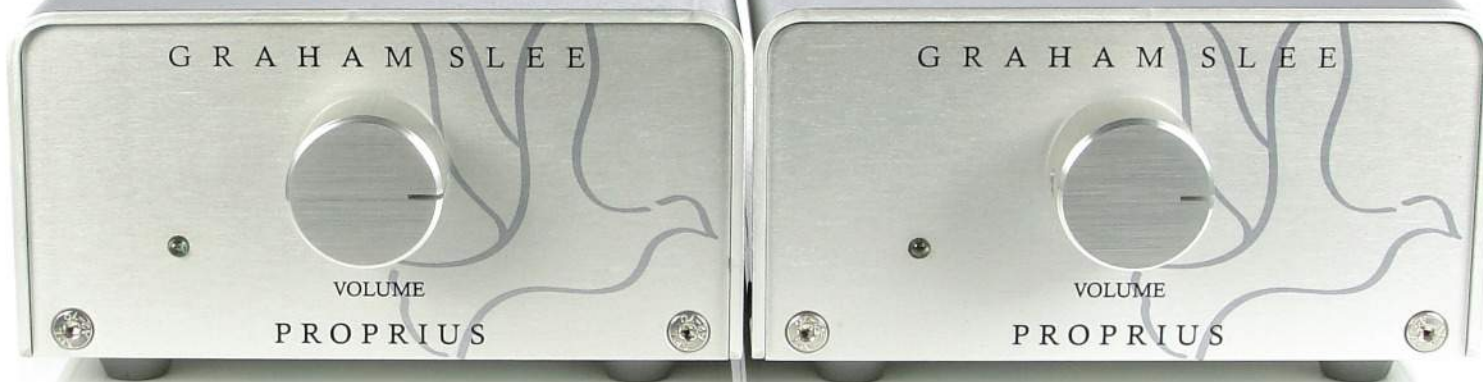
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with their EARS not their eyes**

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**We don't do  
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**What WE do is let your music sources communicate  
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You don't notice the detail, dynamics, colour and naturalness  
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**See our website for details of our full range of high fidelity equipment,  
and find out how you can borrow our products for a  
FREE HOME TRIAL from our Forum**

**<https://hifisystemcomponents.com>**



# Newcomers to High-End

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Every year the High End Show introduces some newcomers to the Hifi Industry. Hifi Pig always has a chat with these exhibitors and does a feature on them as we think that the continual growth of the industry depends on new brands as well as our more well known names. Over the last five years that we have been attending the show we have seen new brands like PureAudioProject, with their open baffle loudspeakers, and Westminster Labs super-high-end electronics go from being 'Newcomers' to established brands



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First up this year was **B.audio** who come from near Strasbourg in Eastern France. Brothers Sebastien and Cedric Bermann, along with their designer, Olivier Hess, were presenting their designed and made in France B.dac and B.dpr. The B.dac is, unsurprisingly, a DAC whilst the B.dpr is an enhanced version that also features a preamplifier. Their products feature their in-house technology called SJR "Source Jitter Removal", which they say "provides the best possible D/A conversion, from every source" They have spent the last ten years developing their product before unveiling to the audiophile world at High End Munich.

Their products have a very classy, minimal design which I immediately loved and feature a CNC - machined aluminium front panel with integrated ball-bearing mounted rotary knobs. A very simple looking less is more approach. B.audio are already working on their next products, the B.amp series.

Next we encountered **Betonart Audio** from Germany. Physicist Jörg Wähdel had some very attractive concrete loudspeakers that had a wonderful Bauhaus style to them, with a small selection of different models. Modern and minimal the concrete had a lovely tactile quality to it. He also presented an isolation platform that utilises a sandwich construction of concrete, microquartz and wood with sorbothane feet.



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**Stacore** are a Polish brand who make anti-vibration platforms. We encountered them in one of the best rooms at last year's High End Munich, so it was good to see them getting to exhibit in their own right. Available in Basic and Advanced versions they are made from Italian slate and fill with air to work pneumatically. The Advanced version has a second stage, ball bearings, which they say "greatly improve the isolation efficiency for lateral vibrations, happening in the dimensions of the basis. In this way the so called full six-axis decoupling is achieved—the Holy Grail of vibration control".



We next met with Giorgio and Marco of **Fonica International** from Italy. It took a short while to dawn on me that what at first glance appeared to be some kind of room treatment panels, were actually loudspeakers. The speakers were incredible thin and very stylish and the guys told us this was because they feature isodynamic speaker technology: sound comes from a large surface area consisting of a thin, ultra-light membrane, moving evenly along the entire surface. By reacting to the impulse of a magnetic field, this membrane vibrates producing "pure sound with no distortion". The result is a speaker that could unobtrusively grace any ultra-modern home, available in three sizes from tall floorstanders to desktop. They can also be customised with the image of your choice.



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The final newcomer was **Flux Hifi**. This German company were showcasing vinyl accessories, the main one that caught our eye was their Flux Sonic stylus cleaner. This little gadget is made in Germany and costs 149€. Flux told us: "The Flux-Sonic Stylus Cleaner is designed to gently, safely and quickly remove hardened dirt from the record player needle. Targeted vibration ensures residue-free cleaning. The stylus need not be removed for this purpose. The application is simple and works on every turntable. Flux-Sonic can be applied as often as desired. We recommend using it before each playback". They also gave us one to try for ourselves, so expect a review once the Munich madness has died down!



So, that was the  
Newcomers at  
High End Munich  
2017...roll on High  
End Munich 2018  
where we we  
hopefully see  
some of the  
Newcomers  
exhibiting again in  
the main exhibition  
areas!



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# The Joy Of Decks - Turntables At High-End

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Vinyl is everywhere right now and Munich was no exception. Here's a snapshot of some of the spinners that caught our eye at this year's show.

Of course some of these turntables are built with no expense being spared but that's not to say there weren't a good number of more affordable turntables too

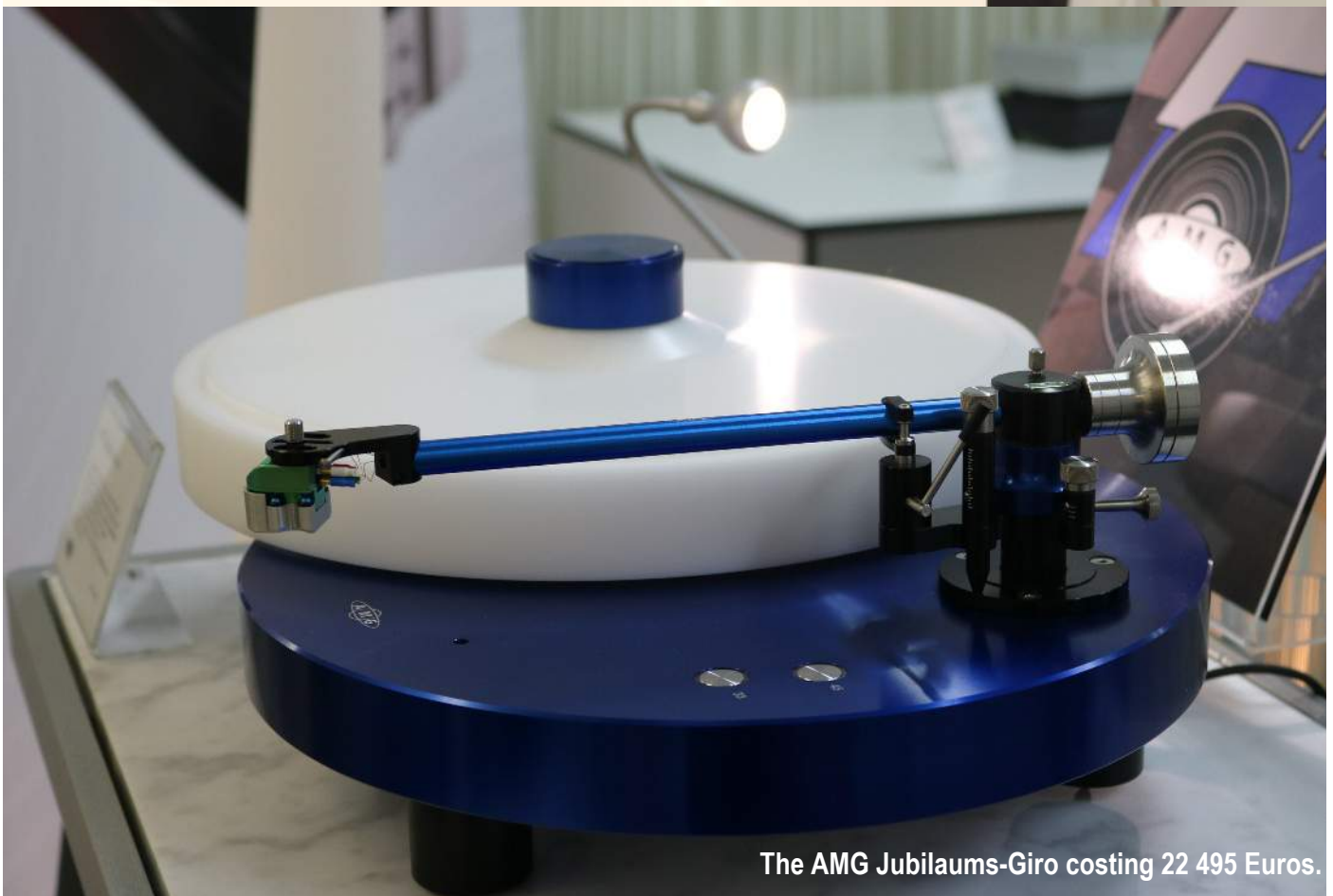


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Continuum Audio Labs and their Obsidian turntable and Viper tonearm.



The AMG Jubilaums-Giro costing 22 495 Euros.



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# High-End Munich 2017



The all American VPI Titan turntable sporting two arms.



Graham Slee's excellent phonostages.



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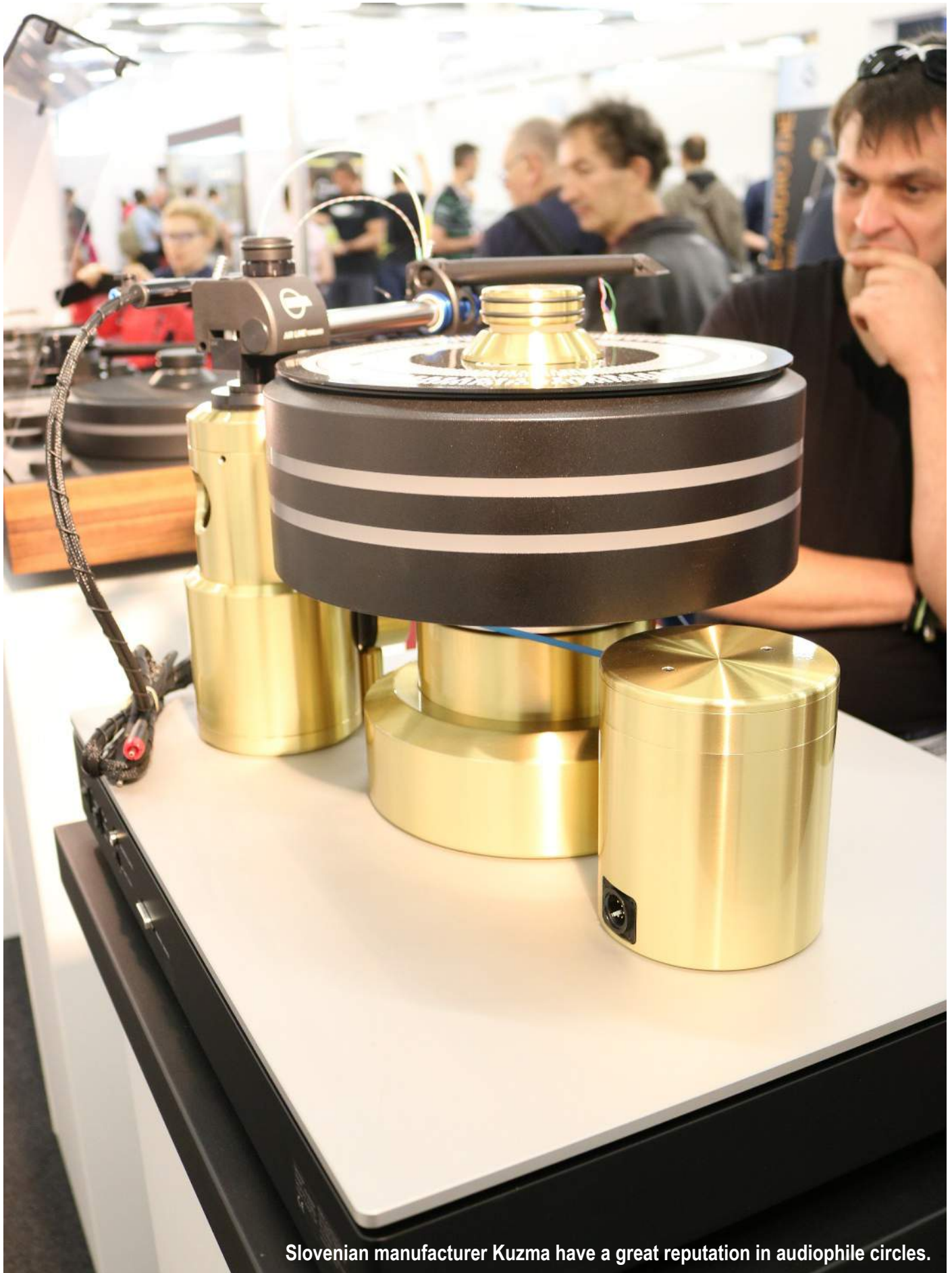
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Slovenian manufacturer Kuzma have a great reputation in audiophile circles.

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# High-End Munich 2017

Acoustic Signature's Invictus turntable and four arms, because everyone needs four arms!



The Hanss Acoustics T-60 SE.

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The Funk Firm's Saffire V turntable and the the new AK 1 tonearm (inset).



The Woodpecker from Dr Feikert.



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# High-End Munich 2017

The absolutely insane Apolyt from Acoustical Systems



From New Zealand the all new Wand turntable. Many will be familiar with the tonearm and so it is great to see them with their own turntable too.

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# High-End Munich 2017

Pro-Ject always bring loads of turntables to pretty much every show and Munich was no exception.



The Panalogue turntable.



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Built and designed by Dr Jacques Bloch this is the First Voice turntable.



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SME From England!



Gold Note Analog turntable, sporting the fantastic Tuscany Red cartridge that I currently use.



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Kronos Pro from Canada



The Scheu Analog Classic.



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Triangle Art Master Reference and Signature turntables and phonostages.



Transrotor, which we think is the Tourbillon FMD.



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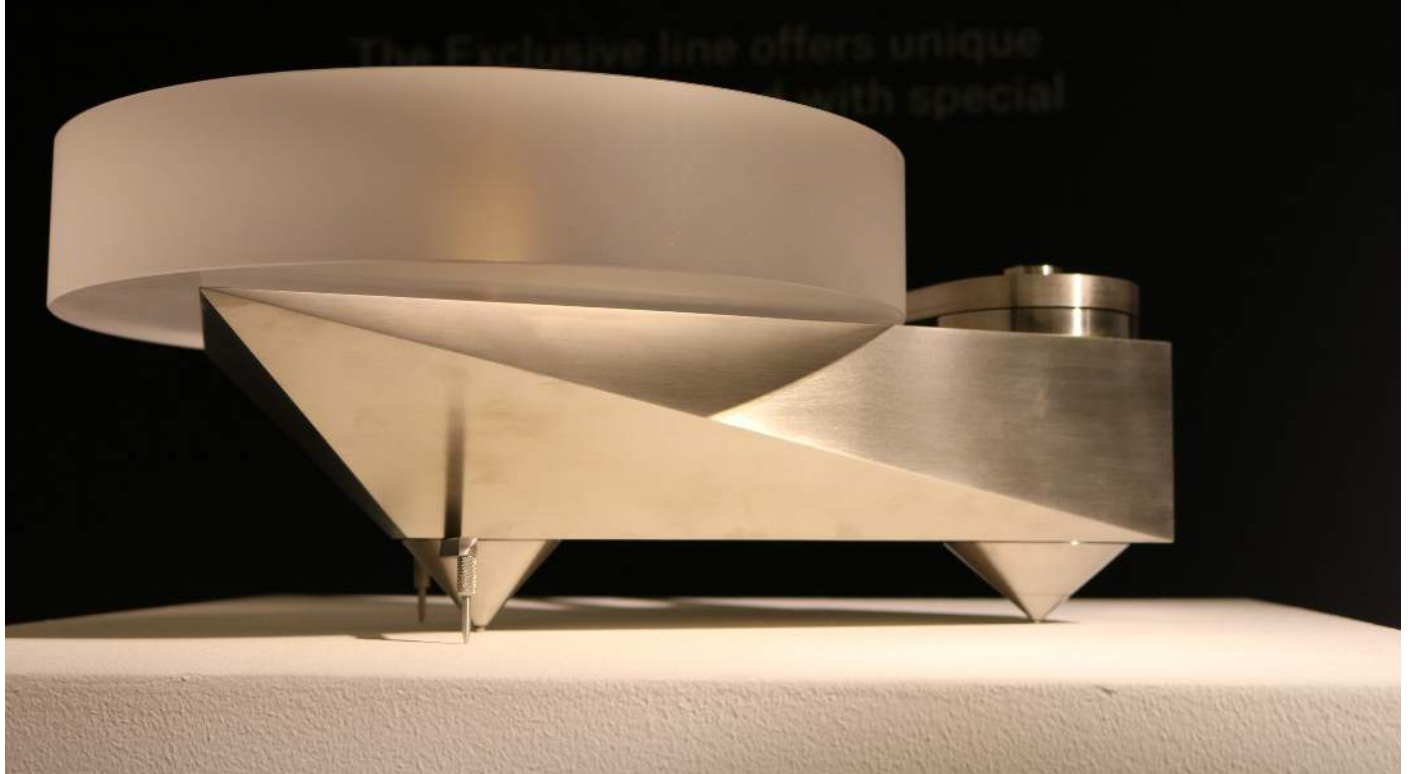


# High-End Munich 2017



The Tech Das Air Force III.

440 Audio turntables from Czechoslovakia and their G3 in glass which is an absolute work of art and, to my mind THE best looking turntable around today.



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Clearaudio

The classic Thorens TD124



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# High-End Munich 2017

From England the Origin Live Zephyr.



The Wand Tonearm.



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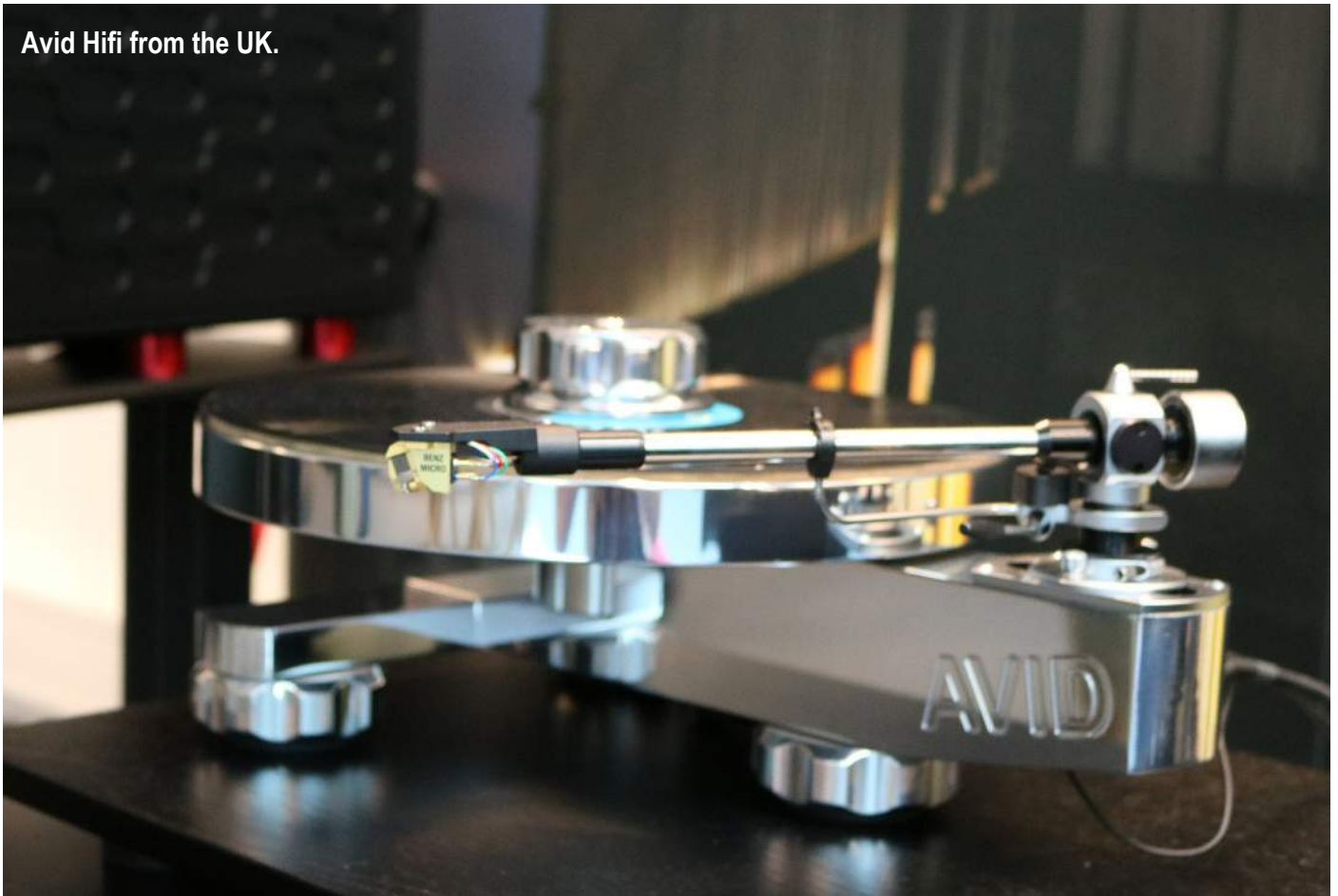
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Avid Hifi from the UK.



McIntosh



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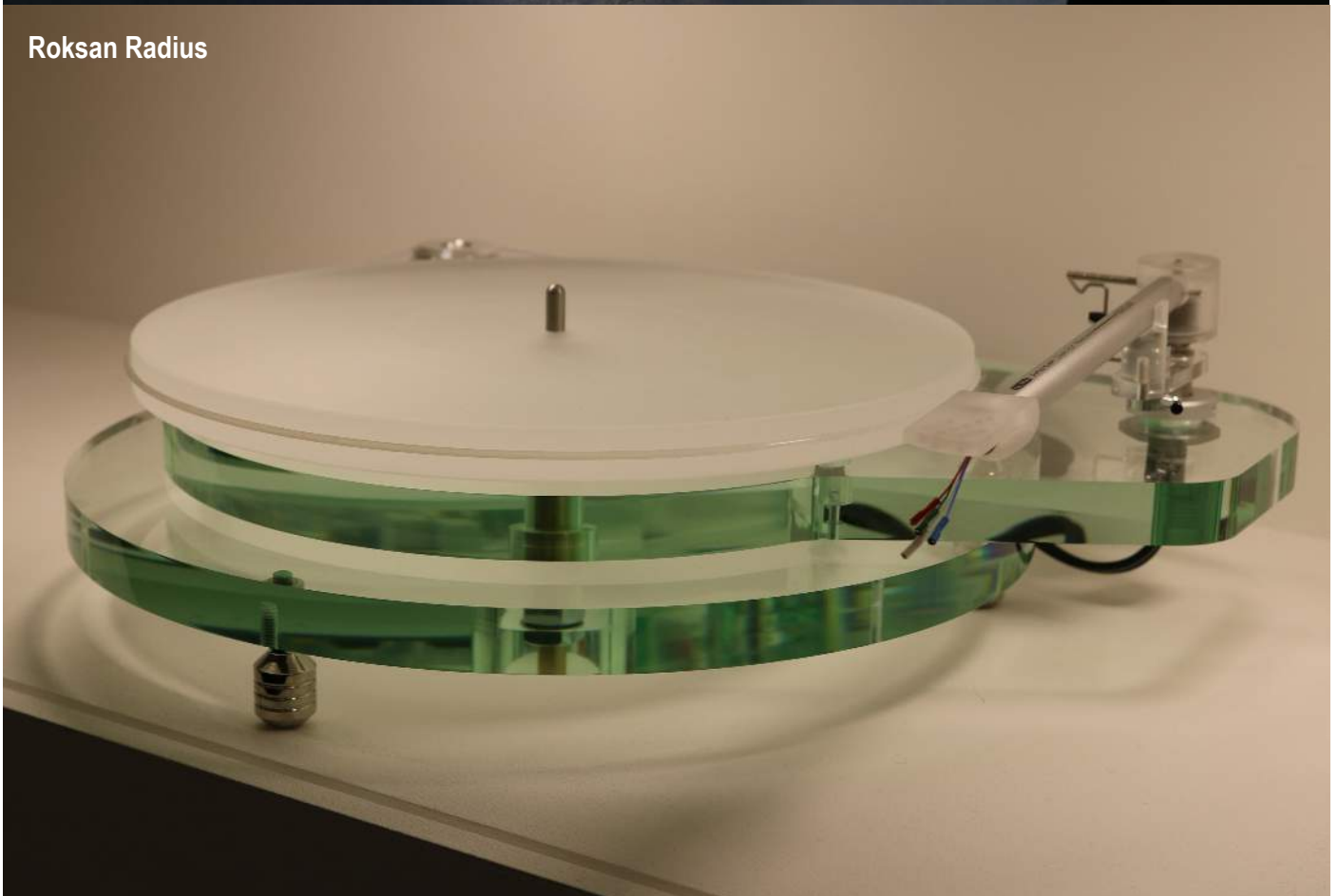


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Audio Exclusiv's Das Laufwerk Referenz costing 5775 Euros.



Roksan Radius



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# High-End Munich 2017

Kondo From Japan



Another shot of the new Mark Levinson turntable built by VPI in the US



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Burmester's new disc spinner



ELAC's Miracord 90



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We believe that  
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# A Walk Around The Show

---

There is so much to see and hear at High-End in Munich that it's pretty much impossible to get around the whole show and it's inevitable we will miss someone, but here's a whole load of photographs from the rooms and stands w visited that stood out for us



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# High-End Munich 2017



One of the highlights of the High-End Show in Munich for both myself and Linette was this room that featured Audiobyte, Skogrand Cables, Rockna, Trafomatic and Tune Audio. The system as a whole was hugely dynamic and definitely in the top five rooms of the show and was on our shortlist for our Hifi Pig Loves You Award. The Tune Audio Avaton speakers are a three way design that is totally passive and driven here by the beautiful Trafomatic Elysium power amps that feature 2x 20B-V4 EML, 1x 5Z3 EML and 1x 250TL EIMAC tubes. Hifi on a huge scale both in terms of physical size and musical impact.



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I really wanted to like this room as the guy that makes the Joseph Audio (Jeff Joseph) is one of the good guys in audio...so I was relieved when we got to listen and can report that the system as a whole was refined and musical with the partnering Alluxity electronics from Denmark and the brainchild of Alexander Vitus Mogensen.



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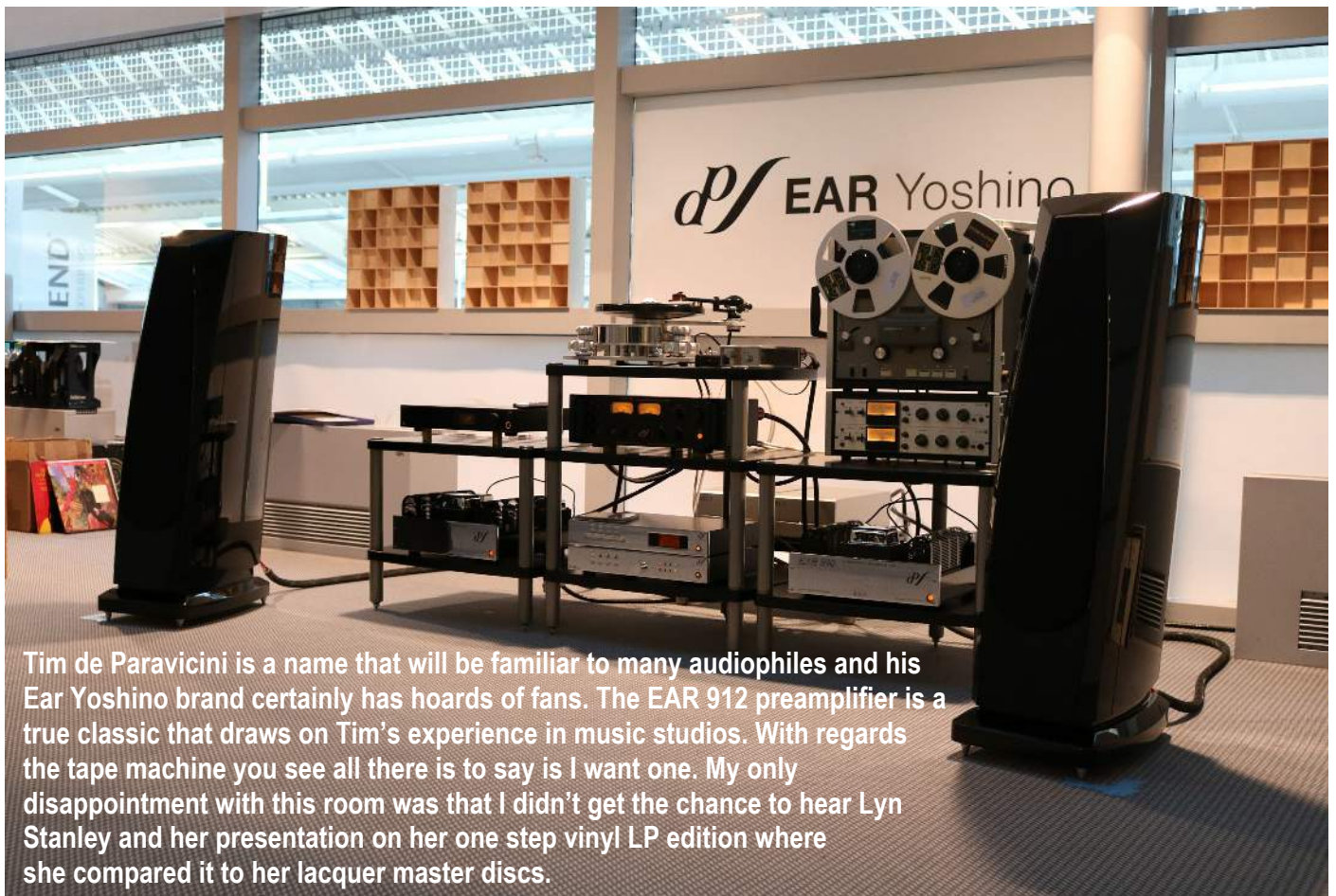
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Tim de Paravicini is a name that will be familiar to many audiophiles and his Ear Yoshino brand certainly has hoards of fans. The EAR 912 preamplifier is a true classic that draws on Tim's experience in music studios. With regards the tape machine you see all there is to say is I want one. My only disappointment with this room was that I didn't get the chance to hear Lyn Stanley and her presentation on her one step vinyl LP edition where she compared it to her lacquer master discs.



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Another room that made the shortlist for me was the Nagra room partnered with Wilson Alexandria speakers and a Kronos turntable. What's not to love about this system. Elegant, powerful and beautifully made.

From the sublime to the lime green in the form of Cessaro's rather impressive Gamma 2 horns and bass horns along with the TW Acoustic Black Raven turntable and Cessaro's own Air Two amps and Air One preamplifier.



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German brand Stein Music make horn loudspeakers, BIG horn loudspeakers, but they also do a standmounter for those that can't accommodate the behemoths.



Tony from Townshend is holding one of their new products which is being used in clubs around the world to isolate and "float" huge sub bass speakers. They do of course do home versions as pictured as some supertweeters (inset) that are raved about.



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MSB Technology electronics feeding the signal into speakers we failed miserably to note down. The amps are the monobloc M204s, yes those things that look like some kind of portable radiator. A very cool room none the less!



Holger Adler and his Voxativ room using the German company's loudspeakers with full range drivers and valve amps was very good indeed. Someone important was due to arrive and so the system was quickly changed to vinyl...no guesses for guessing who that was then!



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Munich High End wouldn't be Munich High End without a visit to the absolutely bonkers (but in a good way) Silbatone room. As well as their stunning electronics visitors to High End were treated to the Western Electric M2 featuring 2x 594A compression drivers and 2X TA-4181 18" woofers per side, all using field coil units. The multicell horn on top is the WE 26B. If you go to High End and miss this you should kick yourself!



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One of THE uber systems at this years High End was from Kondo and Kawero. The smaller system (below) sounded fab and was getting a LOT of attention from visitors to the show. The bigger system is many audiophiles' idea of the ultimate system and certainly price-wise it is up there with the most expensive available.



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RD Acoustics, 440 Audio turntable, Lampizator and KR Audio sounding brilliant. You can read the review of the [Euphoria](#) and [Evolution](#) speakers here. I'd have loved to have seen and heard the Music First preamp in this room but it was sat outside the whole show. The Quadratic diffuser at the back is nothing if not impressive looking and it follows proven tech. Not in the room but pictured is the Vurtuoso loudspeaker from the Czech company. Thanks for the Slivovitz...i think.



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# High-End Munich 2017



German Odeon Audio loudspeakers partnered well with the Italian valve amps from New Audio Frontiers.



Lots of Luxman and a pair of Xavian Calliope speakers from Czechoslovakia. Very nice in a fairly conventional kind of way.



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The fab Harbeth and their M40.2 loudspeaker.



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We love companies that are serious about their products but don't take themselves too seriously and it was great to visit the Leema (from Wales) room where outside they had a sheep (not a live one) called Shadwell. The room was pretty cool too and they'd put a good deal of effort into kitting it out with some rather splendid guitars. At this year's show Leema introduced the Pulse IV amp, DAC and Bluetooth streamer.



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Graeme Holland of Audion who make the valve amps pictured and John Cadman pictured holding the Graham Slee accession phonostage were part of a really cool stand and pair of booths. Hifi does not have to be boring as these guys proved.



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More Graham Slee phonostages



The well loved Revolver turntable from the eighties lives again.



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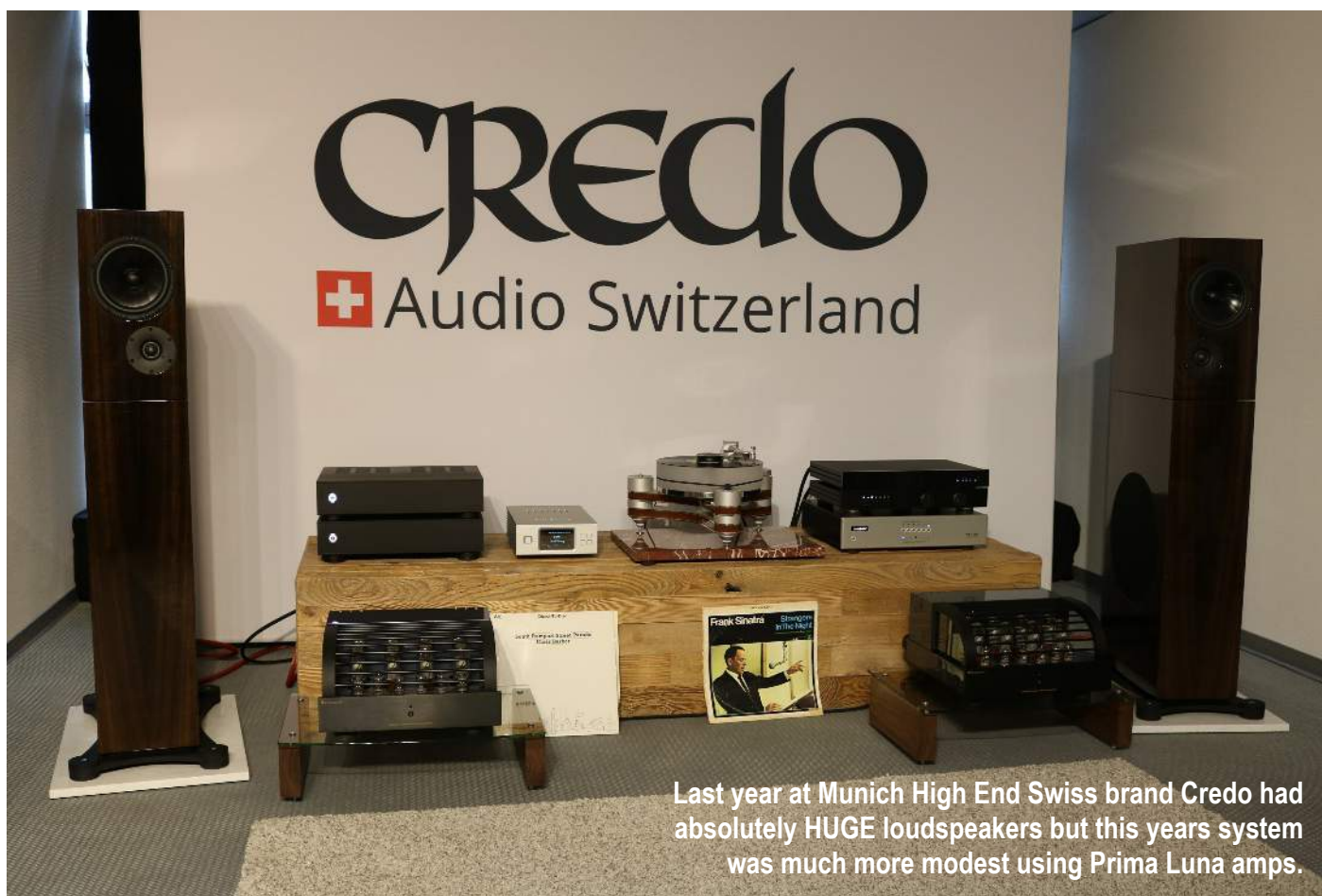


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Last year at Munich High End Swiss brand Credo had absolutely HUGE loudspeakers but this years system was much more modest using Prima Luna amps.



JoSound was again featuring their Horus loudspeakers with single driver and unique design. Also in the room were Elektron Research showing off their new amp.

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Polish brand hORNS, whose Mummy loudspeaker we used as a reference for a good couple of years were demoing a new speaker in the form of their Opera as well as having their Universum and Atmosphere loudspeakers on show.



Audio Flight chose to use Quadraspire racks at this years High End in Munich.

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The name Magnum Dynalab will be familiar to many and is perhaps most well known for their FT101 tuner. However, the brand is expanding into a whole range of electronics including their Dynamite range which includes streamer, DAC and amp.



Pure Audio Project launched at High End in 2013 on the newcomers stand and have gone from strength to strength since then with their open baffle loudspeakers (next page) This year they partnered with the excellent, though inexpensive Soul Note.

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Volya were massively pro-active at this year's show with lots of women inviting people into their room. Outside were the magnificent Bouquet speakers we reviewed a short while ago whilst inside their No Limits loudspeaker was hooked up and playing nicely. As well as their booth and in association with High End Society Service GmbH launched a charity auction where one lucky winner could win a pair of the No Limit speakers. Well done Volya!!!



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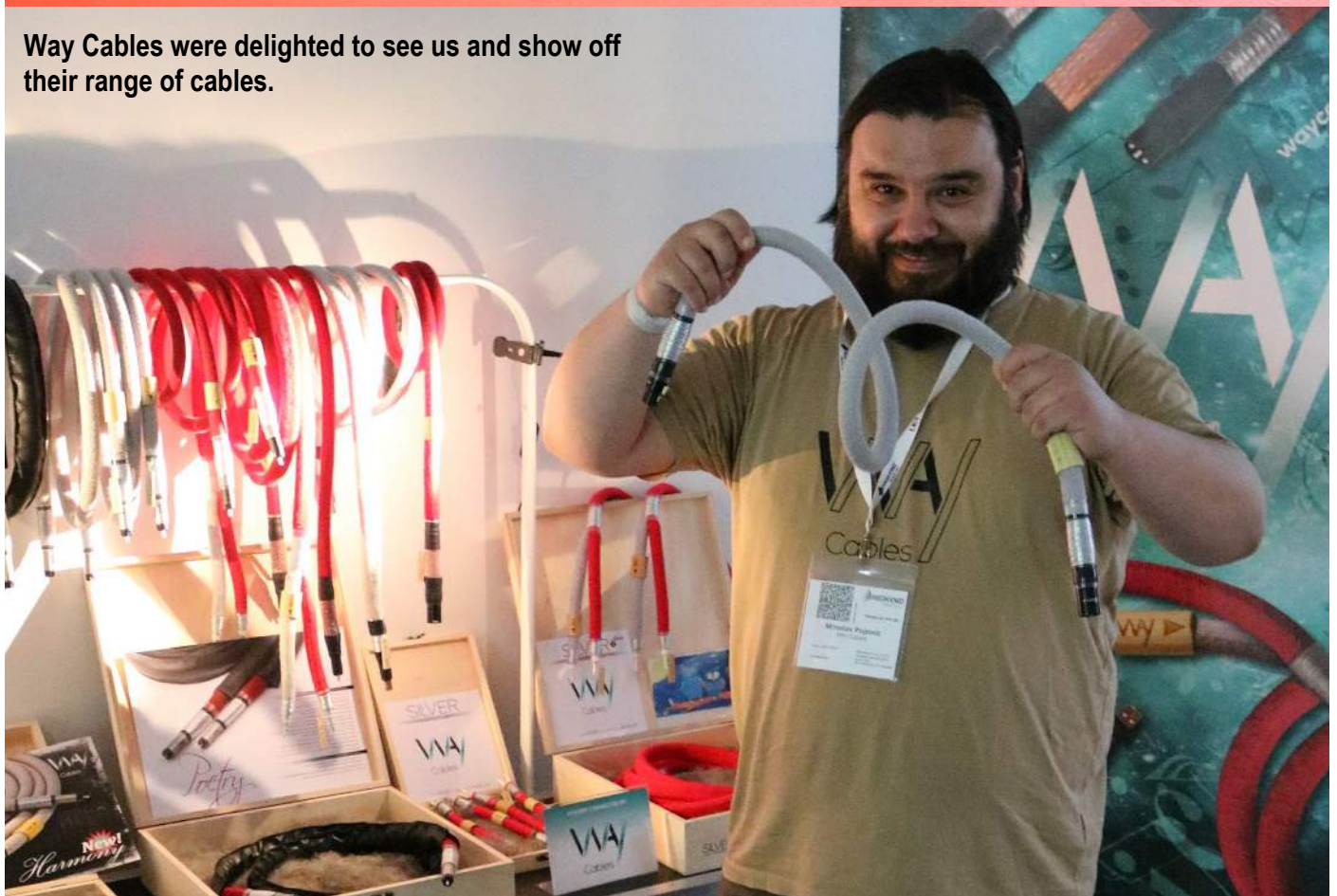


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No Limits!

Way Cables were delighted to see us and show off their range of cables.



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Scottish company Atlas Cables had their new Grun cables on display as well as their 6-way EOS Modular 4.0 power distribution unit.



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Mytek launched their new Brooklyn class D amplifier at this year's show which compliments their Brooklyn DAC perfectly. They also had their Brooklyn DAC and new Clef on display, though someone was hogging that so no pics.



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Venusodio had this rather splendid 2A3 amplifier playing but what really stood out was the gorgeous wooden chassis.



Greek brand Lab 12 always put on a great static display at Munich and this year was no exception. As well as their power conditioners, DAC and valve based pre and power amplifiers this year they launched a brand new phonostage in the form of the melto 2.



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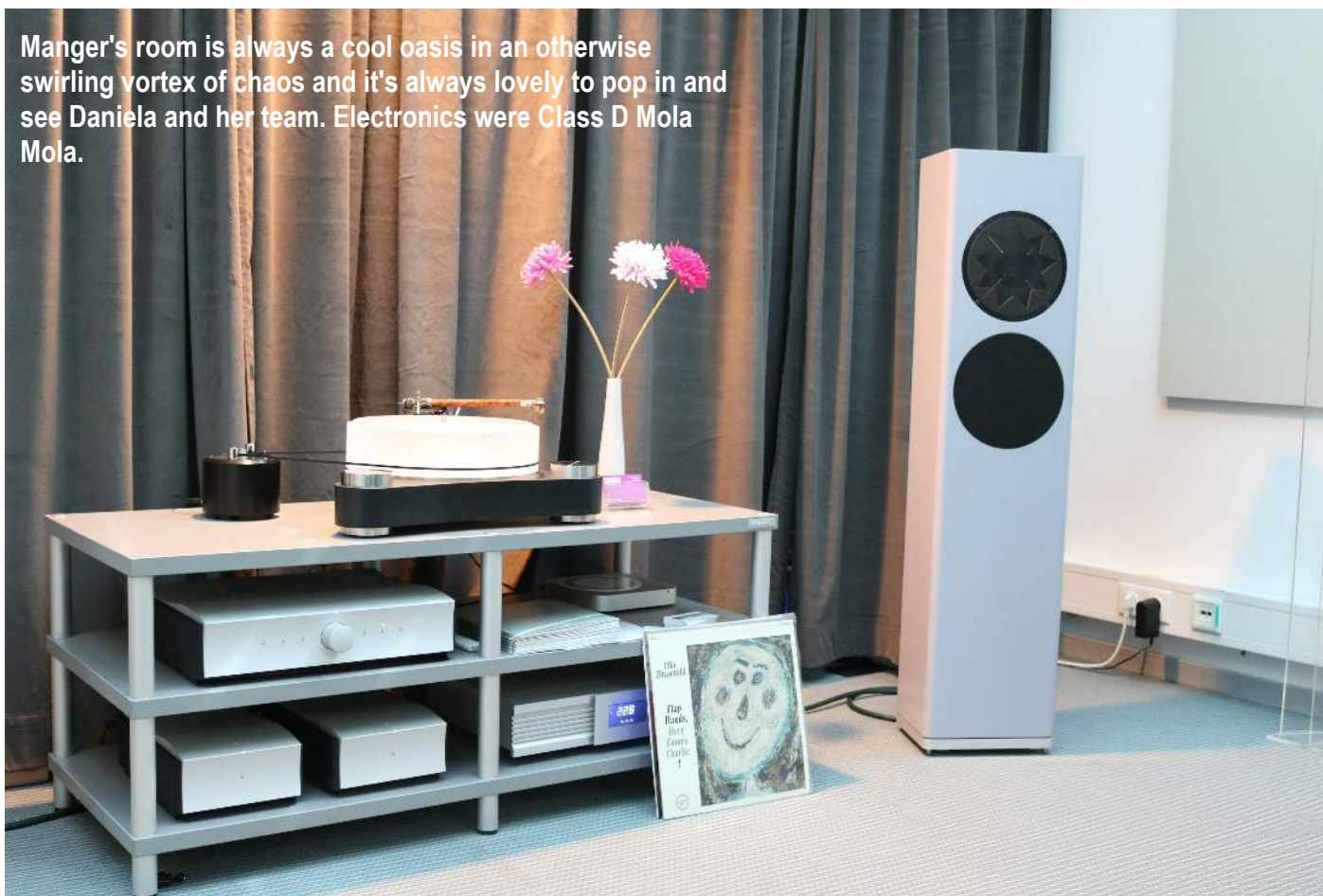
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Manger's room is always a cool oasis in an otherwise swirling vortex of chaos and it's always lovely to pop in and see Daniela and her team. Electronics were Class D Mola Mola.



Another room that is always understated and cool is the Estelon room. This year they launched their Lynx loudspeaker.



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Bulgarian brand Thrax Audio had their uber system on show and sounding very nice but also had in the window a new all in one product that they are very excited about. We chatted about this system and Thrax are very keen to say that this is the future of real-world audio. Sadly we didn't manage to get a usable shot.



Italian brand Diapason were showing off their new Dynamis loudspeaker using Vanden Hul Excalibur amps. The little boxes on top of the speakers are a new product that i initially thought was a super tweeter but was informed it's actually not. Whatever the gubbins inside the box it certainly seemed to add space to the stereo image.



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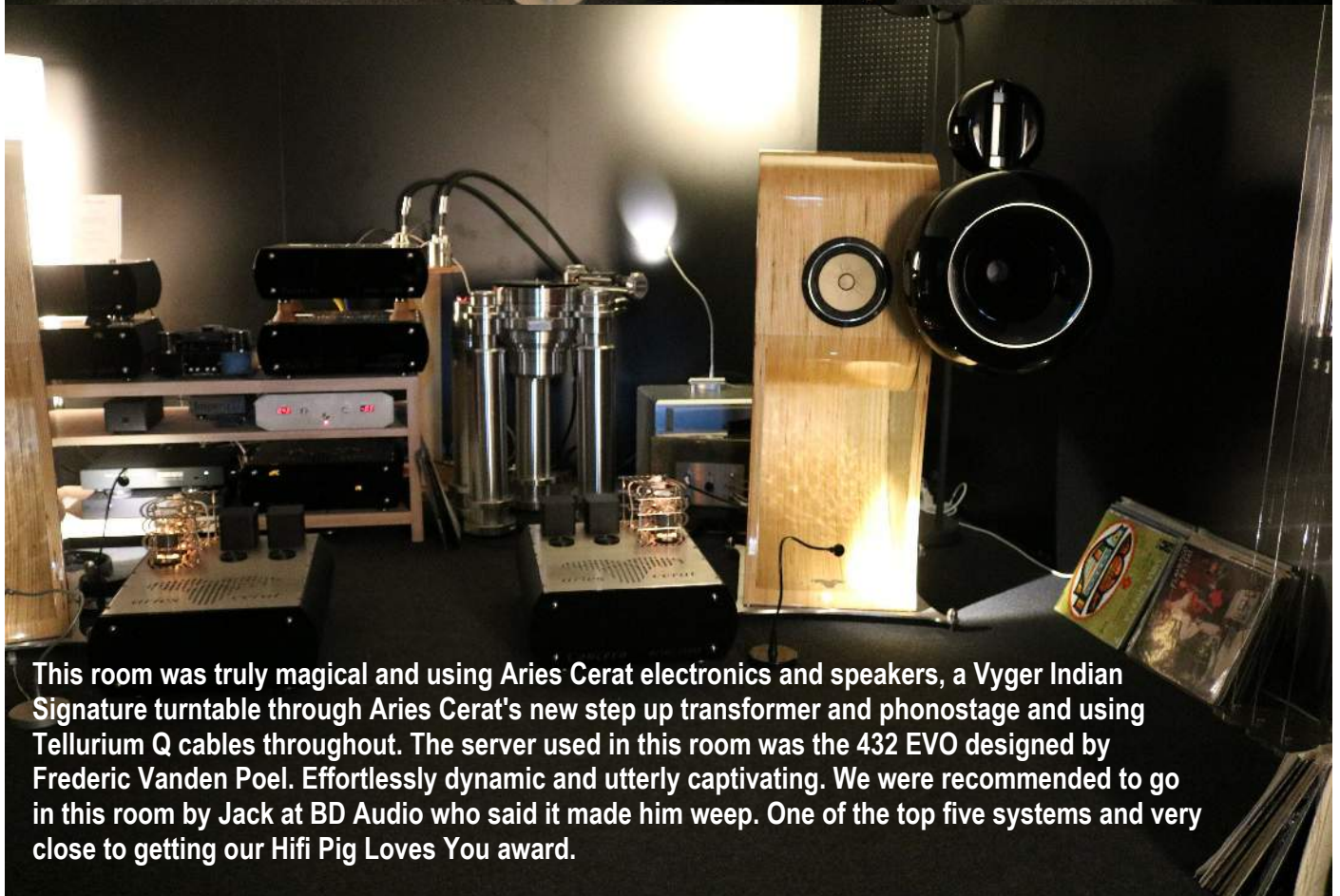
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This room was truly magical and using Aries Cerat electronics and speakers, a Vyger Indian Signature turntable through Aries Cerat's new step up transformer and phonostage and using Tellurium Q cables throughout. The server used in this room was the 432 EVO designed by Frederic Vanden Poel. Effortlessly dynamic and utterly captivating. We were recommended to go in this room by Jack at BD Audio who said it made him weep. One of the top five systems and very close to getting our Hifi Pig Loves You award.

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Netty and Fritz de With of STS Digital who make some rather nice reel to reel tapes and reels. The machine pictured is the highly desirable but appallingly named Ballfinger Tonbandmaschine M 063. This stand was absolutely hectic every time we passed!



Art Deco Audio certainly live up to their name with these valve amplifiers



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This was tucked away in a very busy corner of the show and sounded incredible. The big horns at the Grand Sfera from Azzolina and the smaller ones are the Hadron. Amps are Thomas Mayer designs.



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I've heard the Vox Palladians on a few occasions now but never have they sounded better than at this year's High end in Munich.

Absolutely stunning performance that just oozes class. Kevein asked if I'd be back later for some dub, "What time?" I asked. "I'll pop it on now!" came his response and so I was in there for another chunk. Expensive yes, but the craftsmanship and the sound are out of this world, to the point i turned to Linette and said "I'm selling you!" which went down well.



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YBA, like 3D Labs are made in France and are gaining a good reputation around the world. Unfussy and classy looking kit.



Davis Acoustics come from France and have very distinctive drivers. They sell DIY kits, drivers and finished loudspeakers that are all french made so something for everyone.

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Riviera Audio Laboratories are from Italy and were founded in January of this year. Luca Chiomenti is the company's audio designer and engineer. He has been designing and manufacturing Hi-Fi systems since the 1990s, Silvio Delfino deals with imports and exports and Marco Muzia deals with chassis design and manufacturing. I really loved the design of these products.



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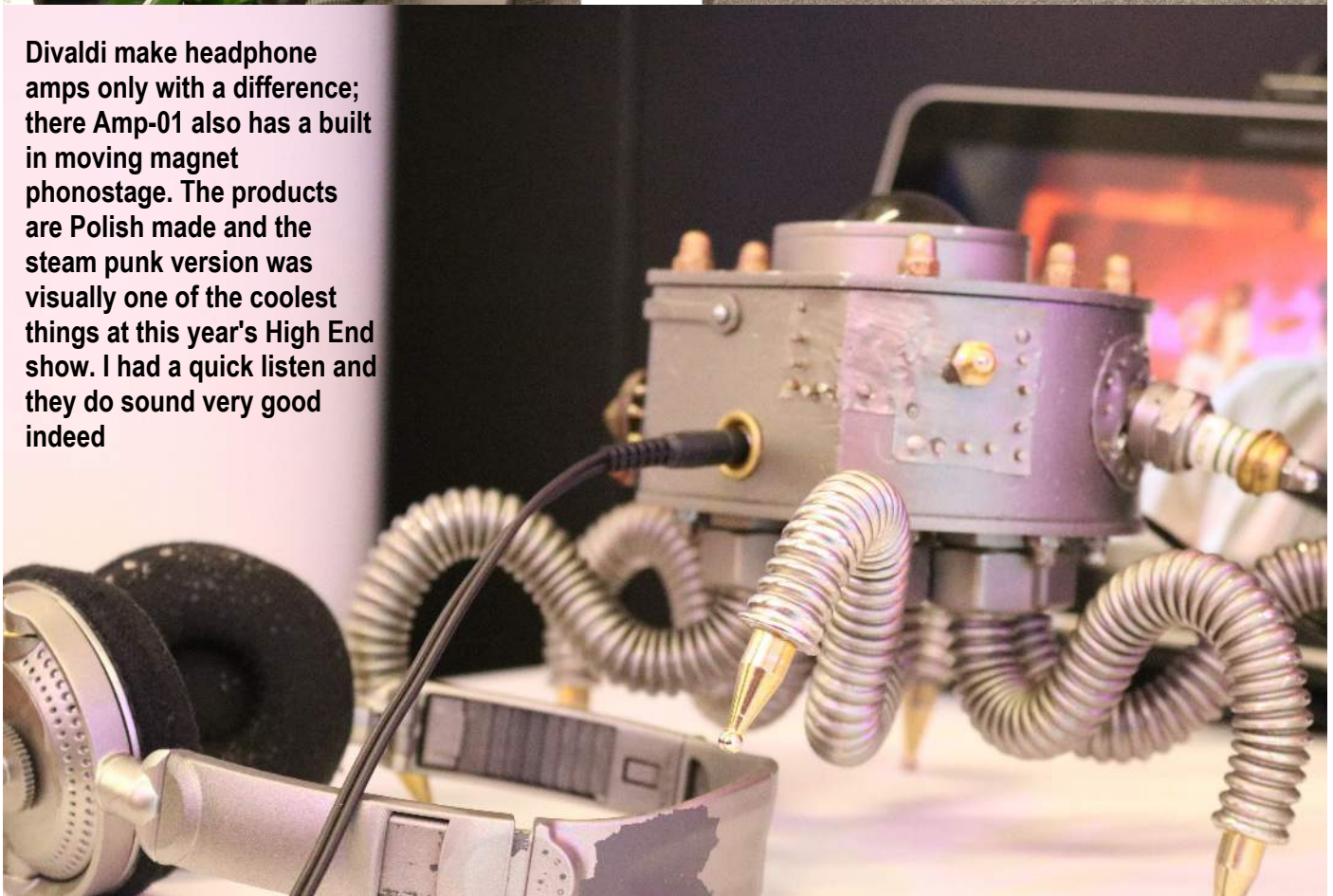


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Analog Domain electronics powering Stark Audio Jane loudspeakers. Jane is the newcomer to Stark's portfolio and aims to bring much of what their Emma



Divaldi make headphone amps only with a difference; there Amp-01 also has a built in moving magnet phonostage. The products are Polish made and the steam punk version was visually one of the coolest things at this year's High End show. I had a quick listen and they do sound very good indeed



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Stromtank was launched at High End last year with their S5000. The Stromtank S5000 is a high-power battery pack with integrated pure-sine wave converter power supply that disconnects your audio system from the grid and allows up to 8 hours listening to music before it connects uninterrupted and automatically with the grid to recharge. The S2500 is the same concept that allows up to 4 hours off grid time. I want one!



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Hungary Audio and Qualiton. Pictured is László Fábíán the Executive Director. I'm currently using the companies A20i in one of the systems we have set up and it is a very good sounding little amp with exemplary finish that many could learn from.



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Nico Memoli and his incredible looking Nime loudspeakers.  
Thanks for the wine, guys;)



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The Eclipse room sounded really nice but was very dark and this is the only shot we managed.



Some interesting looking speakers from Axiolab and Popspeakers. The Pop speakers were launched at this year's Munich High End and are an active model from the Italian brand.



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# High-End Munich 2017



Audioplus Laboratories come from Italy and make a range of amps and preamps, some of which use tubes

This was a really excellent room and Scott from CAD's demonstration of his grounding boxes was pretty impressive. Great to see The Chord Company at Munich too! The Boenicke speakers are really excellent and I've never heard them sound anything but. This room sounded great using their new amp. A great combination of electronics, speakers and cables that married together really well.



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This is a big money system featuring CH Precision electronics, Tech Das turntable and Vivid Giya G1 Spirit loudspeakers.



Kalista was born at the beginning of the 2000's in the workshop of a French Hifi handcrafter, the company Métronome Technologie, located in the countryside county of Tarn. Again completely made in France the Kalista CD player is a classic and sounded very nice indeed here at Munich High End. This CD player is definitely on the "must own" list.



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We like Portento Audio from Italy as they listen to suggestions. Cables appear to be well made and having used a pair of interconnects they perform well too...they wouldn't be in the TAD room otherwise.



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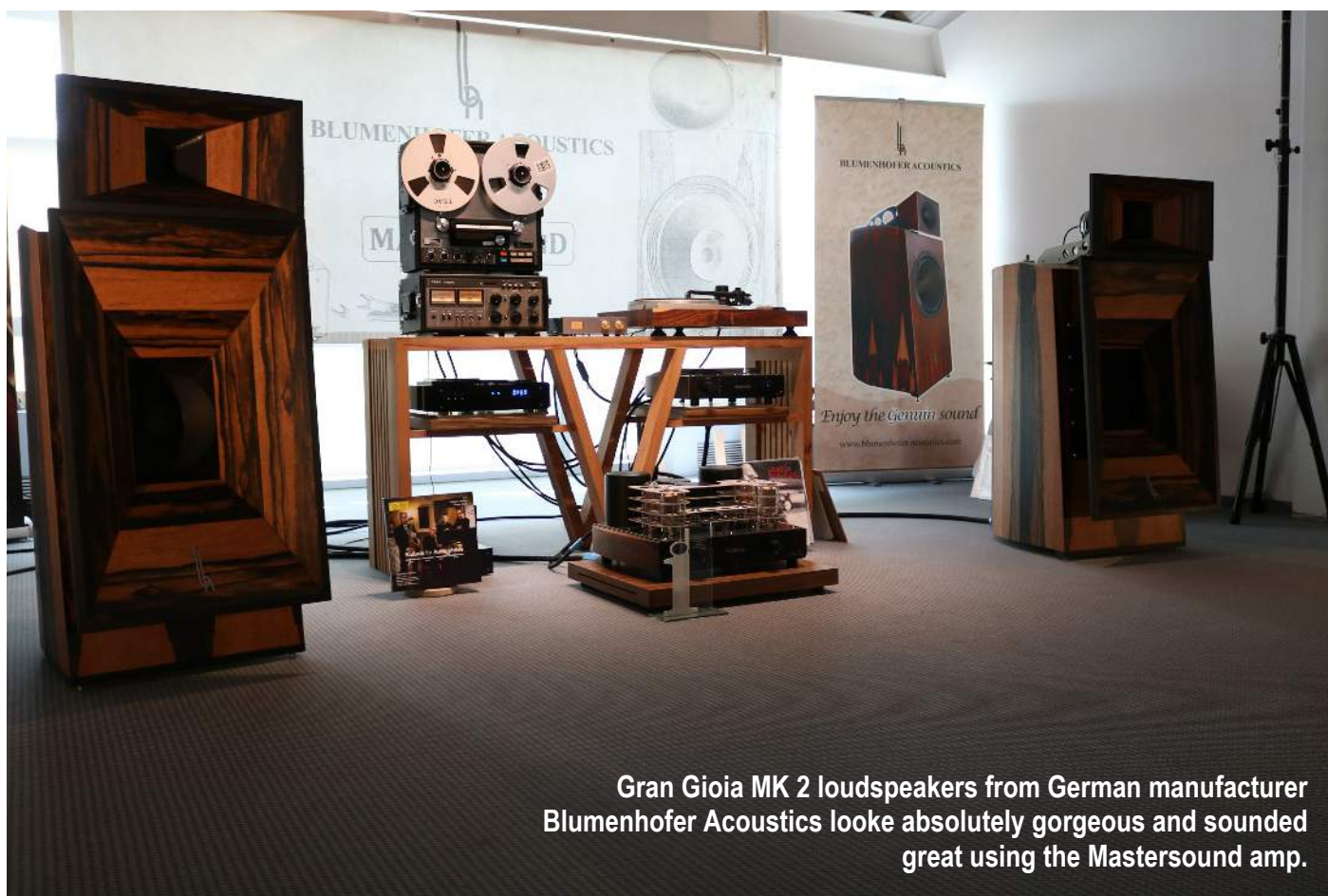
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# High-End Munich 2017



Gran Gioia MK 2 loudspeakers from German manufacturer Blumenhofer Acoustics look absolutely gorgeous and sounded great using the Mastersound amp.



Great sound needn't cost the earth as this room showed.



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On a static stand but you have to love the aesthetics of the Tektron amplifiers from Italy.



Now these Jern loudspeakers were really interesting. Ole Lund Christensen is the designer and inside their booth I was a bit confused as to why there was what appeared to be a witches cauldron in the room, was this some sort of witchcraft? Well no, the speakers are made out of cast iron...they weigh an absolute ton and sounded very good indeed in a holographic kind of way.



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TAGA make no nonsense audio and hifi gear that is affordable and accessible. The finish on the loudspeakers is insanely good for the modest asking price.



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Norbert Lehmann is a great character and he makes some fine products to boot. Latest out of this German company's factory is the Silver Cube phonstage. His wife Ulrike his wife is in charge of the innovative headphone gallery for neatly storing your cans.



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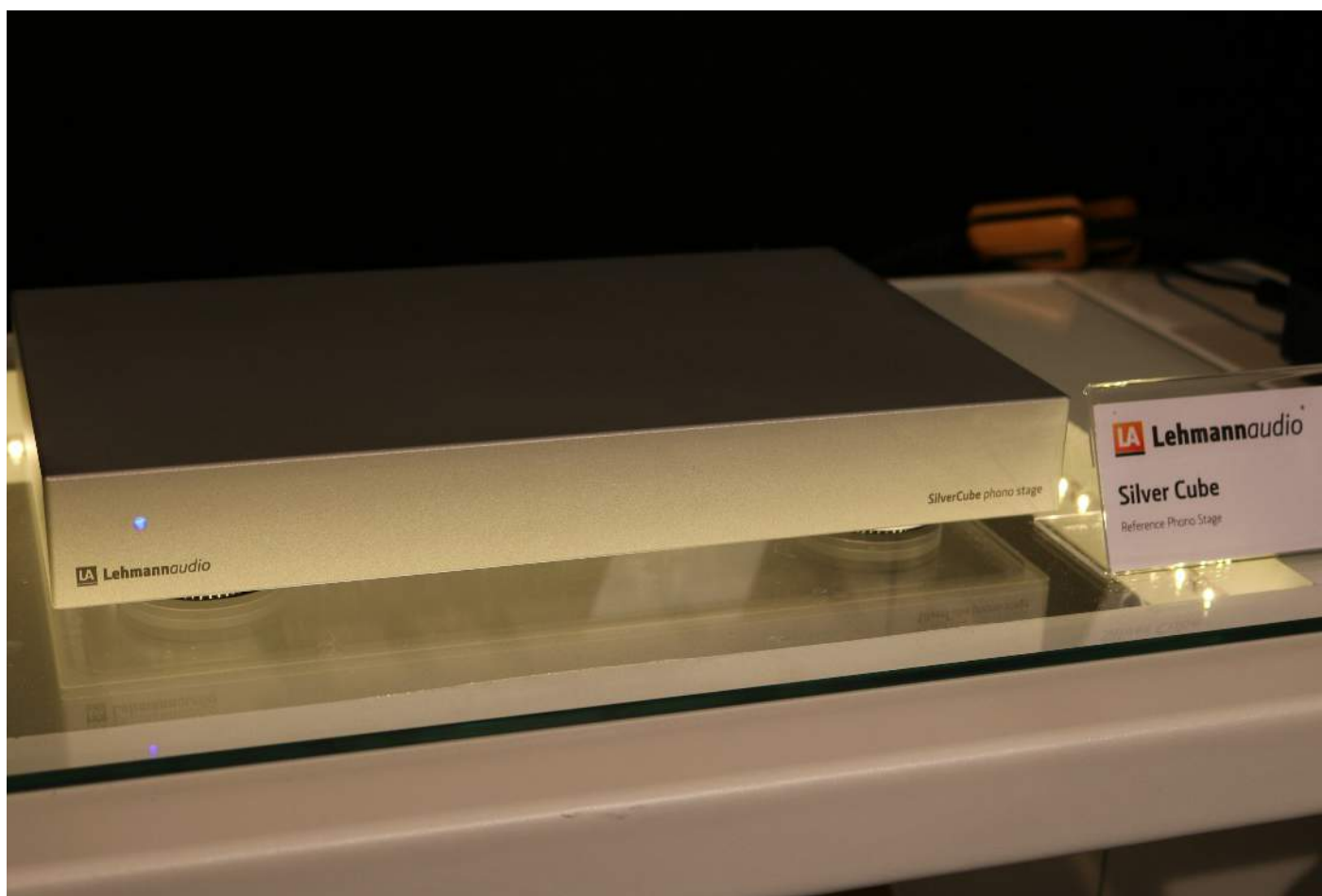
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Our reviewer Dan Worth loved the DiDiT DAC 212 so much when he reviewed it that he bought two of them.



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Falcon Acoustics JR149 loudspeaker will be recognisable to many but the company do a whole lot more besides



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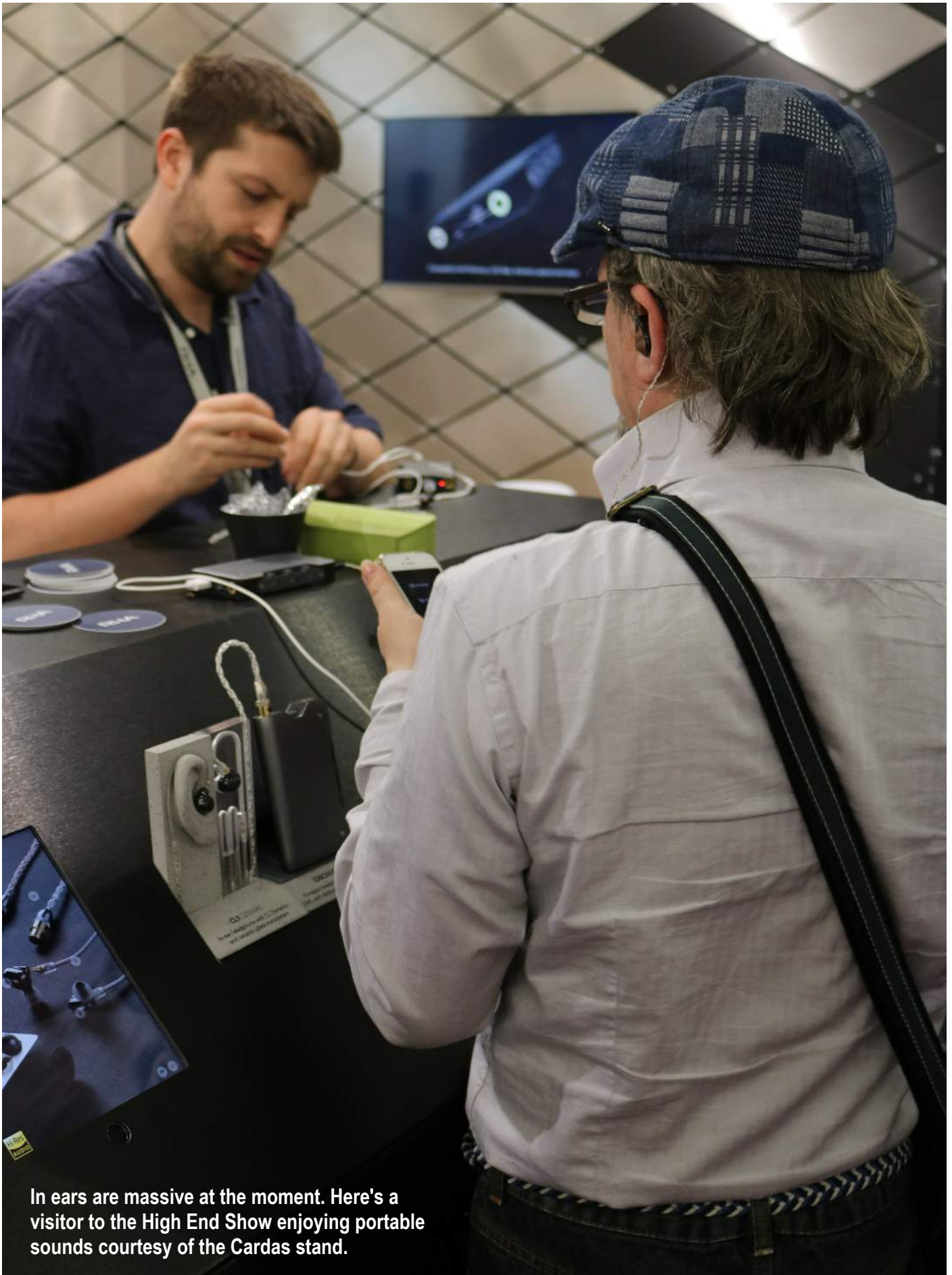
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In ears are massive at the moment. Here's a visitor to the High End Show enjoying portable sounds courtesy of the Cardas stand.

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Vinnie Rossi and his LIO preamplifier. Would like to get a listen to one of these sometime!



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Monitor Audio Silver series at High End.



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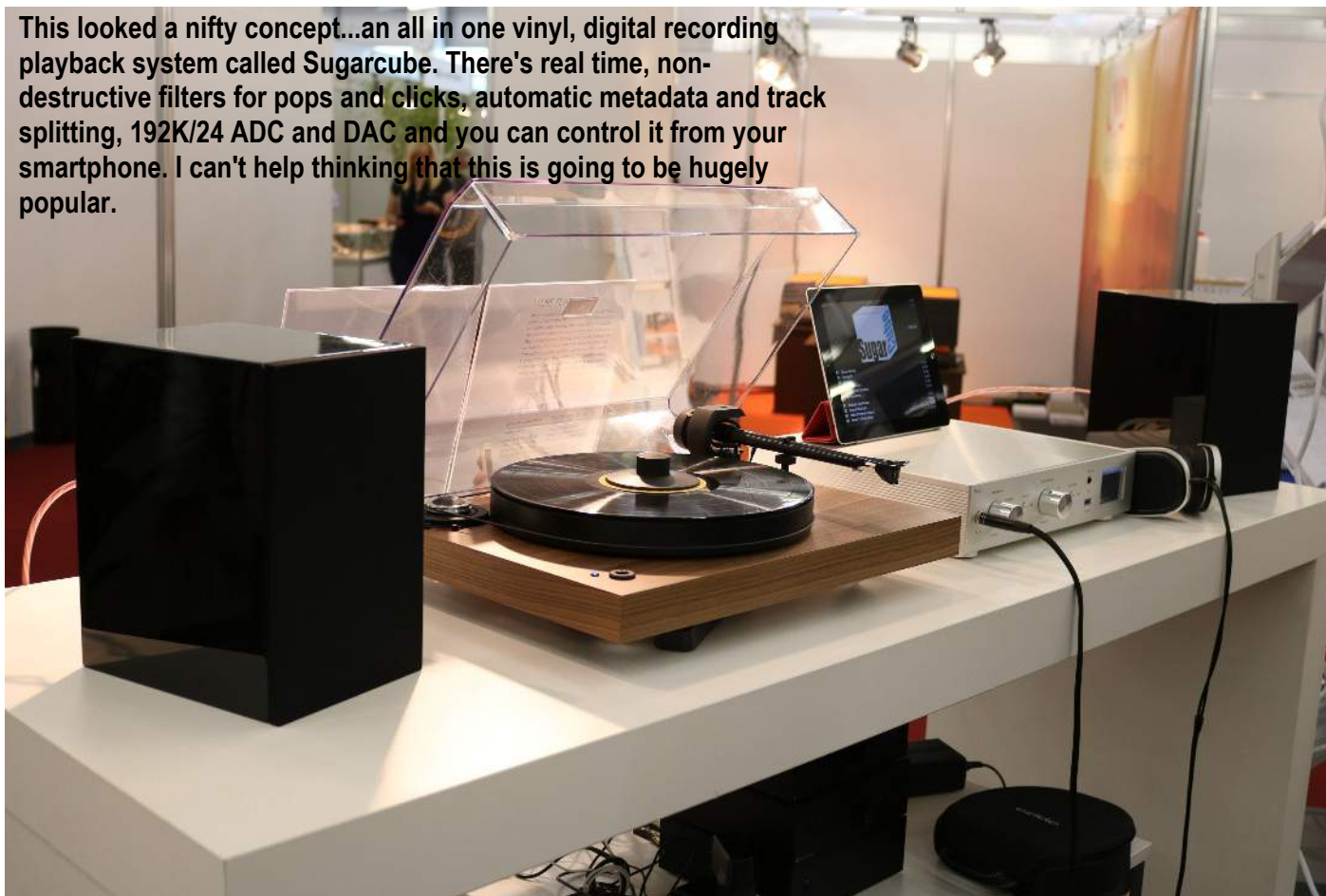
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This looked a nifty concept...an all in one vinyl, digital recording playback system called Sugarcube. There's real time, non-destructive filters for pops and clicks, automatic metadata and track splitting, 192K/24 ADC and DAC and you can control it from your smartphone. I can't help thinking that this is going to be hugely popular.



A Charlin pre-phono and power amps driving Triangle Signature Delta loudspeakers. Francophiles will love this as it's all French. I'm noting here that there is a lot of French brands here at this year's show.

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Really interesting coaxial loudspeakers from German brand Musikelectronic Geithain.



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Questyle Reference System Gold Edition.  
Wonderful and possibly as good as it gets  
on headphones.



Graham Audio were keeping up the British front.



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Mutec make reclockers for the professional audio market but they are moving into home audio in a big way. Watch out for this name in serious computer audio systems.



Such a shame to see the Music First Audio preamplifier on the bottom shelf outside Offensive Audio's cabin. I'd have loved to hear it in the system in there.



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SOTM make some great products at affordable prices....and of course higher end products, this year at High End they announce the SMS-200ultra mini music server.



More very serious high end in the form of Egglestonworks loudspeakers, Skogrand Cables and Triangle Art who supplied the turntables and amps.

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Gold Note from Italy do some great products and we highlighted their new phono stage in our Joy Of Decks feature around Munich High End. Here you can see Tommaso Dolfo from the company in front of the latest loudspeaker in their XT range.



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The Kronos pro turntable was in a good few rooms at this year's High-End and not one of the rooms sounded anything but great. ZenSati ApS handled the cabling big American valve amps from VAC, speakers were the Von Schweikert Ultras whilst APL HiFi dealt with the digital side of things. Racks were all Astoria Audio.



The Bittner Tonmeister tube amplifier. Expect to have to dig deep for this one as its bigger brother the 500 was close to €50K.

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Horch House and one of their many Studer tape to tape machines.



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KR Audio Kronzilla...the company makes the amps and the tubes to go in them. Awesome, even to look at!!!



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Mezza Audio use toroidal transformers in their amps and sounded great in the booth powering relatively inefficient Pylon Audio loudspeakers. A great pairing that won't break the bank.



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A great starter system from Triangle including powered speakers and a fully kitted out turntable for around €900.



Bespoke Audio make a lovely looking preamplifier that, as the name suggest can be made as you wish.



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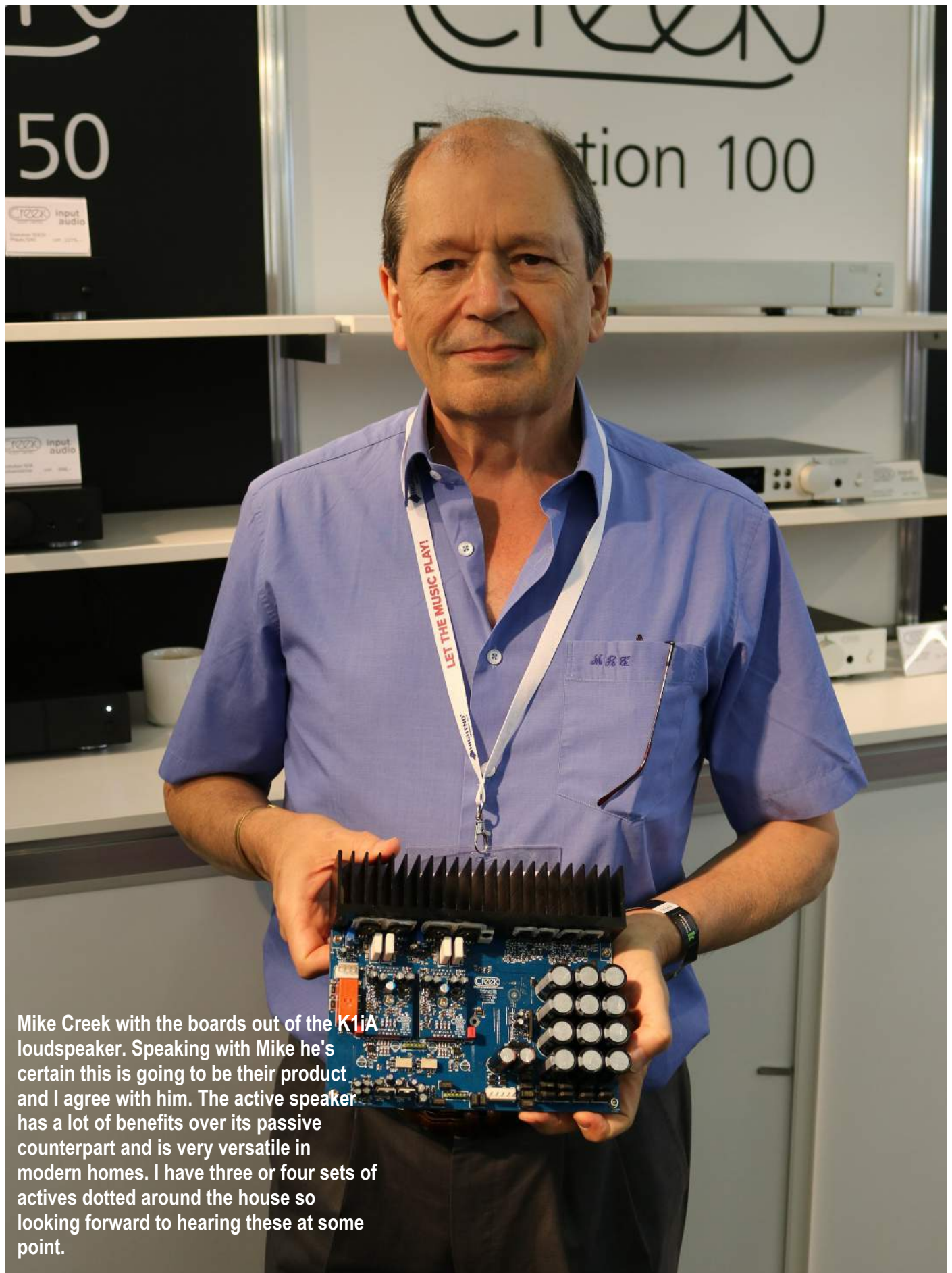


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Mike Creek with the boards out of the K1iA loudspeaker. Speaking with Mike he's certain this is going to be their product and I agree with him. The active speaker has a lot of benefits over its passive counterpart and is very versatile in modern homes. I have three or four sets of actives dotted around the house so looking forward to hearing these at some point.



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Hifi Racks seem to be at every show we go to and Bradley and Julie always put on a great stand....if you'll excuse the pun.



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Japanese headphone manufacturer Final.



GIK's stands are always lively affairs. At Munich they were showing off their new Gotham diffusors and impression panels. These are no nonsense products that just work and our listening room uses GIK products extensively, with more to be added soon.



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Sugden is a well know and well loved British brand and follow a strictly Class A formula with their amplifiers.



Innuos are everywhere at the moment with their Music servers and players. The Zenith shown here is very clever and certainly one of the best in class.



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A tasty looking Line Magnetic tube amp using the 845 valve. Line magnetic are an interesting company and make a whole range of amps, CD player and DAC but also some pretty interesting looking loudspeakers based on classic designs from the 50s.



Orpheus Lab electronics and Marten Coltrane 3s on what look like Townshend Seismic Platforms.

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Static display of Roksans looking classy.



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A whole lotta Bryston from Canada



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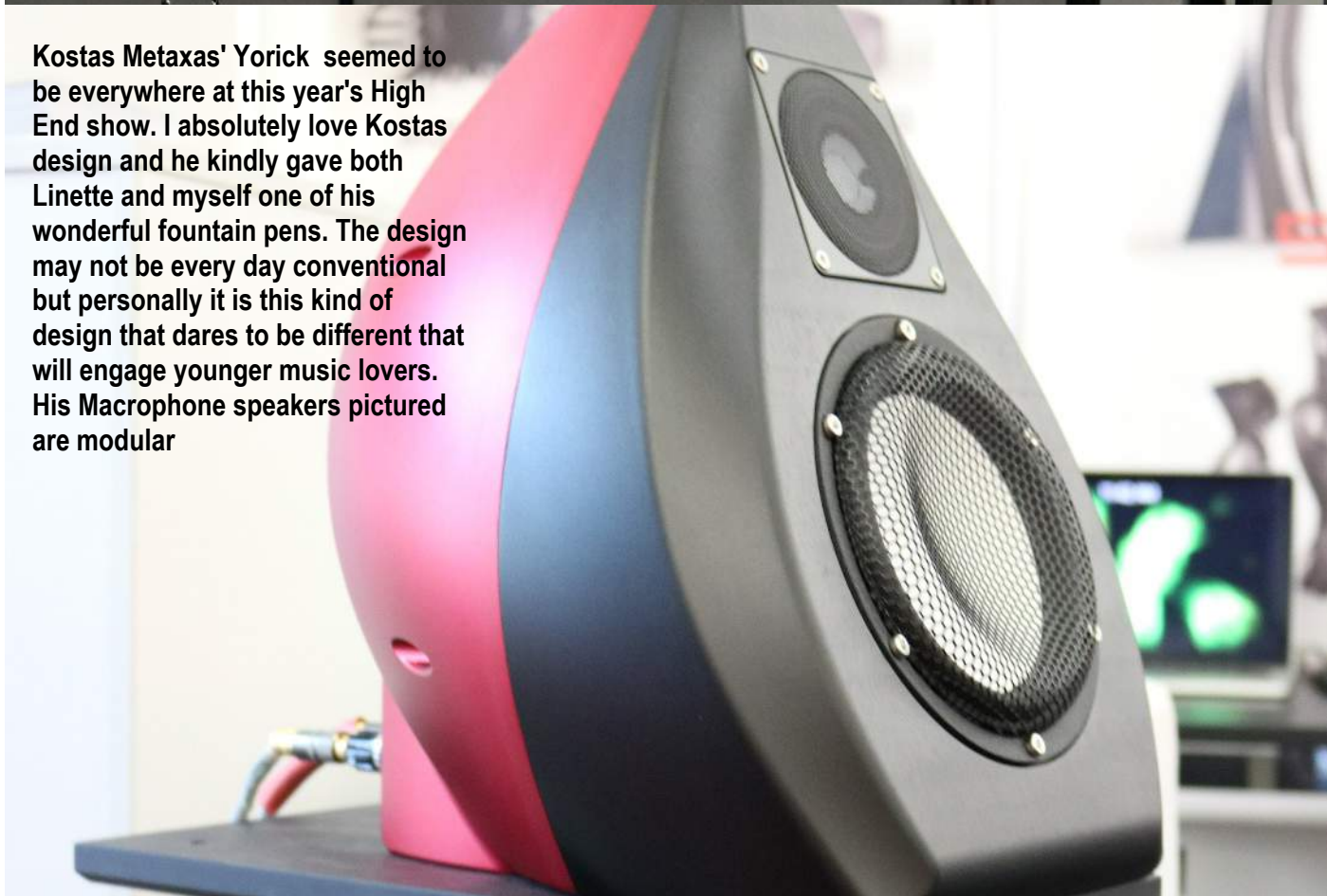




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Kostas Metaxas' Yorick seemed to be everywhere at this year's High End show. I absolutely love Kostas design and he kindly gave both Linette and myself one of his wonderful fountain pens. The design may not be every day conventional but personally it is this kind of design that dares to be different that will engage younger music lovers. His Macrophone speakers pictured are modular



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Quadraspire were in a lot of rooms at High End, with a good few choosing to use their X Reference rack.



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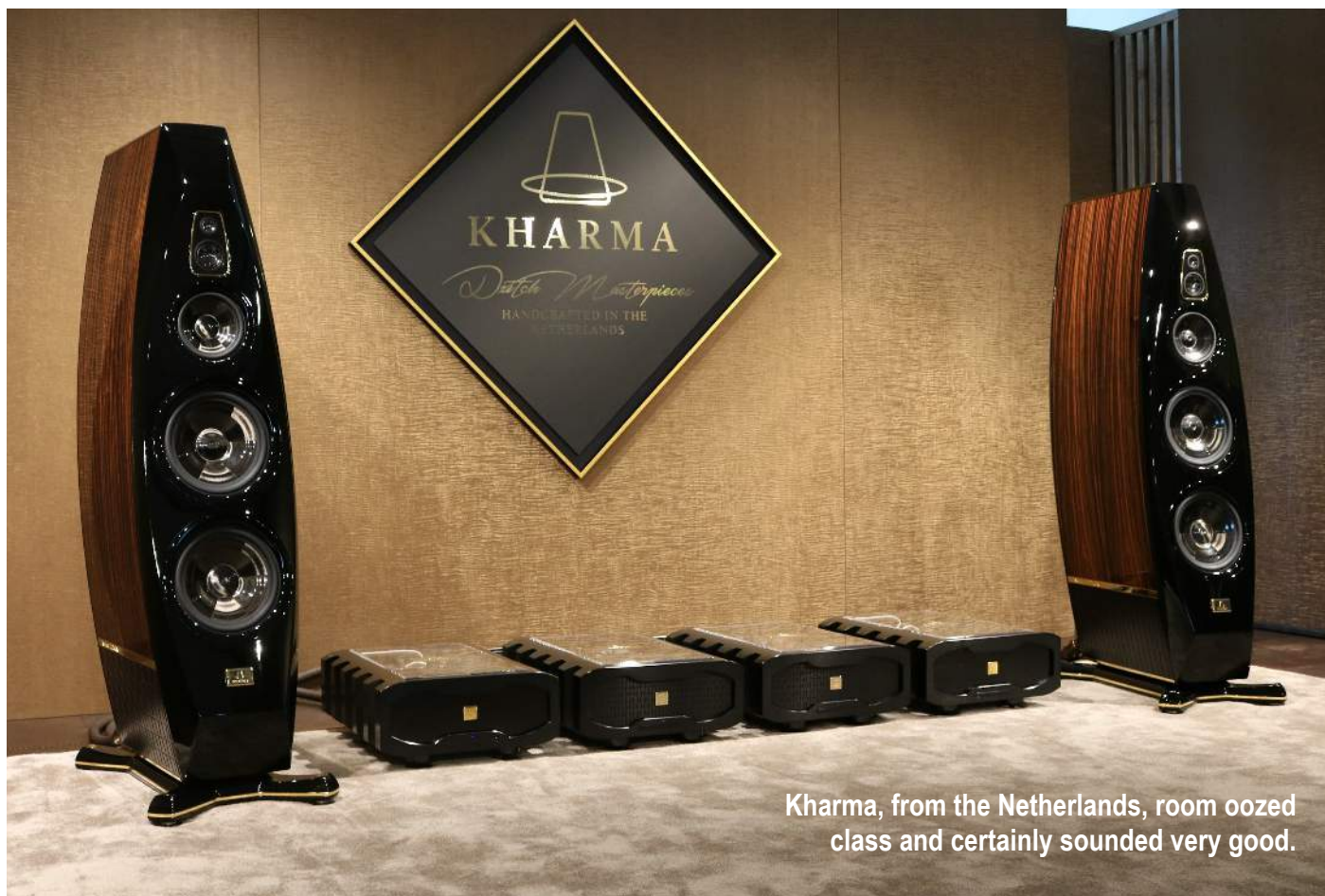
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Kharma, from the Netherlands, room oozed class and certainly sounded very good.



The Beast music server from ReQuest Audio based in Switzerland, and Absolare amps using the 845 tube certainly made this room sing.



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Atohm partnered with fellow french company Atoll Electronique (below)... the two are often seen at shows together.



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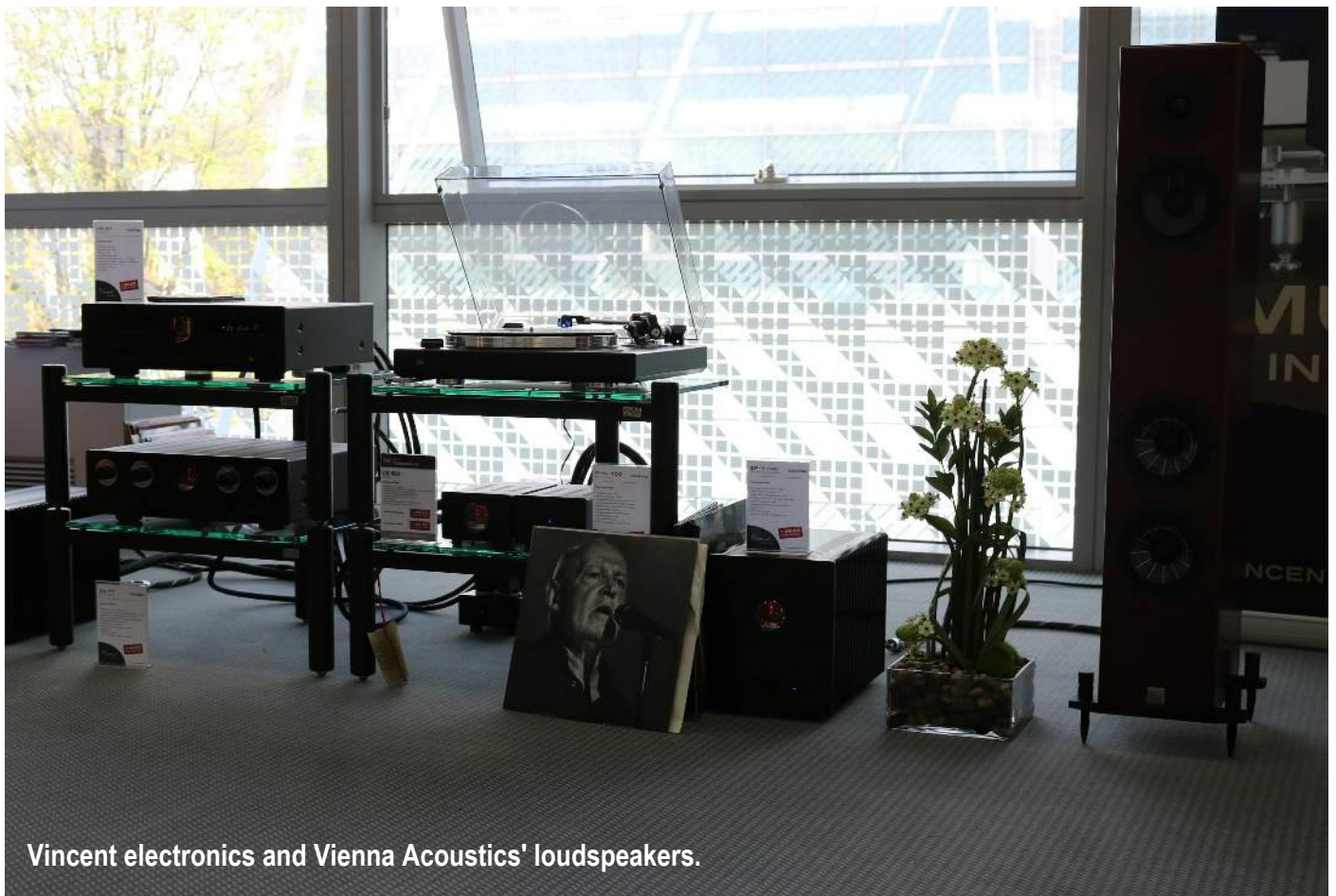
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Vincent electronics and Vienna Acoustics' loudspeakers.



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AVM and Gauder Akustik connected together using a full loom of O2A cables. O2A cables are made by Anna Robathin and she told us she is actively looking for distribution worldwide.



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Stenheim, Wadax and Fono Acustica were making some high-end sounds in this room. This was the world premier for the ATLANTIS digital line and consisted of the Atlantis transport (SACD, CD, Blu-Ray); Atlantis Server and the Atlantis DAC. Fono Acustica who are from Spain (we spoke to at last year's show) make some exquisite looking cables. Stenheim's Reference speakers moved the air powered by the American VTL Siegfried monoblocs.



Soulutions electronics, a De Baer Saphir turntable and Rockport Technologies' Cygnus loudspeakers. Racks are by Critical Mass Systems.

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Vandersteen loudspeakers, Harmonic Resolution Systems racks and Brinkman turntable and electronics.



From WOD Audio we had a Bergman Galder turntable with their Magne ST tonearm from Denmark through a Thrax Audio Orpheus phono stage, North Star Magnifico CD Player and Kubala Sosna cables

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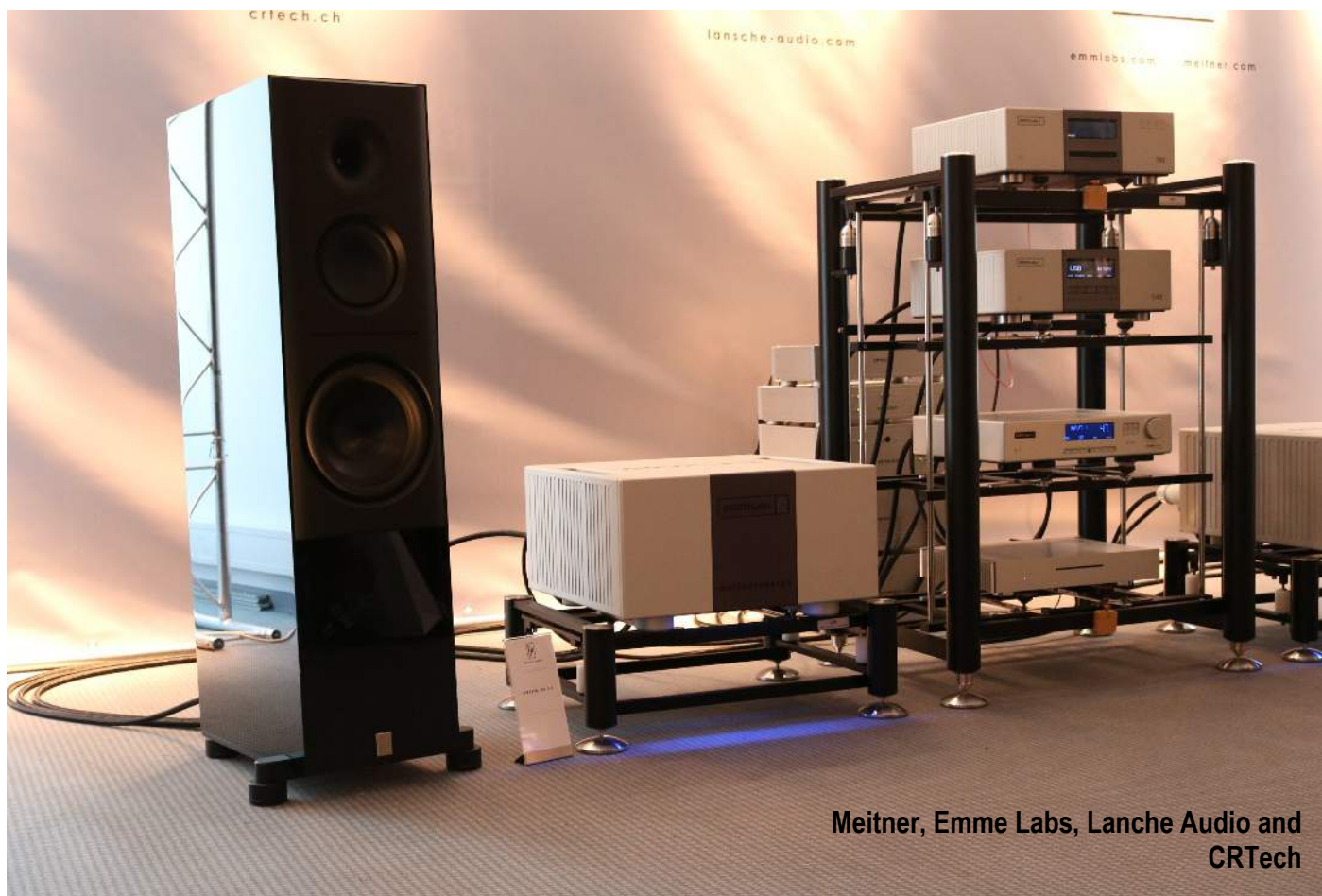
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Meitner, Emme Labs, Lanche Audio and CRTech



We heard these speakers from Audio Exklusiv last year in a little booth and were really impressed and so it was good to see them in a bigger room at this year's High End.

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I'm not a huge fan of surround systems but this one using speakers by Vivid and Electronics by Trinnov certainly impressed...like being on stage with the band.

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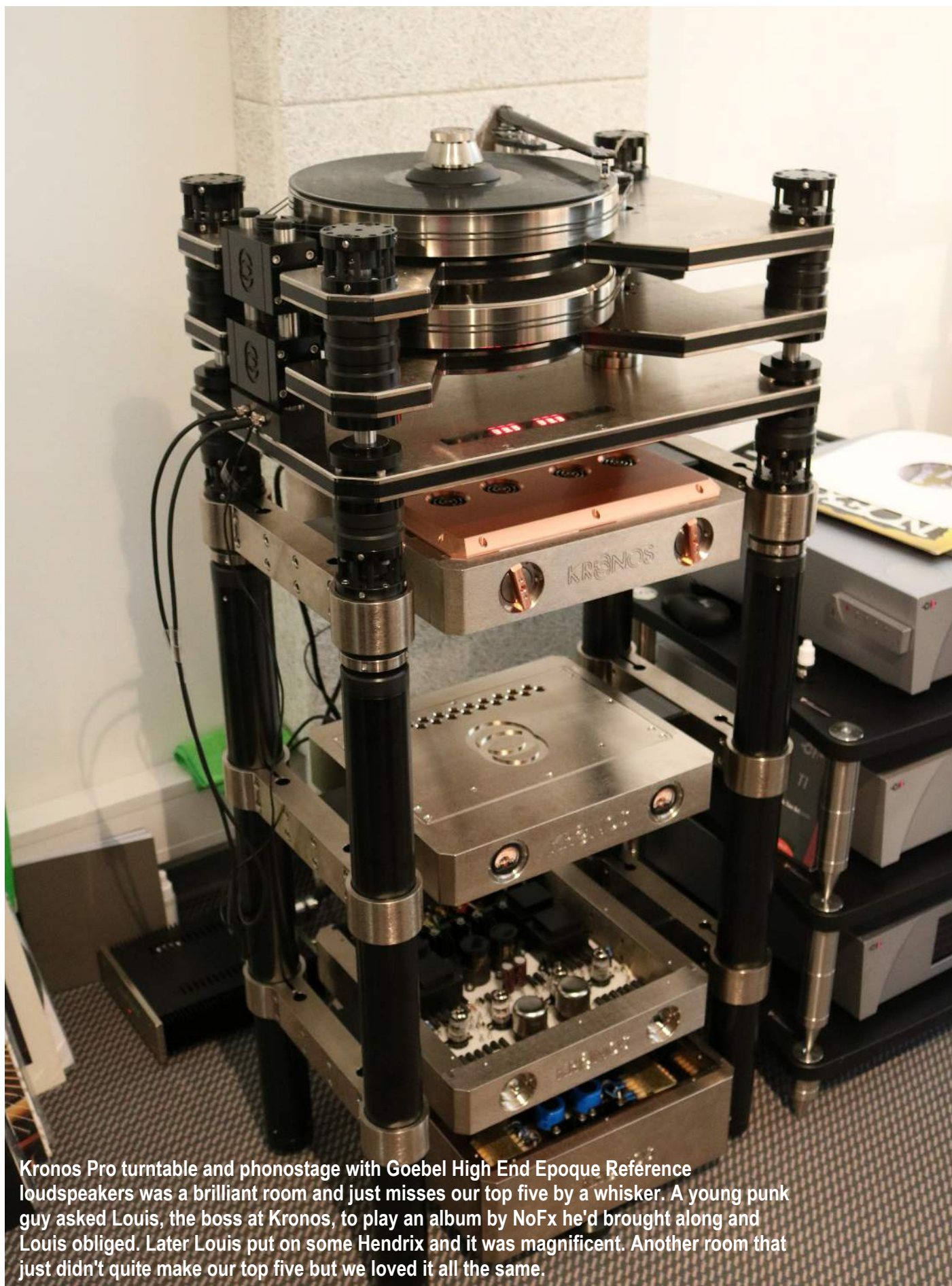


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Kronos Pro turntable and phonostage with Goebel High End Epoque Reference loudspeakers was a brilliant room and just misses our top five by a whisker. A young punk guy asked Louis, the boss at Kronos, to play an album by NoFx he'd brought along and Louis obliged. Later Louis put on some Hendrix and it was magnificent. Another room that just didn't quite make our top five but we loved it all the same.

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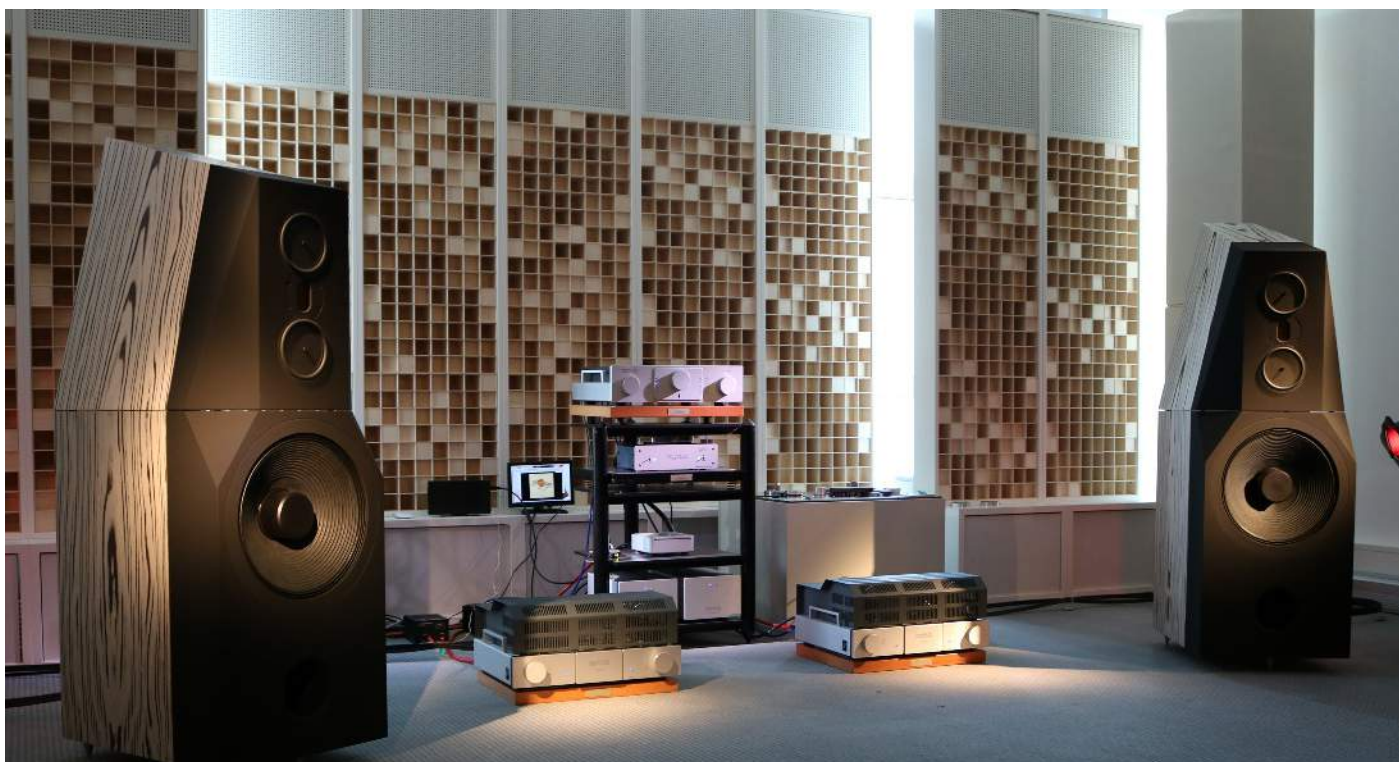
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FINKTEAM are a group of Audio Consultants and this was their prototype loudspeaker at last year's show now made into a product for sale and called the WM-4 costing €65 000 and available July/August of this year. Preamplifier on the top of the rack is the Octave HP700 feeding down to their MRE 220 power amplifiers. This was a great room that missed our top six by a hairs breadth.



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A full Esoteric rack feeding a pair of Bowers and Wilkins 800 series loudspeakers. This was a really nicely thought out room with a fresh and airy feel to it. Don't let the kids and their sticky fingers near it though.



Lots of goodness from Moon by SimAudio including a humongous pair of 888 power amps sat atop specially made Quadraspire stands.



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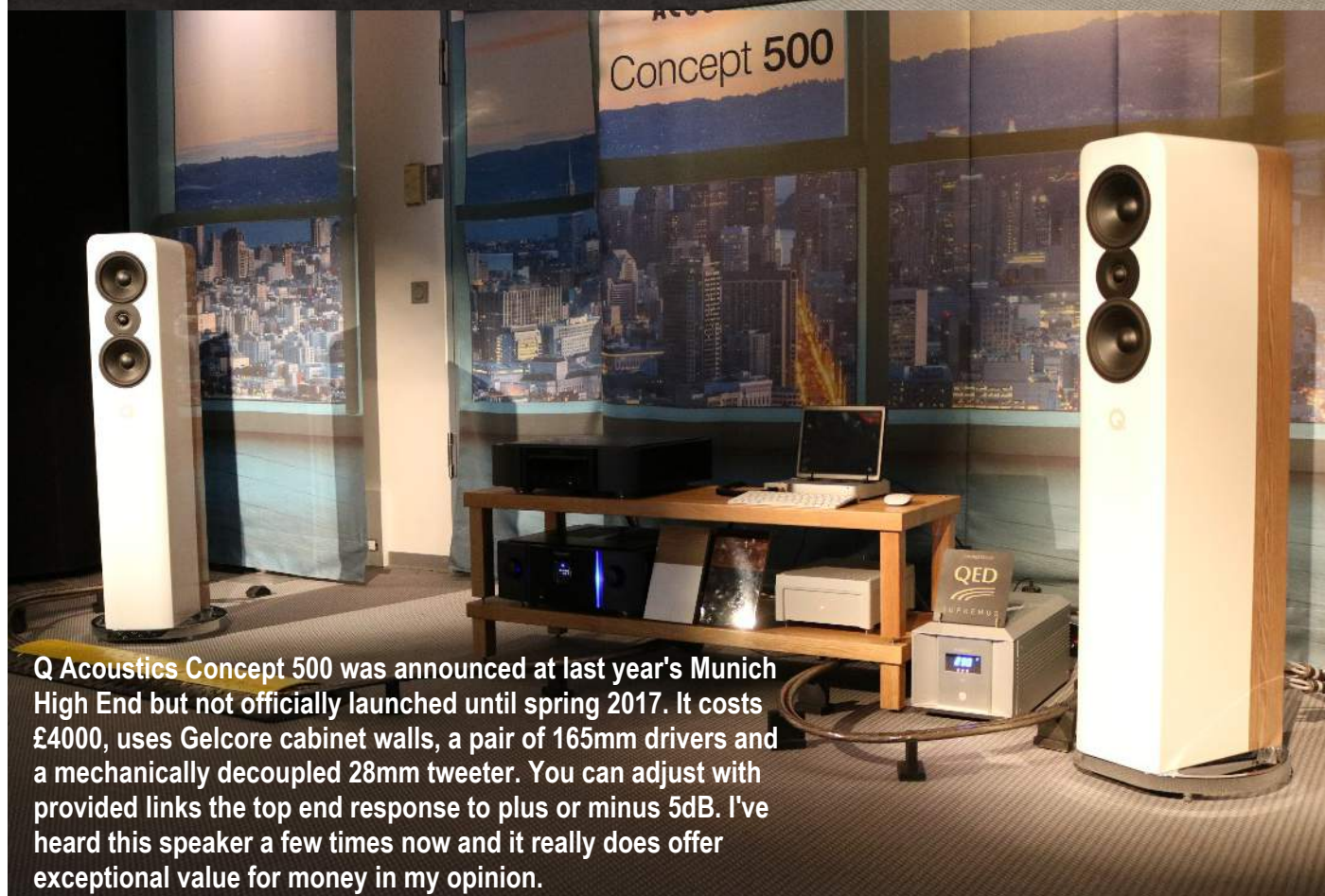


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AUDIODATA  
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Speakers are the Audiodata Art 1 using active electronics for the woofers. Stands are by Falkenohr and electronics are soulution.

Falkenohr



Q Acoustics Concept 500 was announced at last year's Munich High End but not officially launched until spring 2017. It costs £4000, uses Gelcore cabinet walls, a pair of 165mm drivers and a mechanically decoupled 28mm tweeter. You can adjust with provided links the top end response to plus or minus 5dB. I've heard this speaker a few times now and it really does offer exceptional value for money in my opinion.

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Anthem and Paradigm. The Persona 7F loudspeaker from Canadian company Paradigm was brilliant powered by the Anthem STR integrated amplifier. Frequency extension is claimed to be down to 18Hz!



French electronics from Atoll and German loudspeakers from Audium. We've had these loudspeakers in the house and they are very good given the point source full range driver and the integrated sub.

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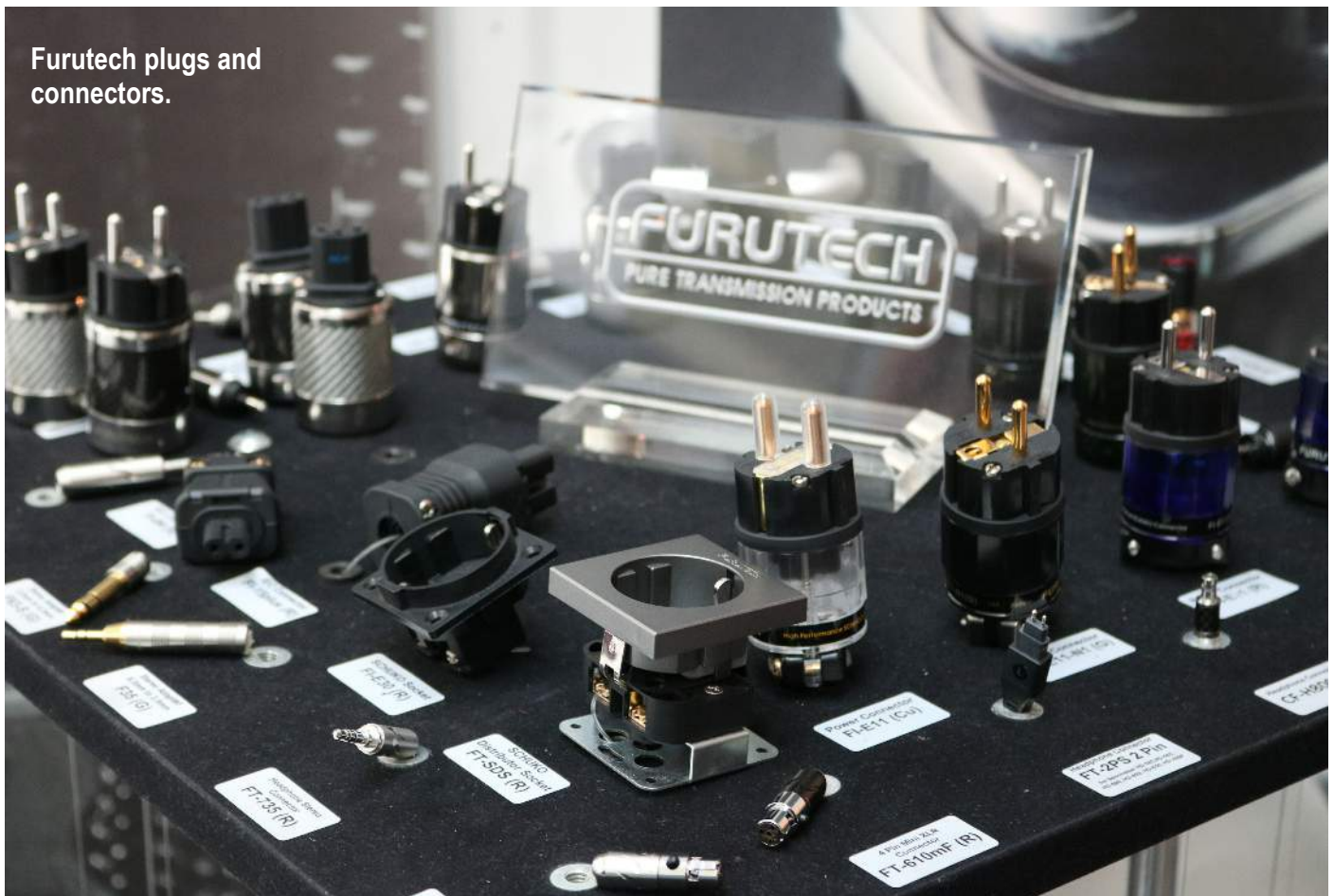
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Furutech plugs and connectors.



Fischer and Fischer are loudspeakers that are made out of natural slate and look beautiful. The speakers nearest the stand are the company's SN/SL 470M and the ones on the outer edge are SN/SL 670. Electronics are AVM and power sockets etc are MudRa Akustik.

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Music should be about FUN and Avantgarde Acoustic certainly brought that to this year's High End with the brilliant performance of Oded Kafri through Trio horns and the 6 bass horns in the centre. I've been dying to listen to the full Trio/6 Bass horn set up and I was not disappointed at all. They did play music too when Oded wasn't playing and I could have sat in this room all day, but then I'm biased as our reference speakers are the Avantgarde Duo XD pictured centre in the last image. The wonderful people pictured next to the Trios are Holger and Beate Fromme who own the company. Easily in top five of the show for me without a doubt and very close to winning our Hifi Pig Loves You award!!!



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Conrad Mas at AVID Hifi must never stop. Everything you see on the rack was new for this year's Munich High End. Everything looks stunningly well built and looks great with it's industrial design. And in the window Conrad was proud to show off his new range of tonearms that you can see in our Joy Of Decks. AVID are previous winners of our Hifi Pig Loves You Award.



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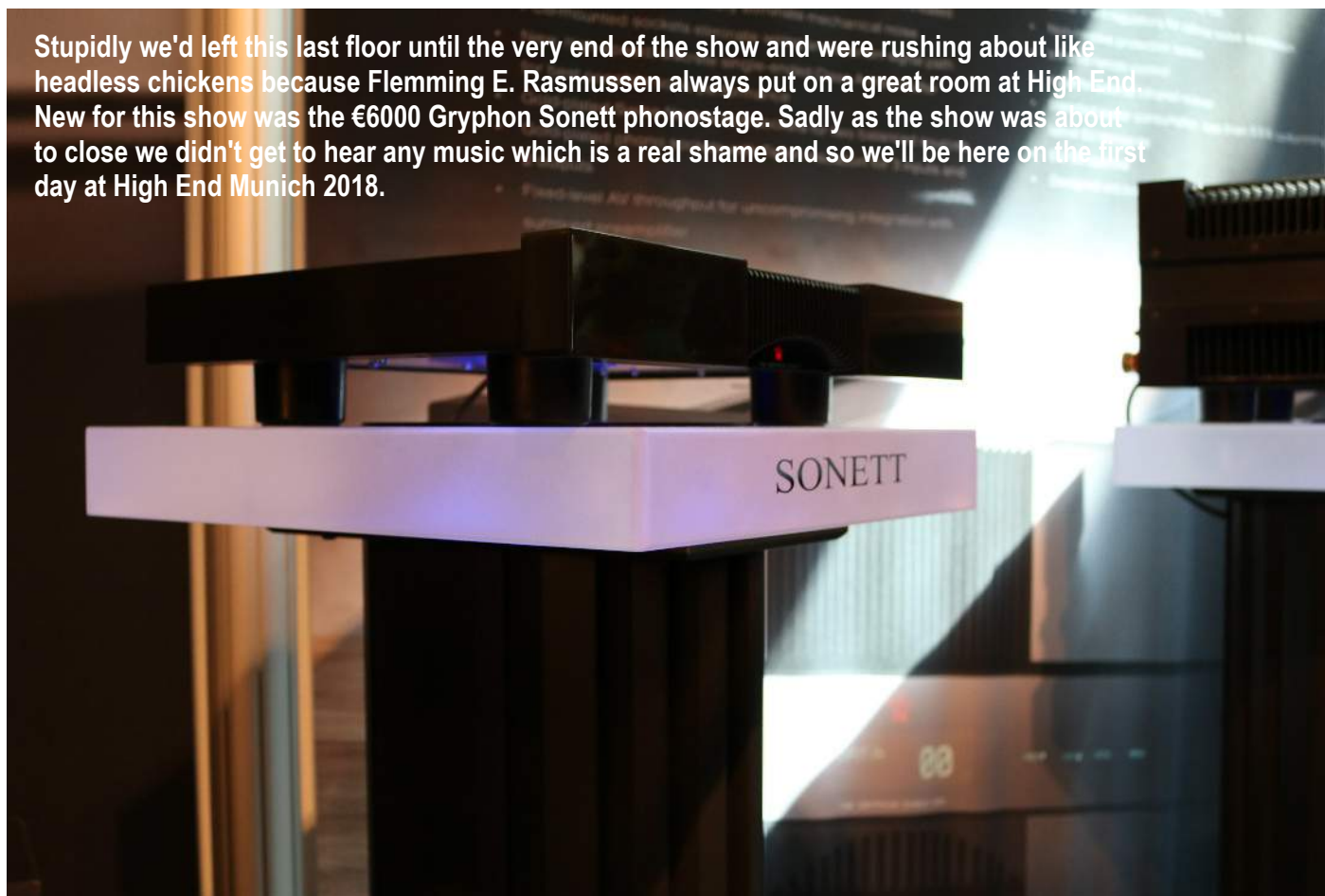
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Stupidly we'd left this last floor until the very end of the show and were rushing about like headless chickens because Flemming E. Rasmussen always put on a great room at High End. New for this show was the €6000 Gryphon Sonett phonostage. Sadly as the show was about to close we didn't get to hear any music which is a real shame and so we'll be here on the first day at High End Munich 2018.



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T + A's room was an oasis of white calm where they had a whole load of



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# High-End Munich 2017



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Dali Spektor 6 and their sub certainly moved the air in this AV room.

Uber cool display from Amphion.



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BMC electronics and speakers.



Time really was running out for us which is a shame as these sounded very interesting. Live Act Audio is headed up by Dieter Molitor and Markuz Reitz and the speakers in front are from their Emotion Line whilst the bigger ones to the rear are 512 from their Reference line of speakers.

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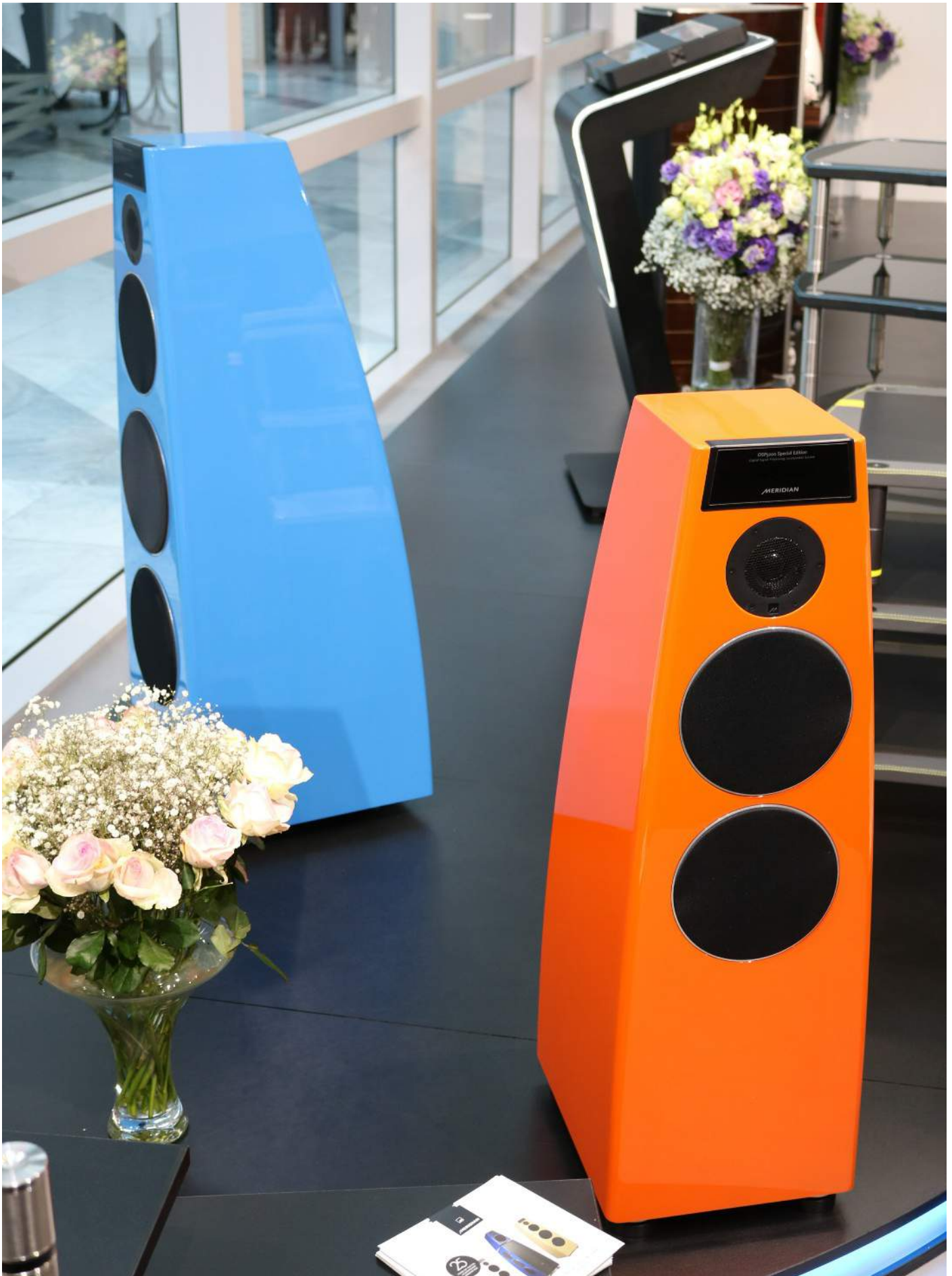
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Octave (In a good few nice sounding rooms) were partnered here by Blumenhofer loudspeakers that again we saw in a good few rooms.



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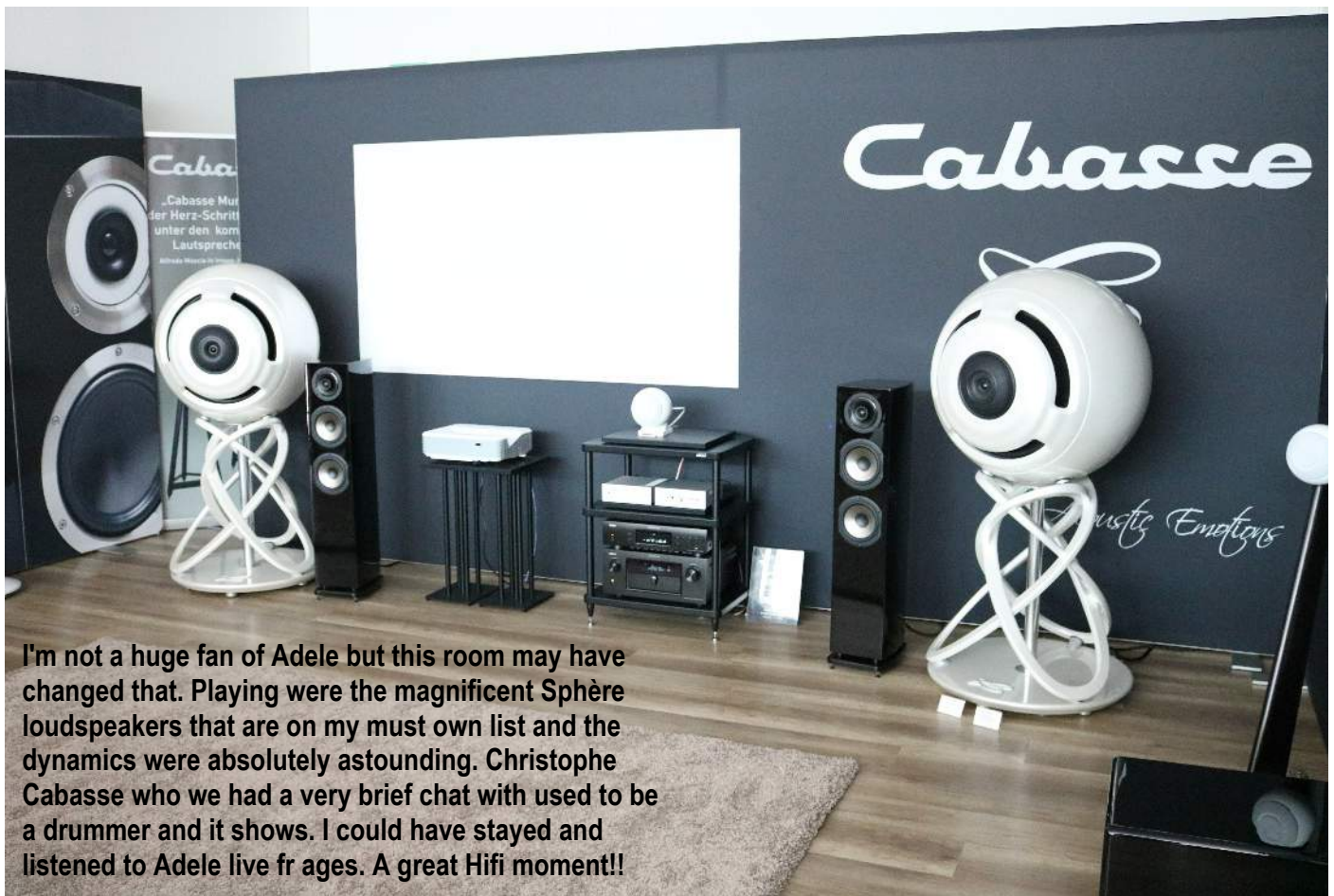


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I'm not a huge fan of Adele but this room may have changed that. Playing were the magnificent Sphère loudspeakers that are on my must own list and the dynamics were absolutely astounding. Christophe Cabasse who we had a very brief chat with used to be a drummer and it shows. I could have stayed and listened to Adele live fr ages. A great Hifi moment!!



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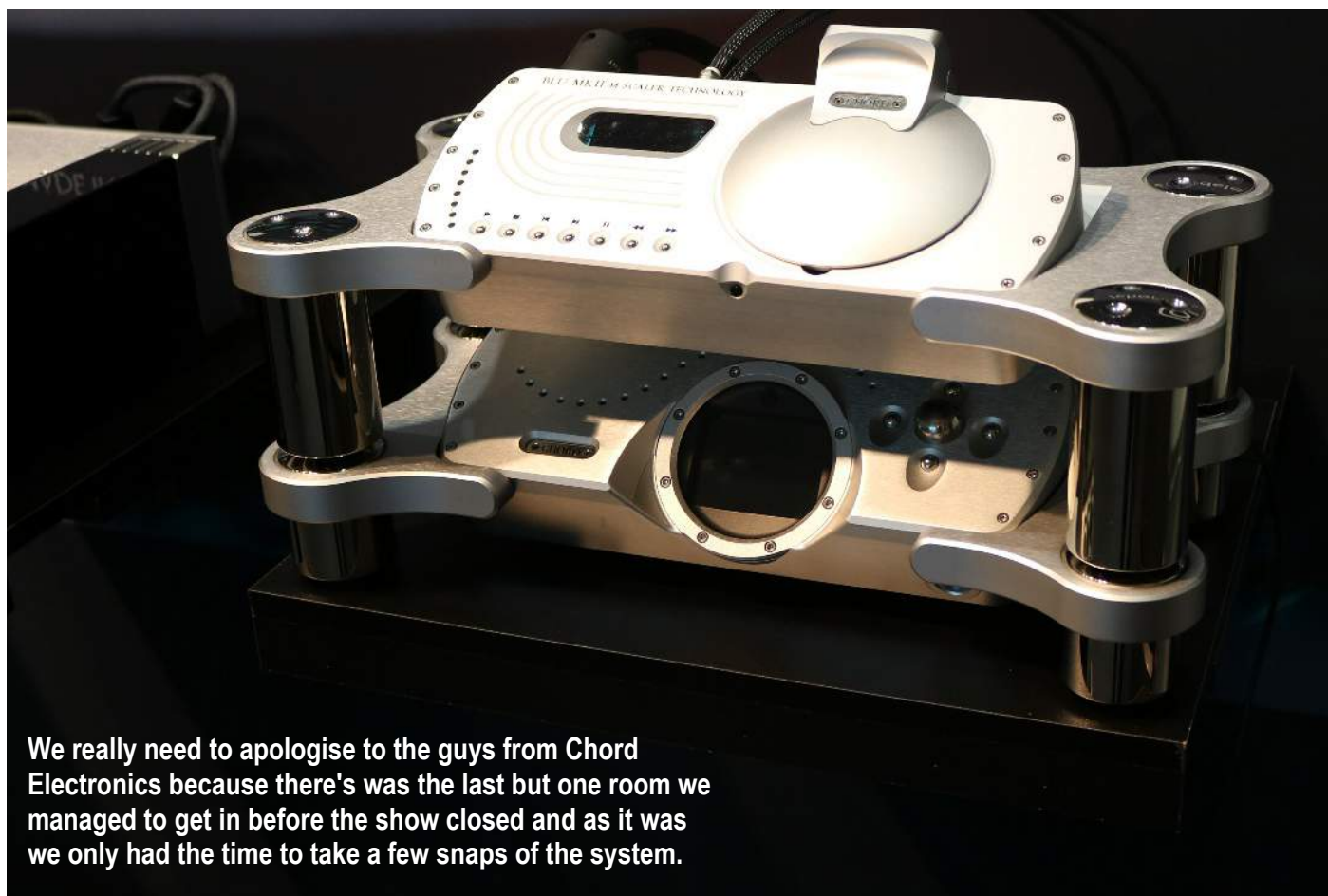
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We really need to apologise to the guys from Chord Electronics because there's was the last but one room we managed to get in before the show closed and as it was we only had the time to take a few snaps of the system.



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# The Hifi Pig Loves You Award

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It's that time again, when we announce the winner of our High End Munich "Hifi Pig Loves You" Award. There has been a real mix of winners over the years and different hifi shows that we attend. From high end manufacturers to local hifi dealers and even a music enthusiast for his talks at the Cranage show. Last year's High End Munich prize went to British brand Avid Hifi. It is not just for the best sound at the show, though of course that is a part of it. We also take into account how the people running the room treat their audience, the effort that they have taken putting the system and the room together and the kind of music that they play. Hifi Pig loves rooms with a sense of fun, that look like are enjoying themselves and are not scared to play something a little out of the ordinary for a hifi show. Generally it's a tricky one to judge, especially at the High End where the standard is incredibly high and we often feel torn between several rooms.



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So out of the overwhelming array of amazing ear and eye candy at the show we managed to narrow it down to a few final rooms. All of these moved us, they had put a lot of work into their rooms, got the ambience right...the works. It was very, very difficult to choose between them...so here's our four (in no particular order) runners up and our winner of the Hifi Pig loves you Award Munich 2017! (Use the widget at the bottom to turn to the next page!)

## Avantgarde Acoustic

OK, so their room is stunning every year, they have a huge room that allows for a big listening area and static displays. Holger, Beate, Armin, Peter and the rest of their team are always on hand to give information, advice or just have a chat and they are always very welcoming to all. We've been so impressed with them over the years that we bought the Duo XDs straight after hearing them at High End Munich 2015. As usual the Avantgarde Acoustic room was packed.

The static display was a real eyecatcher of Uno, Duo and Trio XDs in bright turquoise in front of a seascape backdrop. The main room had plenty of seats and an egg-yolk yellow set of Trios with all six basshorns. However, this year the Avantgarde team wanted to shift things up a gear and they wanted to have fun. When we went in on Sunday there was an electronic drum kit set up in front of the Trios and we managed to time our arrival with the start of an amazing spectacle. To a packed house (there was barely even standing room) Oded Kafri proceeded to leap about drumming, dancing, and singing with an extremely energetic show. It was loads of fun. It was not what you might expect from one of the world's highest end loudspeaker manufacturers but as Holger told us, Avantgarde Acoustic really do want to bring the fun back to hifi. Well done guys!

## Tune Audio, Trafomatic, Audiobyte, Rockna and Skogrand Cables

They say that big is beautiful, and nowhere more so is this true than at High End Munich! We have been very impressed with the Tune Audio Animas in the past and they were pretty sizeable beasts, however the new Avaton three way horns are even more gigantic and the sound, the sound was fantastic and incredibly dynamic...really a case of the actual listening experience matching up to the visual impact of the system. The Trafomatic Elysium amps worked very well with the Avatons and all the components really 'sang' together.

It was a totally international room with Tune being from Greece, Trafomatic from Serbia, Skogrand is Norwegian and Audiobyte and Rockna from Romania. I really love the fact that the High End show brings nationalities together like this, sharing rooms and a love of music. There was an incredibly warm welcome from the people running the room and the atmosphere was a pleasant as the sound!



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## Aries Cerat with Vyger, Tellurium Q and 432 EVO

When someone, whose opinion you trust about high end hifi, tells you that a room sounds so beautiful it moved them to tears...you make sure you go into that room and have a serious listen. Jack at BD Audio had not steered us wrong! A visually stunning room featuring Aries Cerat Symphonia horn loudspeakers, that are wonderfully made from wood, and their hefty Concero 65 monoblock valve amplifiers, plus more of their electronics. There was an equally stunning Vyger Indian Signature turntable, 432 EVO music server and the system was fully cabled with Tellurium Q Silver Diamond with Ultra Silver power cables.

Now this is all very high end gear, it's big and unashamedly bold so a feast for audiophile eyes as well as ears. They were playing classical music when we went in, normally not something that appeals to me but if music that I don't normally listen to can captivate me then it's a good sign. It really was simply stunning and definitely one of the best sounding rooms at the show...also one that we will make a beeline for next year and hopefully get to hear a wider variety of music too.



## Cabasse

Cabasse had the most recent version of their wonderful La Sphère loudspeaker system on show (along with a lot of more affordable gear too). We have heard these speakers several times, including at a private listening session at their coastal Brittany HQ, and have always been extremely impressed with the 'liveness' of their sound. Appropriate then that they had a set up with a big screen and were playing an Adele concert in their room. Now, I'm not really much of an Adele fan but there is no denying she is a great performer and through the Cabasse system it was really like being at the event live and in person.

Christophe Cabasse had cranked the system up to give the audience a treat and they seemed to be enjoying it immensely. The precise and lively quality of the system was particularly evident with drums, something we have noticed before and it makes sense when you know that Christophe is himself a drummer. Another case of high end hifi letting it's hair down, being fun and making it about the music!



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## And the winner is.....

As I mentioned earlier, this year's show has been particularly difficult to judge because of the very high quality of many, many exhibitors. There are many more who get mentions in our main coverage and we really thought that the High End Show had turned it up to 11 this year. Speaking of which, that is one of the reasons our winner won...they just topped expectations and we were not the only ones to think so, the winner of our Hifi Pig Loves You Award at High End Munich 2017 is....

## Living Voice

The Living Voice room is always impressive. When you are measuring the cost of the system in tens, sorry make that hundreds, of thousands of pounds then you expect to get something super special. This is the highest of the high end and you can't fail to have a bit of a 'wow' moment when you walk in. For a start, just look at them!

with any old electronics. Kondo is a natural partner for them and the electronics were all very high end quality (see kit list and prices below for further info). Taking precision to the next level they even bring their own battery 'power station'...and they have to bring this all by lorry from the UK, setting off the week before the show, that is dedication for you!



The Living Voice room is always on the top floor of Atrium four, it has become a must see for most show attendees and as a consequence it is always packed. This year however we took the sensible option of visiting on the first day and managed to get a seat. We were not disappointed. Kevin and Lynn Scott are very into music, they always play a lot of classical and opera as Kevin is particular into this genre. Then Kevin put some Dub on, I didn't know the track but it was just amazing, this high end system was perfectly suited to non classical. It was all a bit goosebumps and chills, music just enveloping you and carrying you away. It has always sounded magical in that room but this was really another, and totally unexpected, level.



This year Living Voice showed their Vox Palladian Basso system. Recognisably Living Voice like their predecessors the Vox Olympian, they had a glorious European walnut satin finish laid in a sunburst motif. The distinctive bronzework was finished in a rich mottled chocolate through an artisanal process of hand patination and Carnauba wax. The quality of the workmanship was stunning and they are hand-built in England. Of course they don't just pair speakers of this quality

There is not much more to say really, we were not the only ones to notice how good it was...we kept bumping into people we know around the show and it was always 'have you heard Living Voice yet???'. We told everyone we met to go for a listen. Kevin and Lynn are also lovely people, they are very professional, look after their customers and anyone who comes in to their room, they are down to earth and love music. We are very pleased to give them our Hifi Pig Loves You Award and can't wait to see what they do to top this at High End Munich 2018.



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## Living Voice Comment On Winning The Hifi Pig Loves You Award

"Thank you. It's such a thrill to accept this award given the immense competition at the show. We try to create a unique ambience in our room and to push the boundaries of convention; both musically and aesthetically. The Munich Hi-End show is THE place to showcase new products and demonstrate our system developments, and anyone who's seriously interested in high end audio is there. It's our job and objective to offer a thrilling and memorable experience to the biggest international audience. We are already planning and looking forward to next year."

**Lynn & Kevin Scott**

### The System

Living Voice Vox Palladian and Palladian Basso horn loudspeaker system in European Walnut satin finish laid to sunburst motif £450,000

Neodine Origine S2 CD Player £40,000 And Canary CD300LV CD Player £7,500

Kondo Gakuoh 300B mono amplifiers £70,000

Kondo M77 preamplifier £40,000

2 x Living Voice G3 equipment tables £16,000

Assorted Kondo speaker, power and interconnect cables.

Second system

Living Voice OBX-RW3 Piano Black finish £14,000

The Beast music server £35,000 And Canary CD300LV Cd Player £7500

Kondo Keron Integrated 300B amplifier £45000 Or Kondo Gakuoh 300B mono amplifiers £70,000

Kondo M77 preamplifier £40,000

Living Voice G8 equipment table £35,000

Assorted Kondo speaker, power and interconnect cables.



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