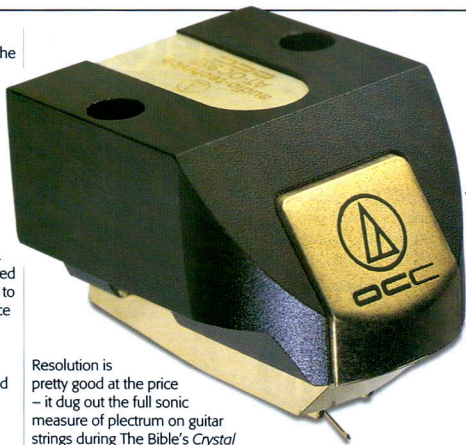
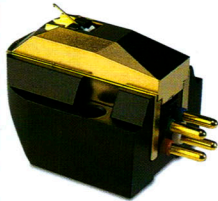


AUDIO TECHNICA AT-OC9ML

This beautifully turned-out design from AT exemplifies the aesthetic appeal of a well made cartridge. It's small but, like a perfectly cut jewel or an intricate watch mechanism, the precision craftsmanship is immensely satisfying. This low(ish)-output moving coil design sports excellent fit and finish, and incorporates a gold-plated beryllium cantilever supporting a nude square shank stylus. A cleaning brush is supplied and, if you have an old cartridge to trade in as part exchange, its price is cut to £249.95.

SOUND QUALITY

Performance is even-handed and well controlled, with a smooth delivery that's easy on the ear.



Resolution is pretty good at the price – it dug out the full sonic measure of spectrum on guitar strings during The Bible's *Crystal Palace* – but the cartridge's macro-dynamic and rhythmic qualities are left a little wanting.

Compared with the more invigorating MCs at the price, voices sound a little recessed and percussion subdued. Its tone is pleasant, but the instrumental images it produces are a touch soft and smeary. Soundstaging has

decent front-to-back depth but shows a lack of width, and busier mixes sound rather congealed. Performance is civilised and cultured to a degree, and might suit those seeking a smooth performance with relaxed music, but there's more involvement to be had at the price.

TB

"Performance is civilised and cultured to a degree, and might suit those seeking a smooth performance with relaxed music."

VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£330.00

A beautifully finished cartridge with a sound that's smoothly detailed, but also rather unexciting.

ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Audio Technica, Technica House, Unit 2, Royal London Trading Estate, Old Lane, Beeston, Leeds LS11 8AG
(0113) 277 1441

SPECIFICATIONS

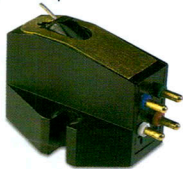
Type:	moving coil
Weight:	8g
Output:	0.4mV
Recommended tracking force:	1.5g

DYNAVECTOR DV-20XL

Japanese company Dynavector has long been among the most admired of cartridge makers, renowned for a consistently high level of performance. Here we have a neatly constructed moving coil cartridge with a traditionally low output, put together to the maker's usual high standard and featuring an aluminium body and cantilever.

Inside this body lies Dynavector's flux-damping coil, there to soak up excess magnetic flux that can be detrimental to sound. Another 'unique' element in this design is the use of iron to focus the magnetic field.

There's a trade-in offer too: if you already own a Dynavector cartridge, you can recoup 20 per cent of the old model's cost against the price of a new needle.



SOUND QUALITY

A lithe, rather airy character is apparent the moment its stylus hits the groove, blessed with agile bass and impressive high frequency detail. Its tone is a touch bright, but the conveyance of ambient detail and overall transparency is extremely fine.

The DV-20XL seems to be at its best with light classical, jazz and acoustic music, its nimble footing and fine resolution making for a vivid listening experience. Vocal

projection is a touch weak, however, and more rhythmic material can sound somewhat dry and lightweight.

It earns a cautious recommendation, depending on your record collection – if it's predominantly rock or dance, other cartridges might prove more satisfying.

TB

"A lithe, rather airy character is apparent from the moment stylus hits groove, blessing music with agile bass and hf detail."

VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆

An articulate-sounding cartridge with impressive high frequency resolve, but it sounds a little lightweight at times. Needs a high quality turntable and arm.

ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Pear Audio Ltd, 7 Prospect Place, Almouth, Northumberland NE66 2RL
(01665) 830862

SPECIFICATIONS

Type:	moving coil
Weight:	8.6g
Output:	0.25mV
Recommended tracking force:	2g