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# Hi-Fi Choice

**PASSION FOR SOUND**

Issue No. 529

July 2025

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**TOP OF THE WHIRL**



**Exclusive - Soulines'  
skeletal tt9 turntable**

**"ENERGETIC FUN!"**



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# Tweak of the week

New from Serbia is Soulines' tt9 turntable and Kivi M3 'captured unipivot' tonearm.

**Adam Smith** takes a listen

**S**oulines may be a new name to you, but the company has been making turntables officially for 14 years, since the introduction of its now-discontinued Hermes DCX. I say 'officially' because, since 2009, Soulines' founder Igor Gligorov has been creating turntables from all sorts of recycled parts. My favourite is the 'Half Moon' – made from recycled MDF, hockey pucks and a wooden barrel cover with a Lenco platter and Philips VCR motor!

This hobby was turned into a full-time job in 2011 and Gligorov's background as a mechanical engineer and trained musician stood him in good stead. As a result, all of his creations are mechanically modelled during design and based on sound engineering and vibration control principles.

The tt9 is the entry-level offering in the Soulines range and comes pre-fitted with the Kivi M3 tonearm. Other models include the Kubrick DCX, £6,490 with the same arm.

Your £3,990 buys you a great deal in the tt9. Its construction is described as: "solid but light" and its main plinth is made from acrylic and Delrin, to which an aluminium sub-plinth is coupled at three points using rubber/cork washers of different thicknesses and diameters. The aim is to both absorb and channel away resonances so as not to upset the stylus as it goes about its business.

The turntable's main bearing is an inverted type comprising a stainless steel ball atop a stainless steel spindle, with a brass spindle sleeve and Delrin thrust plate. The sub-platter is also

Delrin and is securely bonded to the main bearing. The main platter sits directly on this and weighs 2.5kg, made from precisely machined acrylic. Interestingly, a set of cork/rubber mix washers for the centre spindle are also included and can be placed under the record to help with vibration control.

The tt9 sits on three adjustable cone feet and is supplied with acrylic cups into which the cone spikes sit. These also feature cork/rubber washers on their underside and so help stop the

**The tt9 and Kivi M3 offer an ordered but dynamic and sweet presentation**

turntable from sliding when in position. As an added bonus, the deck even comes with a lid.

The pre-mounted Kivi M3 is Soulines' first tonearm, described as a captive or false unipivot as the centre pivot on the arm housing does not sit in a 'cup' as might be expected. Instead, the lower bearing consists of three hardened stainless steel balls and the pin locates in the centre of these. Soulines claims that this makes the arm feel more conventional.

Four different stainless steel counterweights come supplied, which may be used in combination to ▶

## ► DETAILS

**PRODUCT**  
Soulines tt9 turntable and Kivi M3 tonearm

**ORIGIN**  
Serbia

**TYPE**  
Belt-drive turntable with tonearm

**WEIGHT**  
10kg

**DIMENSIONS**  
(WxHxD)  
440 x 355 x 170mm

**FEATURES**  
• 33 and 45rpm  
• Kivi M3 captured unipivot tonearm  
• tt Clamp

**DISTRIBUTOR**  
Sound Foundations

**WEBSITE**  
soulines.com  
soundfoundations.co.uk





balance a range of weights from 5 to 15g. A secure locking collar can be loosened for easy VTA adjustment and a special azimuth adjustment counterweight can be rotated for precision setup.

The Kivi M3 is a little more involved as there are a lot of adjustments and some transit brackets and screws to be removed. Fortunately, instructions are clear and go into impressive levels of detail about not only what you need to do, but why you're doing it.

Also supplied for the review are the £1,290 u-base isolation platform and a set of three bbs (ball bearing swing) feet (£890 for a set of three, or £1,150 for four).

### Sound quality

Initially in standard configuration, fitted with a Clearaudio MC Essence cartridge and connected to Yamaha's C-5000/M-5000 amplifiers and PMC twenty5.24 floorstanders, it is soon clear that this is a turntable designed by someone who has an excellent grip on the fundamentals of vinyl replay. The tt9 and Kivi M3 combination offers a beautifully ordered but dynamic and sweet presentation, and is in control of everything at all times. The deck has a quiet but unassailable confidence to its presentation.

I like the eminent tweakability of the design and my first couple of hours are spent 'fiddling' with the accessories supplied with the turntable. I could write pages on the effects of these but, in summary, I find

that the clamp tightens the bass usefully, but initially adds a slight hardness across the midband. However, judicious choice of a rubber/cork washer under the LP before fitting the clamp not only ameliorates this hardness, but also opens up the soundstage very pleasingly, and so this is the configuration I stick with.

### Four different stainless steel counterweights come supplied

Set like this, the tt9 has impressive solidity and realism to its central imagery, locking singers precisely centre stage and bringing the heart of performances out into the room by just the right amount. I play Lyn Stanley performing *It Had To Be You*, and her backing musicians are arranged around her in their own space and with plenty of atmosphere. The tt9 doesn't quite pull off the left-to-right majesty of a Michell Gyrodec, but then few turntables do. But it certainly won't leave you wanting in terms of soundstage scale.

At the top-end there is a joyous purity to the tt9's performance. Conventional unipivots always seem to offer a sense of air and space to things, and the Kivi M3's take on this maintains this strength in spades. Cymbal strokes are firm and clear

without any spittiness, and shimmer off into the distance quite deliciously. Equally, firmly struck hi-hats maintain a solidity and pace that ensures rhythms are tight and focussed.

Talking of rhythm, you need to get the bass right if you're going to do this justice and the tt9 proves once again to be something of a master. The instrumentation on The Colorblind James Experience's *Considering A Move To Memphis* is an absolute riot through the deck. Drum beats are solid and taut with plenty of chest-thumping impact and no sense of outstaying their welcome. Even better, the double bass is chewy and fulsome, underpinning the action with a warm, fruity resonance.

As a final step, I check out the effects of the bbs feet and u-base platform. The feet have the more subtle effect of the two, offering a fraction more depth and focus to the bass, but not really altering the overall balance of the sound. I like the changes they bring, but they are subtle.

Less subtle is the u-base, which really is something of an eye-opener. Again, a fraction more solidity to the low end is welcome, but the platform also offers up a notable increase in soundstage depth and adds a lovely sense of sweetness across the whole of the midrange. Isolation platforms are funny things and can have effects ranging from barely there to 'can't go back to living without it'. Igor Gligorov clearly knows his stuff as the addition of the u-base to the tt9 is definitely towards the top of that scale.

### Conclusion

The tt9 and Kivi M3 arm combination is intelligently designed, beautifully made and with a range of standard and optional extra tweaks available, if you can't get a sound that you love, I would be very surprised. The Soulines name might not be that well known currently, but surely this won't be the case for much longer ●

### Hi-FiChoice

#### OUR VERDICT

##### SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

**LIKE:** Design and styling, fine sound quality

##### VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

**DISLIKE:** Setup needs some care

##### BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

**WE SAY:** An intelligently designed and superbly performing turntable with great tweakability

##### FEATURES

★★★★★

##### OVERALL

★★★★★

