

HIFICRITIC  
BEST BUY

# MF's Merlin System

ANDREW EVERARD CHECKS OUT A COMPLETE AND UP-TO-DATE VINYL-BASED HI-FI SYSTEM THAT SELLS FOR £1,300

In fact, that's a definite trait of this little system: at background levels – or 'running in dinner party mode' as a friend of mine describes it – the sound is smooth and inoffensive, but crank the level up and things really start to get interesting. The bass fills out, treble detail suddenly sparkles through and a real sense of rhythmic drive becomes apparent, alongside better orchestral scale and recorded ambience.

I have to admit to coming to this system with divided thoughts. Yes, I expected good things given the brand, but still couldn't quite dismiss from my mind the worry that this might be a lifestyle move too far, and that those quirky-looking speakers might have rather more to do with style than substance. I really needn't have worried: the *Merlin* system, and its partnering *Roundtable* turntable, more than meet up to their brief, and even have a spot of magic going for them.

If you're after a second or desktop system, or a main system for a modestly-sized room, and fancy something different with more than a spot of style on its side, this compact package deserves a serious audition...

...Even if you're not a civilian.

## Specifications

### Merlin 1 amplifier and speakers

Price	£799
speakers alone	£299/pr
Inputs	Line/MM phono, line/optical digital, USB, Bluetooth
Outputs	One pair of speakers, line/pre- out/optical digital, headphones
Amplifier power	40W/ch into 4ohms, 50Wpc peak
Size (WxHxD)	22x5.5x24cm

### Loudspeaker

Drivers	1x6cm (approx) BMR,
Enclosure	ported, extruded
Power handling	15-75W
Impedance	4ohms nominal
Size (WxHxD)	22x12.5x20cm (‘horizontal’ with base)
Accessories	Remote handset, Bluetooth antenna, speaker cables

### Roundtable turntable

Price	£599
Type	Belt-drive, DC motor, MDF plinth and platter
Tonearm	9in
Effective tonearm mass	14g
Accessories	AT95E cartridge, felt mat, interconnects, cartridge protractor, cartridge balance
Size (WxHxD)	48.2x10x34.2cm