



## BLUE HORIZON RECORD MAT £64.95

As our editor underlined during his own improvements of his Technics SL1200 MkII, a turntable's performance can be greatly improved with the right mat. These things come in varying sizes, are made from weird

and wonderful materials and, if matched correctly, should deaden any platter resonances. The new effort from Blue Horizon is intriguing because it arrives as a two-piece affair, in order to minimise any tonearm height issues. That is, if you place a standard thick, third-party mat on your deck, your entire arm may suddenly be playing your records at the wrong angle and will require adjustment to play correctly. The Blue Horizon mat however, minimises such VTA errors. For standard records, you use the entire two pieces which interlock seamlessly. For thicker audiophile examples, you only need one piece. This reduces the mat height and helps to maintain a more consistent vertical tracking angle.

Made from a mixture of cork, leather and India rubber, I replaced

the weedy felt mat to be found on the recently released budget deck from Pro-Ject, the Essential (£150). Spinning a variety of vinyl, I found that the Blue Horizon mat brought order to the sonic chaos. Bass not only had structure for the first time but also a measure of breadth and depth. In addition, vocals were far more engaging and sincere while general midrange duties revealed a greater sense of detail and a less flustered quality. Obviously, results vary from deck to deck but if you're convinced your record support is not as good as it should be, and VTA is a real issue for you, then the Blue Horizon mat is a no brainer upgrade. It's decently affordable, so it's great for budget decks, but should yield fine results with higher priced models such as the Technics, too. **PR**

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