Audio-Technica’s new $9,999 turntable levitates and glows

Making its debut at Milan Design Week, where function often takes a back seat to form, Audio-Technica’s new Hotaru turntable manages to balance both. The upper section not only floats above the base using a series of magnets that help dampen vibrations, it also glows from within with a color-changing light show that responds to sounds from the record being played, making the Hotaru itself part of the vinyl experience.

Floating turntables aren’t an entirely new idea. It’s one of many methods for reducing vibrations, preventing skipping, and improving playback accuracy on record players. But unlike previous designs such as the MAG-LEV that floats just the spinning turntable, the entire upper section of the Hotaru — including the tonearm and DC motor that spins a record — levitates.

Made from translucent acrylic that hides a belt drive system, that upper section also features internal lighting with three different illumination modes. You can select from 20 different static color palettes, a Gradient Mode that gently transitions between those color palettes, or a Link Mode with lighting that reacts to the beat of the music you’re playing. Unlike many party speakers, the lighting here is a subtle effect that’s going for a chill experience instead of a high-energy rave.

The base of the Hotaru turntable is made from sturdy aluminum with solid brass feet and houses an integrated speaker system featuring two 63.5-millimeter full-range speakers and a pair of tweeters. It also features a line out port for connecting

it to an external sound system, and a dedicated subwoofer output if you’re only looking to boost low-end frequencies.

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