



# Elipson Omega 100 RIAA BT £500

The Omega flagship shows that an extensive spec need not come at the expense of performance

**DETAILS**  
**PRODUCT**  
 Elipson Omega 100 RIAA BT  
**ORIGIN**  
 France  
**TYPE**  
 Belt-drive turntable  
**WEIGHT**  
 5.9kg  
**DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)**  
 450 x 120 x 380mm  
**FEATURES**  
 • 33 & 45rpm  
 • Built-in MM phono stage  
 • Ortofon OM10 cartridge  
 • OTT Tonearm with torsion based antiskate  
**DISTRIBUTOR**  
 Avoka Ltd.  
**TELEPHONE**  
 01628 484968  
**WEBSITE**  
 elipson.com

**T**he very fact that the Omega 100 exists at all is a testament to the extent of the revival in vinyl's fortunes. The RIAA BT is the flagship of six models that effectively break down into two groups of three – the more affordable Alpha models and the premium Omega range. The playback hardware of the Omegas is identical and comprises a completely bespoke design that's been developed inhouse by the French brand.

Chief among the new technology is a computer-controlled motor with electronic speed switching. The arm is also unique and features a carbon fibre armtube connected to an innovative bearing arrangement that combines vertical and horizontal yokes into a single knuckle and applies the antiskate down the bearing axis using a patented rubber torsion system. It is extremely elegant but has no armlift and although it is

easy to place it lightly and accurately on a record, this may deter some vinyl fans. An Ortofon OM10 cartridge is also fitted.

There's also an onboard phono stage with the ability to connect via aptX Bluetooth to a suitable device (see box out). Unusually, the internal phono stage can't be switched out of the system. Aesthetically, this is a smart deck with some pleasing design touches and genuinely great build quality. The gloss black finish looks smart, but white and red versions are also available.

**Sound quality**

You might reasonably expect that the Elipson's dependence on its own internal phono stage might put it at a disadvantage to some of the other turntables here that are connected to the Cyrus Phono Signature. The fact that it isn't offers a clue to just how good a performance it's capable of. The internal board is encouragingly quiet with no hiss or hum, which allows the Omega to show off its performance to good effect. The Portico Quartet recording is the pick of the pack with a fantastic combination of effortless space and an appealingly lively presentation.

What makes this such a capable design is the way that it manages to balance excitement and refinement in such a way as to let the Portico recording sound refined and tonally accurate, but then conversely give the Nothing But Thieves track the attack and energy it needs to sound just right. Some of this is undoubtedly

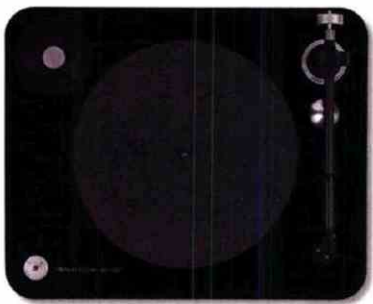
**APT-X FACTOR**

Like the Akai, the Elipson can communicate via Bluetooth. This is a straightforward process and is easily connected to a receiver on an amp or speaker system by placing the other unit in pairing mode and then activating Bluetooth on the turntable. The big difference over the Akai's Bluetooth connectivity is that the Omega supports aptX and connected to the Naim Mu-so Qb (HFC 409), the result is a cleaner presentation.

It is also worth noting that the basic Omega 100 without phono stage and Bluetooth (HFC 412) offers the same vinyl replay hardware and would be comfortably the most affordable model in the group. If you don't want the extra bells and whistles, the entry-level model of the Omega range represents exceptional value and is an interesting alternative to the minimalist designs also on test here.

down to the Ortofon OM10, which is a comparatively expensive cartridge in the context of this roundup and one that offers a level of refinement that others struggle to match. This means that the way the Elipson replays the Fischer-Z recording is also comfortably the best here.

By the same token, the weaknesses of the Omega are comparatively slight. There is the merest sense of midrange congestion with the Läpsley track that means that voices and instruments are slightly less well defined than some other decks while some fine detail is marginally harder to discern. When the other decks are tried with the more sensibly priced Graham Slee, however, it becomes clear that not only has Elipson provided the Omega 100 RIAA BT with a useful convenience feature, but something that can hold its own in exalted company. The result is a seriously impressive turntable ●



**Hi-Fi Choice**

**OUR VERDICT**

**SOUND QUALITY**  
 ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Refined and lively sound; excellent build; some useful additional features

**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
 ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** No armlift; phono stage can't be bypassed

**BUILD QUALITY**  
 ★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Combines lovely design, useful features and excellent performance

**FEATURES**  
 ★★★★★

**OVERALL**  
 ★★★★★



# Group test verdict

Having spent the last few days in a spin, it's time for **Ed Selley** to gather his thoughts, check through his notes and reveal this month's winner

**THE CHOICE OF** models available to you at this price point is larger than it has been for some time and there is an impressive array of talent on display in the group. There are no poor turntables here, but the Akai BT500 is the one that struggles most to stand out from the pack. It offers an impressive specification for the asking price, but the performance is very closely tied to the internal phono stage, which limits its future upgrade potential. The Audio-Technica AT-LP5 by contrast delivers a consistently powerful and engaging performance with excellent features at the lowest

price here, but it lacks some of the all-round ability of its rivals. The Thorens TD 240-2 has a level of performance that is towards the upper echelons of the group, but struggles to justify why it costs nearly £200 more than similarly specified rivals. The Edwards Audio by contrast is excellent value for money, with an entertaining performance combined with good build and handsome looks with the promise of even more performance being available via the company's upgrades. Why does the Rega pip the Edwards Audio to the runner's-up spot? The

two designs are very similar, but the Planar 2 offers a slightly more rounded performance that is happier with poorer-quality recordings while still offering a lively and incredibly assured performance with faster material. It is slightly better finished and also has access to a useful selection of upgrades after you have purchased it that should allow you to extract even more performance from it. Rega's Planar 2 is an outstanding affordable turntable and one that should find many happy owners, even if it isn't the best design here.

**WINNER**

The Elipson Omega 100 RIAA BT is extensively specified and everything on it works supremely well. It offers a stunning performance across a wide variety of music combined with superb build quality. The result is the best all-round affordable turntable on the market.



Make/model	Akai Professional BT500	Audio-Technica AT-LP5	Edwards Audio Apprentice TT Mk2	Elipson Omega 100 RIAA BT	Rega Planar 2	Thorens TD 240-2
<b>Price</b>	£350	£330	£380	£500	£380	£575
<b>Sound</b>	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Value</b>	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Build</b>	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Features</b>	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Overall</b>	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>Key features</b>	An interesting turntable with plenty of features that's held back by some sonic limitations	A great starter deck with decent enough sound for anyone wishing to kick start their vinyl habit	A handsome and supremely talented turntable that delivers a decent all-round performance	The Omega 100 RIAA BT combines a lovely design, useful features and a top-notch performance	A supremely talented deck that should work well in many setups, but it's not quite the best	A talented turntable with some really interesting and useful features, but the price is too high

Key features	Akai Professional BT500	Audio-Technica AT-LP5	Edwards Audio Apprentice TT Mk2	Elipson Omega 100 RIAA BT	Rega Planar 2	Thorens TD 240-2
<b>Phono stage</b>	Bypassable	Bypassable	None	Fixed	None	None
<b>Speed change</b>	Auto	Auto	Manual	Auto	Manual	Auto
<b>Drive</b>	Belt	Direct	Belt	Belt	Belt	Belt
<b>78rpm</b>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
<b>USB output</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

**TRY WITH THESE**



**LOUDSPEAKER:**  
Q Acoustics Concept 20 £350  
**HFC 402**  
Still one of the most exceptionally talented standmounts on sale under £1,000, the Concept 20 delivers a performance that should let the Elipson sing and at a price that won't break the bank.



**INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER:**  
Onkyo A-9010 (UK) £200  
**HFC 409**  
Another Group Test winner, this Onkyo amp offers the perfect combination of a rock-bottom price alongside a sky-high performance. The built-in phono stage is merely adequate, but at this price you can afford to buy a dedicated one.



**SPEAKER CABLE:**  
The Chord Company Sarsen  
£8/m  
**HFC 398**  
This speaker cable from The Chord Company is small, easy to fit into tight spaces and hard wearing while comfortably conveying the all-important transparency that the Elipson turntable can produce combined with a very clean and open sound.