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• **TURNTABLE OF THE YEAR**

**Clearaudio Ovation**

\$5500

This mid-priced 'table fills the gap between high-end performance and real-world convenience. With no tricky setup required, Clearaudio's Ovation delivers impressive clarity of definition, transparency to the source, and excellent overall tonal balance. This 'table and integral Clarify arm—newly created specifically for the Ovation—strike an ideal balance between weight and delicacy. Technical features include a decoupled motor with optical speed control, inverted ceramic magnetic bearing, and a sandwich-structure plinth made from Panzerholz and wood. The arm wand is carbon fiber, the headshell made from machined aluminum, the arm itself supported by a friction-free magnetic bearing. It all adds up to a terrific value—and our Turntable of the Year Award winner. *Wayne Garcia (216)*



**AAS Gabriel/Da Vinci MK II**

\$76,100

The Swiss-made AAS Gabriel/Da Vinci turntable is an object of considerable beauty. The arm support and the motor controller are mounted on separate massive cylindrical pillars, the extremely heavy, acoustically inert, magnetically suspended platter on its own gigantic cylinder. In combination with the Da Vinci Grandezza arm, this is a record player capable of state-of-the-art resolution and transparency—as finely detailed, faithful to sources, and tonally neutral as any 'table/arm on the market. Where the Mk I version was the first JV heard that could capture and reproduce a *pianissimo* not just with utter clarity but also with genuinely lifelike whisper-softness, the greatly improved Mk II version extends dynamic range on the *fortissimo* side. As a result, LPs can be played back at levels that makes both soft and loud just right. There is a smooth, easy, continuous, tape-like quality to this masterpiece of a record player that makes long-term listening utterly enjoyable—and makes the Gabriel/Da Vinci Mk II a top choice for high-end turntable of *any* year. *JV (216)*

• **PHONOSTAGE OF THE YEAR**

**Parasound Halo JC 3**

\$2350

The collaboration between Parasound and John Curl has been a gift to audiophiles on two fronts—components of remarkable sonic worthiness married to real-world price tags. And never more so than in the JC 3—a full-chassis beauty that exemplifies Curl's passion for the reproduction of LPs. Each channel of the JC 3 is housed in its own extruded aluminum enclosure in a fully isolated dual-mono layout. Sonically there's a riveting balance of extremes at play here—a kiss of romance through the mids and an ability to extract and define low-level information in acoustic space. Notes and images are fully embroidered with air and harmonics. Through the JC 3 there's a warm breath of life in every musical image. *NG (215)*

