

Press release



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Above Helix One Mk3 turntable by Döhmann Audio – the sixth maker to join Ten, the artisan collection from Absolute Sounds

Döhmann joins Ten – the artisan audio collection

Absolute Sounds, the UK's foremost high-end audio distributor, adds two extraordinary turntables from the other side of the world to its carefully curated Ten collection of singular sonic artistry

London, England – Since 1978, Absolute Sounds has brought the world's finest audio equipment to discerning music lovers in the UK. At the end of 2020, the company launched a new distribution concept called Ten – a curated collection of extraordinary sonic creations from around the world, personally selected by Ricardo Franassovici, Absolute Sounds' founder and MD.

The first maker to join Ten was DeVore Fidelity, creator of specialised high-sensitivity loudspeakers fashioned in Brooklyn, New York. In the months that followed, amplifiers by Robert Koda of Japan and Trafomatic Audio of Serbia, phonostages by HSE of Switzerland, and reel-to-reel tape machines by Metaxas & Sins of the Netherlands were added to the collection. Spring 2023 sees a sixth maker join this exclusive club: Döhmann Audio of Australia, creator of turntables *par excellence*.

Döhmann Audio was formed in 2013 by Mark Döhmann, a man acknowledged in high-end circles as the finest turntable engineer of the modern era. His association with Absolute Sounds began with the

Continuum Caliburn – a remarkable Döhmann-designed turntable which launched in 2005, cost six figures and redefined the frontiers of vinyl playback. Continuum eventually discontinued the Caliburn and replaced it with the Obsidian, which remains in Absolute Sounds’ distribution portfolio. But now, by inviting Döhmann Audio to join the Ten collection, Absolute Sounds is ensuring Mark Döhmann’s extraordinary turntable designs are available to vinyl connoisseurs in the UK once again.



Left Mark Döhmann is considered the world's foremost exponent of leading-edge, zero-compromise turntable design

Incorporating state-of-the-art technologies never previously applied to audio design, Döhmann Audio creates heirloom-quality industrial works of art to provide music lovers with truly exceptional sound, so they may derive absolute maximum pleasure from their record collections.

There are two Döhmann turntables – the Helix One, which is the no-holds-barred flagship, and the Helix Two, which incorporates key Döhmann Audio technologies into a smaller footprint. The Helix Two has one armboard (whereas the Helix One has two) and is “engineered to deliver unprecedented performance in analogue playback for its physical size and price point”.

The Mk3 versions of the Helix One and Helix Two launched in Australia in the final quarter of 2022. Now, a few months later, they’re available to order in the UK – courtesy of a select group of specialist retailers entrusted by Ricardo Franassovici to sell pieces from the Ten collection.

The appliance of science

The Helix One Mk3 and Helix Two Mk3 share the same core technologies, which are unique to Döhmann Audio. Everything about their design is targeted at unprecedented resonance control, born from Mark Döhmann’s experience as an aerospace engineer. As he puts it, “Vinyl playback involves converting the vibrational energy experienced by a stylus as it moves through the grooves of a vinyl record into an electrical signal. The challenge is that there are other forms of vibrational energy (resonance) present in this environment that arise from various sources that are also picked up by the stylus. If you remove as much of that unwanted resonance as possible, you have a purer signal, less distortion... more music!”

By analysing research relating to other challenging environments and industries, Döhmann has introduced new techniques and technologies to the field of audio engineering. For example, electron microscopes in research labs cannot operate accurately if there is even the slightest vibration present, so how are they isolated? How do fighter jet manufacturers deal with vibrational energies when

breaking the sound barrier? How do NASA engineers isolate and insulate sensitive equipment in satellites from damaging resonant energy? How does electronic equipment used in volatile environments such as mining shafts dissipate energy without interacting with the surroundings?

As a result of this research, Döhmann Audio has harnessed solutions used in aerospace, spectrometry, medical imaging and electron microscopy to achieve its sonic goals. At the heart of both turntables is a Minus K vibration isolation system utilising NSM (Negative-Stiffness Mechanism) technology. Minus K vibration isolators are used by the European Space Agency and NASA, for applications that include the James Webb Space Telescope – just one indication of the extreme level of mechanical engineering applied to these turntables in the pursuit of perfection.



Left The Helix One Mk3 is the ultimate expression of Döhmann's innovative engineering approach

The technical innovations and 'world firsts' in the designs of both Mk3 turntables are far too numerous to list in full. They include a mechanical crossover network designed to dissipate mid and high frequency vibrations, 'floating' armboards made from a composite sandwich incorporating a ballistics-grade polymer developed for military armour, and RSA (Resonance Suppression Architecture) which involves the insertion of special materials into hollow chambers at critical locations within the turntable.

The platter for both models consists of a specific mix of elements, formed using a finite element loading technique to ensure the ideal distribution of mass throughout its body, and is driven by a high-torque motor custom-made in Switzerland to Döhmann Audio's exact specifications. In the case of the Helix One Mk3, the motor control software, suspension stabiliser and power supply electronics, including specially designed high-frequency/RF absorption features, are contained within the separate 'PowerBase' beneath the main structure.



Left The Helix Two Mk3 has a smaller footprint but retains the core technologies of the flagship turntable

Ultimate grooves

With turntables by Continuum, EAT, TechDAS and the recently added Reed already established in Absolute Sounds' main portfolio, the addition of Döhmann Audio to the Ten collection further strengthens the distributor's unrivalled roster of brands for vinyl aficionados.

Both turntables are available in a black anodised-aluminium finish, or a nickel and titanium plated finish applied by a company that plates parts for military jets. The Helix One Mk3 is priced at £64,998 in black and £78,998 in titanium, and the Helix Two Mk3 costs £46,000 in black and £51,500 in titanium.

More about Ten – the artisan audio collection

Ten stands apart from Absolute Sounds' main distribution portfolio, which consists of many high-end audio marques already widely recognised to be among the finest in the world. The products selected for Ten are made by audio artisans – perhaps less well-known, more specialised and smaller in scale, but no less accomplished in their pursuit of sonic perfection.

Ten does not necessarily carry a featured maker's full range. Instead, each piece is selected for its outstanding individual attributes, lovingly crafted in limited quantity to satisfy the specific tastes of audio connoisseurs. Only adventurous designs of exceptional quality stand a chance of making the grade, and only makers who specialise in a singular concept – a specific type of loudspeaker, or amplifier, or source component – will be considered.

Speaking about the Ten distribution concept, Ricardo Franassovici – founder of Absolute Sounds and curator of the Ten collection – said: "If I were to draw an analogy from my music industry background, I would describe the main Absolute Sounds catalogue as a 'major label' to which many of the world's most critically acclaimed artists are signed, while Ten is a specialised subsidiary with a more 'indie' ethos, shining a light on exceptional creative talent from every corner of the globe."

Mr Franassovici continued, "Each maker has a high level of specialisation. Just as an accomplished shoemaker makes the best shoes, an exceptional tailor makes best suits, and a superior milliner makes the best hats, so the best audio equipment is made by creators who specialise in a particular thing. The bar for membership of Ten is set at the highest level and each maker has proved they exceed it."

Ten is a number of great significance in culture, religion, science and mathematics. The Japanese word '天' (pronounced 'ten') translates as 'heaven', 'sky' or 'destiny'. Now, Ten also signifies the extraordinary work of gifted audio artisans, brought together to represent the absolute art and soul of sound.



Selections from the Ten collection (left to right) DeVore 0/96; Robert Koda Takumi K-15 EX; Trafomatic Audio Rhapsody; Metaxas & Sins TR-X Tourbillon; HSE Masterline 7; Döhmann Helix One Mk3

Absolute Sounds is the UK's leading importer and distributor of high-end audio equipment. The company was formed in 1978 by Ricardo Franassovici, who left a successful career in the music industry to become one of the world's foremost hi-fi entrepreneurs. Ricardo's burning desire has always been to give UK-based music fans the opportunity to experience audio at the highest level, cherry-picking the very best components from around the globe to create a 'hi-fi boutique' overflowing with highly covetable, high-performance products. Like the finest watches and most prestigious motorcars, these brands deliver finely tuned, supremely engineered products that simply ooze desirability. If you are seeking the world's best audio equipment, Absolute Sounds is your first port of call.

In 2020, Absolute Sounds launched Ten – a curated collection of extraordinary sonic creations from audio artisans around the world. Personally selected by Ricardo Franassovici, this collection is distinct from the main Absolute Sounds portfolio.

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BRAND LIST – ABSOLUTE SOUNDS MAIN PORTFOLIO & TEN COLLECTION		
MAIN PORTFOLIO		TEN COLLECTION
Artesania Audio	KL Audio	DeVore Fidelity
Audio Research	Koetsu	Döhmman Audio
Constellation Audio	Krell	HSE
Continuum Audio Labs	Magico	Metaxas & Sins
Copland	PrimaLuna	Robert Koda
Dan D'Agostino	Reed	Trafomatic
darTZeel	ReQuest Audio	
dCS	TechDAS	
EAT	Transparent Audio	
Franco Serblin	Western Electric	
Jadis	Wilson Audio	



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