The most conspicuously hi-tech of the belt-drive models here, the Planar 6 arguably comes with the biggest reputation to defend. It’s the first new Rega turntable to be constructed with an ultra-lightweight polyurethane foam core plinth weighing just 980g – less than half that of the superseded RP6. The foam is called Tancast 8 – developed for the aerospace industry – and is sandwiched between an exceptionally thin but extremely rigid high-pressure laminate.

Improvements over the RP6 include a single-piece, machined aluminium sub-platter, a new 24V motor hand-tuned and matched to its Neo power supply and a custom drive pulley fitted with an upgraded drive belt.

Rega’s RB330 tonearm is fitted as standard and, in this instance, supplied with the company’s Ania MC cartridge. Of course, the tonearm works with a wide selection of other cartridge designs too, and VTA can be altered via spacers available from Rega.

**Sound quality**

What marks the Planar 6 out from every other turntable in this group isn’t sweeter treble, deeper bass, more mellifluous mids, tauter tempos or any other baseline hi-fi metric. It’s stealth. The deck largely disappears and lets the music set the agenda, whatever you decide to play. It seems wholly unlikely at this reasonably priced end of the turntable market, but it really is very hard to pin a sonic fingerprint or signature sound on the lean and mean Rega.

The upshot is that, unlike the Technics and to some extent the NAD, it doesn’t grab you by the lapels as soon as the stylus hits the groove, but instead draws you inexorably in as you begin to twig that, with the sunny, laidback Boz Scaggs cut, there’s simply more going on – a lot of it in the way of timbral textures, musical nuances, dynamic shading, ambient cues and sundry subtleties and intricacies fumbled or missed altogether by some of the other turntables here. It leads to a more rounded realism that makes music impactful through fascination and finesse as well as its ability to make your foot tap.

I think the words I’m searching for are coherence and cohesion. The way Oscar and Herbie interweave their flourishes at breakneck speed on Naptown Blues should be thrilling and are, but it’s how the Rega paints the quieter moments with the finest of brushes that’s so special. Meanwhile, genre shifts are nailed. The half-speed remaster of EBTG’s Amplified Heart is fully realised with excellent stereo and clarity, while the interplay between double bass and synth on Missing seems effortlessly fluent and purposeful. Simply gorgeous.

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**In Sight**

- Tancast 8 plinth
- Aluminium sub-chassis
- RB330 tonearm
- Ania moving-coil cartridge
- Dual-layer glass platter

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**Rega Planar 6 £1,470**

Rega’s turntable expertise needs no introduction, but does this mid-range package offer top value against rivals half its price?