



# Animal magnetism

Delighted by the success of its Nd range of cartridges, Rega has a new flagship.

**Ed Selley** is decidedly impressed

**B**y any standard, Rega's Nd range of moving-magnet cartridges has been a great success. Since launching in 2024, the company has sold over 35,000 and they have become highly regarded options at the price. What took it by surprise is that the range-topping Nd7 has been the strongest seller. The spec it offers for £450 is exceptionally good, making it a bit of a bargain all things considered – particularly with the price of some MC carts now extending into four figures.

The catch for Rega is that the Nd7 is already a pretty high-spec design; making use of the same stylus and cantilever as the Apheta 3 (HFC 479). The only piece of hardware left in the inventory is the boron cantilever that Rega reserves for its range-topping Aphelion 2. While this sounds simple enough to add, the Nd magnet and generator assembly were designed around aluminium cantilevers because that is what Rega saw itself using. The boron rod that forms the Aphelion 2

cantilever isn't the same, so it's not as simple as a straight swap. Rega has worked with a watchmaker to manufacture an ultra-fine connecting tube with different diameters at each end to mate the two different components together.

The boron cantilever now mates with the same generator assembly as the rest of the range. Built around neodymium magnets, it features miniaturised parallel coils wound in-house utilising 38-micron wire with just 1,275 turns. This produces a low-inductance, low-impedance generator giving a vastly improved high-frequency response. The boron cantilever allows for faster reaction to the changes in record surface and is highly rigid for its mass.

Looking similar to its Nd brethren, the Nd9 has a different-coloured acrylic section that is closer to the Aphelion 2. Used with any Rega-type arm it will naturally align, thanks to the three-bolt fitting. It also comes at a discounted price with the Planar 8.

## Sound quality

I install the Nd9 on a Rega Planar 10 (HFC 456), which has had an Nd7 on it for the last year. In the first couple of hours the Nd9 makes an immediate case for itself. With the dense and congested *Electric War* by Little Barrie and Malcolm Catto, it helps the Planar 10 extract more information and deliver it with imaging and context that brings out the joy of the music without making the experience in any way anodyne. The reduction in mass makes for a cartridge that feels exceptionally dynamic and able to handle anything, regardless of tempo.

This articulation has not been bought at the expense of bass depth. Listening to the exceptionally weighty *Music Has The Right To Children* by Boards Of Canada confirms that the Rega can hit very hard. Further up the frequency response, it is no less assured, delivering detail and tonal realism in spades. This isn't the sweetest-sounding cart money can buy, but at no stage does it tip into come across as bright or forward.

The anthemic *Five* by White Lies is delivered with passion and energy that sucks you into the performance so you enjoy it at an emotional rather than technical level. This is not a pressing or master for the ages and the Nd9 does a fine job of balancing information delivery and forgiveness.

## Conclusion

With so many amps offering moving-magnet only phono stages all the way up to very significant price points, high-performance MM carts are the most logical option for an increasing number of turntable users. The Nd9 takes the exceptional performance of the Nd7 and elevates it further while still offering extremely keen value for money. For anyone with a Rega tonearm it borders on being a no-brainer and the performance is sufficiently impressive that I can see it doing very well elsewhere too ●

### DETAILS

#### PRODUCT

Rega Nd9

#### ORIGIN

UK

#### TYPE

Moving-magnet cartridge

#### WEIGHT

6g (not including fittings)

#### FEATURES

- Neodymium magnet
- Fine line nude diamond stylus
- Boron cantilever

#### DISTRIBUTOR

Rega

WEBSITE  
rega.co.uk

## Hi-Fi Choice

### OUR VERDICT

#### SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

#### VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

#### BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

#### TRACKING

★★★★★

#### OVERALL

★★★★★

**LIKE:** Detailed, energetic and engaging sound; easy to setup and use

**DISLIKE:** Not the sweetest-sounding

**WE SAY:** A fine new topper for the Nd range that offers exceptional value for money