



STEREO • MULTICHANNEL AUDIO • MUSIC
the absolute sound[®]

hi-fi+

GUIDE TO

VINYL PLAYBACK

SPONSORED BY CARDAS AUDIO

Sumiko Bluepoint No. 2

Chris Martens

For many years Sumiko's original Bluepoint Oyster enjoyed a reputation as the go-to choice among entry-level, high-output moving-coil cartridges. Even so, I felt the original model left plenty of room for improvement—improvement that has arrived in the form of the new Bluepoint No. 2. As a first step toward understanding the Bluepoint No. 2, it might be useful to summarize the general benefits moving-coils cartridges are thought to provide.

Relative to moving-magnet designs, moving-coil cartridges are said to offer superior resolution of low-level details, faster and more precise transient response, and a heightened ability to produce broad, spacious, three-dimensional soundstages. The extent of these benefits will vary from design to design, but as a general rule all three are present to some degree in most moving coils—even in relatively inexpensive ones.

Sure enough, the Bluepoint No. 2 improves upon the already good performance of Grado's moving-magnet Prestige Gold in the three areas outlined above, though the Grado is sufficiently good that the gap does not at first seem large. Over time, however, the Bluepoint No. 2 distinguishes itself through superior resolution of textures and, especially, through superior three-dimensionality. Put on a record known for 3-D sound, such as

harpist Andreas Vollenweider's *Down To The Moon* [CBS], and there will come moments when the Bluepoint No. 2 causes the back wall of the room to "melt," confronting the listener with the dark, rich sound of Vollenweider's harp reverberating within a giant acoustic space.

Relative to the original Bluepoint Oyster, the Bluepoint No. 2 offers richer, more potent bass and smoother, less aggressive highs. Together, these improvements transform Sumiko's entry-level moving coil into a cartridge that even finicky listeners might enjoy for hours on end.

Though the Bluepoint No. 2 offers somewhat less purity, focus, and refinement than top-tier moving coils, it supplies most of the essential ingredients necessary for superlative analog sound, which is quite an achievement. **tas**



SPECS & PRICING

Sumiko Bluepoint No. 2

Type: High-output moving coil

Output: 2.5mV

Weight: 6.3 grams

Stylus: Elliptical diamond

Tracking force: 1.6-2.0 grams

U.S.

Price: \$299

SUMIKO AUDIO

2431 Fifth St.
Berkeley, California
94710
(510) 843-4500
sumikoaudio.net

U.K.

Price: £150

SYMMETRY

Suite 5, 17 Holywell Hill,
St. Albans,
Hertfordshire, AL1 1DT
+44 (0) 1727 865488
symmetry-systems.
co.uk

[CLICK HERE TO COMMENT IN THE FORUM AT AVGUIDE.COM](#)