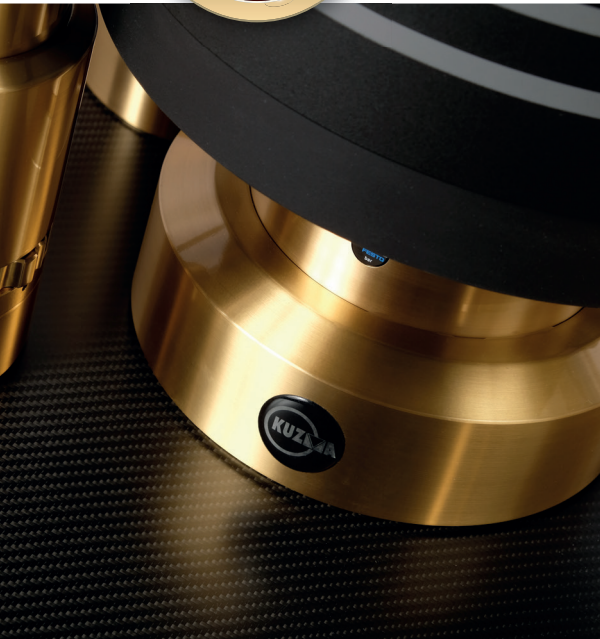




TURNTABLE OF THE YEAR Kuzma XL Air



XL by Kuzma is the company's ultimate expression of turntable making. But, unlike many ultimate-grade devices, it is not an evolutionary dead-end; Franc Kuzma and his team have continued to develop and improve the Kuzma XL, allowing for existing XL owners to upgrade their turntables from the 2000s and onwards. This is a top-grade turntable that just keeps getting better.

The latest *ne plus ultra* Kuzma turntable is the Kuzma XL AIR, building on the success of the XL DC, which remains in production. As the name suggests, the XL AIR adds an air bearing with external air compressor (housed in another room). This requires an additional platter element and new bearing housing. This raises the height of the already reassuringly imposing XL DC by 40mm, and

Kuzma provides the appropriate spacers for its arm towers. The AIR also significantly increases the mass of the XL DC's platter, taking it to a mighty 44kg, meaning the whole turntable tips the scales at over 100kg. Stand makers... take note! However, except for the heavy lifting involved, installing, upgrading and operating the Kuzma XL AIR is surprisingly easy and the turntable is a joy to use. Naturally, it demands the best in tonearms and cartridges, but Kuzma can help there too, with both 4Point and Air Line designs and its own high-end CAR cartridge range.

In our test, Alan Sircom felt that, "The principle difference between the XL DC and XL AIR is close to the difference between the XL DC and most other turntables. It's more about the absence of impact on the music than the character it imparts," and that, "it allows the differences in arms to be rendered in the sharpest focus." He concluded by saying that, "The XL DC is one of the best turntables ever made and its performance reflects that. The XL AIR doesn't make that sound broken, but it pushes the envelope so much further in all the ways the XL DC does so well." +

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