

The Bottom Line

The Talisman Alchemists are more than the sum of their technical advantages. They embody the systems approach. Their synergism is centered on the goal of delivering recorded music as a present reality rather than a veiled memory.

When you make the substantial investment needed to obtain a first-class moving coil phono cartridge, you want to be sure you are getting top-level performance. Please listen to the Alchemists and compare. But don't compare them to other high-output moving

coils. Compare them to the most highly rated combination of low-output moving coils and step-up devices. And let your ears decide.

The Talisman idea is to capture the sense of immediacy, of the music's emotional impact, of being there. The Talisman idea is to give you back the music without interfering with its coherence, punch, dynamics or natural tonal balance. By harnessing technology to accurately retrieve the signal inscribed in your records, Talisman allows you to recapture the magic bound in your music.

Talisman Alchemist Intensified Focus™ Cartridges

Specifications

MODEL	Alchemist IA	Alchemist IIIS
Cantilever	Aluminum/ Magnesium Alloy	Sapphire Tube
Output Voltage per channel at 1 kHz-5cm/s (mV)	2.0	2.0
Internal Impedance (DCR, ohms)	90	90
Load Impedance (ohms)	47,000	47,000
Frequency Response (Hz)	20-40,000	10-60,000
Channel Separation at 1 kHz (dB)	>25	>30
Channel Balance (dB)	0.5	0.5
Compliance (cm/dyne)	15×10^{-6}	15×10^{-6}
Recommended Tracking Force (g)	$1.8 \pm .3$	$2.0 \pm .5$
Stylus Type	Elliptical	see text
Tip Dimensions (mil)	0.3×0.7	—
Weight (g)	6.7	6.7

Total Quality Assurance

Every Talisman phono cartridge is thoroughly quality tested in the United States, using an eight-step screening process known as Total Quality Assurance—TQA.

TQA tests include:

- 1) Microscopic visual inspection of stylus shape, orientation and polish, and cantilever integrity
- 2) Continuity, phase consistency, channel balance
- 3) Compliance, proper adjustment of suspension and damping
- 4) Tracking ability
- 5) Rise time
- 6) Distortion
- 7) Frequency response and channel separation—B & K strip chart readout issued
- 8) Critical listening

Only the cartridges that pass all the lab tests and meet our listening standards for musicality, clarity, coherence and freedom from harshness are shipped to your Talisman dealer.

sumiko

P.O. Box 5046 Berkeley, CA 94705

alchemist



alchemist

(al' ka mist)—A person who seeks to transmute base metals into gold; a magician with the power of transmutation.

Question: If Talisman products are so technologically advanced, why do you give them names associated with magic?

Answer: Because we understand that technology is only a means to an end. The ultimate goal of all Talisman products is to allow you to break down the electronic and mechanical barriers between yourself and the music. The best technology cannot be distinguished from magic because it appears effortless. The best tool becomes an extension of your hand. Results matter much more than endless pages of technical justification for "break-throughs" that somehow don't sound better.

Does this mean that research and development don't count? Of course they count, but only as much as they really improve your listening situation.

The Alchemist series came about because of a demand and a challenge. The demand came from audio enthusiasts who wanted a phono cartridge as good as the Talisman but without the need of a step-up device. The challenge? For years moving coil cartridge designers had been trying to come up with a high-output MC as good as the best low-outputs . . . and failing. Because you demanded it, David Fletcher and the Talisman design team responded to the challenge . . . and succeeded.

Most high-output moving coils are "developed" by simply adding more windings to the coils of an existing product. Adding more windings means more voltage, but also more moving mass—enough to audibly degrade one of the

major factors that elevates moving coils above other designs—transient response (rise time).

Previous high-output MCs had earned a reputation for poor tracking ability and audible "straining" as record modulation got higher. All of the above had to be solved before Alchemist could be released.

Intensified Focus™

Every phono cartridge is a system of interlocking electrical and mechanical relationships. The generating system, the stylus/cantilever and the body must work together as a synergistic whole. Merely having an excellent stylus, exotic cantilever or "break-through" generating system is not enough.

Starting from scratch, Fletcher and the design team developed the "Intensified Focus"™ generating mechanism which adds virtually no extra moving mass to the system and yet boosts the output to 2.0 millivolts. Rise time is 7 to 8 microseconds, faster than many of today's most respected low-output moving coil cartridges.

Because "Intensified Focus"™ is a proprietary design, we cannot divulge precisely how the system works. But we can say that this generating mechanism goes a step beyond even the low-output Talismans in removing the magnetic yokes and pole pieces that mask detail and transparency.

Part of Alchemist's secret is the second generation Samarium Cobalt magnet which contains 20 times the magnetic energy of an ordi-

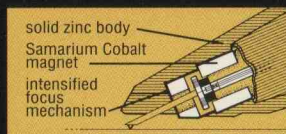
nary magnet the same size. Intense magnetic focus at the coils concentrates the generating mechanism's energy and prevents virtually all losses and fringing effects. Just as the magnetic field remains focused and coherent, so the musical image retains those properties: lifelike soundstage, uncanny image specificity and a sense of the immediacy of the performance.

To keep moving mass low, the Alchemists use an extremely thin gauge of coil wire—oxygen-free copper 15 millionths of a meter in diameter. After the coils are hand wound, the ends are laser annealed for flexibility and lack of resonance. This process is exclusive to Alchemists.

Body

The bodies and outer casings of most phono cartridges are plastic or stamped thin metal, both of which can resonate sympathetically with the stylus/cantilever system. Interior air spaces can act as resonant chambers, selectively

amplifying vibration. The greater these resonances, the more deteriorating the effect on signal integrity and detail.



Talisman cartridges use a machined solid zinc body that is tapered to further discourage resonances. Air cavities are reduced to a minimum. Your Talisman is capable of recreating the subtleties often masked by resonance in other cartridges. The net result can be either subtle or very apparent, depending on the resolving power of the rest of your system.

Alchemist IA

Like its low-output cousin, the Talisman A, the Alchemist IA uses an aluminum-magnesium alloy cantilever that exhibits exceptional rigidity with low moving mass. This design has extremely low flexion

compared to ordinary aluminum cantilevers, meaning much greater linearity and less energy storage. The elliptical stylus is a mirror-polished square-shank diamond that is nude-mounted to the cantilever.

Alchemist IIIS

More high-end audio dealers and manufacturers use the Alchemist IIIS as their reference cartridge than any other high-output moving coil. Although it is identical to the Alchemist IA in body and generating mechanism, the Alchemist IIIS uses perhaps the most advanced cantilever/stylus system of any cartridge currently available. The cantilever is a low-mass sapphire tube, second in hardness only to diamond. Using technology borrowed from his \$1200 The ARM, David Fletcher perfected

a method of heat-fitting the cantilever to the coil-former for best mechanical rigidity. Laser drilling unites the cantilever and stylus and allows them to act as though they had been shaped from a single crystal. These processes result in an almost perfect one-to-one relationship between motion at the stylus and music at the outputs.

The stylus is grain-oriented for best polish, highest shaping precision and lowest wear. Even the stylus contact area is unique. With its extremely long, narrow contact line and small scanning radius, the Alchemist IIIS has detail-resolving ability and tracking ability beyond any other high-output MC to date. Another benefit is the reduction of surface noise on worn records—the stylus skims over ruts and gouges left by other styli.

