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BY GEORGE!
An exclusive interview
with George Spencer-
Churchill

FESTIVAL SPIRIT
Luxury camping at
countryside music
events

**GOOD
SPORTS**
London's insatiable
hunger for action

CITY GUIDE
Restaurants,
bars, spas, stores
and more

Luxury sounds

Henry Neuteboom

*The latest products dedicated
to enhancing the listening experience*

Sound is curious stuff, because at its best it is itself multi-sensorial. The subtle nuances of voices and musical instruments are given character by an infinity of harmonics, and the bass notes produced by the giant arrays of speakers at rock concerts, and by the biggest pipes of church organs, caress you physically. Contemporary sound systems use a whole range of technological innovations to make the listening experience as intense as possible – perhaps even more so than the original concert, in which the undeniable uniqueness of a live performance is inevitably blemished by the guy behind unwrapping a chocolate.

In the photo, the world's first levitating turntable, by Mag-Lev Audio

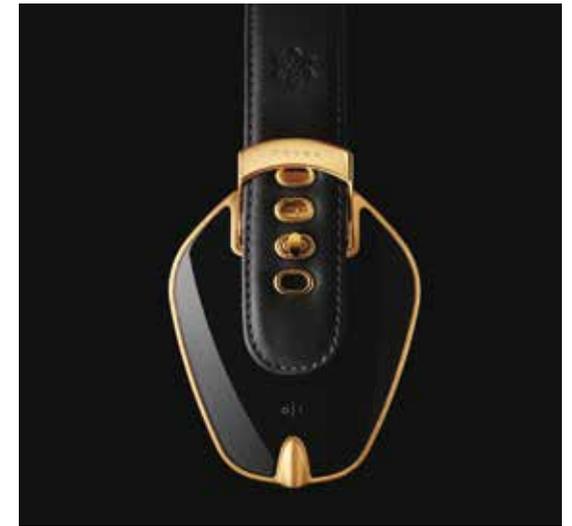


Didier Kwak is an engineer who has dedicated his life to replicating the magnificence of real sound, and began developing the first ASKJA prototype in 2001. This has now become a futuristic system incorporating materials used in motor sports and aerospace, and studies of fluid mechanics and aerodynamics. But the principal difference of ASKJA's approach is that Kwak has worked on psychoacoustics, considering not just the sound itself, but how you hear it, what the brain does with it, and how it translates it into spatial information. Every electronic component is specifically designed and handmade by artisans in Japan and Denmark, without using any solid-state, silicium-based elements.



On this page, top, the levitating turntable by Mag-Lev Audio; centre, luxury headphones by Pryma; bottom, Gold Phantom speakers by Devialet. Opposite page, top, Pryma headphones, detail of the snap-adjusting headband; bottom, a sound system by ASKJA incorporating psychoacoustic studies

Devialet is something completely different. They have been around for a few years now, and their sleek chrome amplifiers are familiar to audiophiles beyond their native France. But it was perhaps their Phantom wi-fi speaker that changed the audio scene, a relatively small, very powerful speaker incorporating an amplifier, capable of connecting to a smartphone by wi-fi or Bluetooth. You can scatter them around the home, with up to 12 operating at the same time to blast the roof off. It's not just about volume, but superb sound quality as well: Sting, Kanye and Karl Lagerfeld are amongst its supporters. The Phantom incorporates a vast amount of technology and design and, even though it is very compact, it can generate the low-frequency infrasound typical of much larger loudspeakers – those vibrations that give good audio systems their sexy emotional power. Today its portability has been enhanced by the lovely Cocoon, a special edition for which Berluti have created a luxurious leather travel case. Available in very limited quantities.





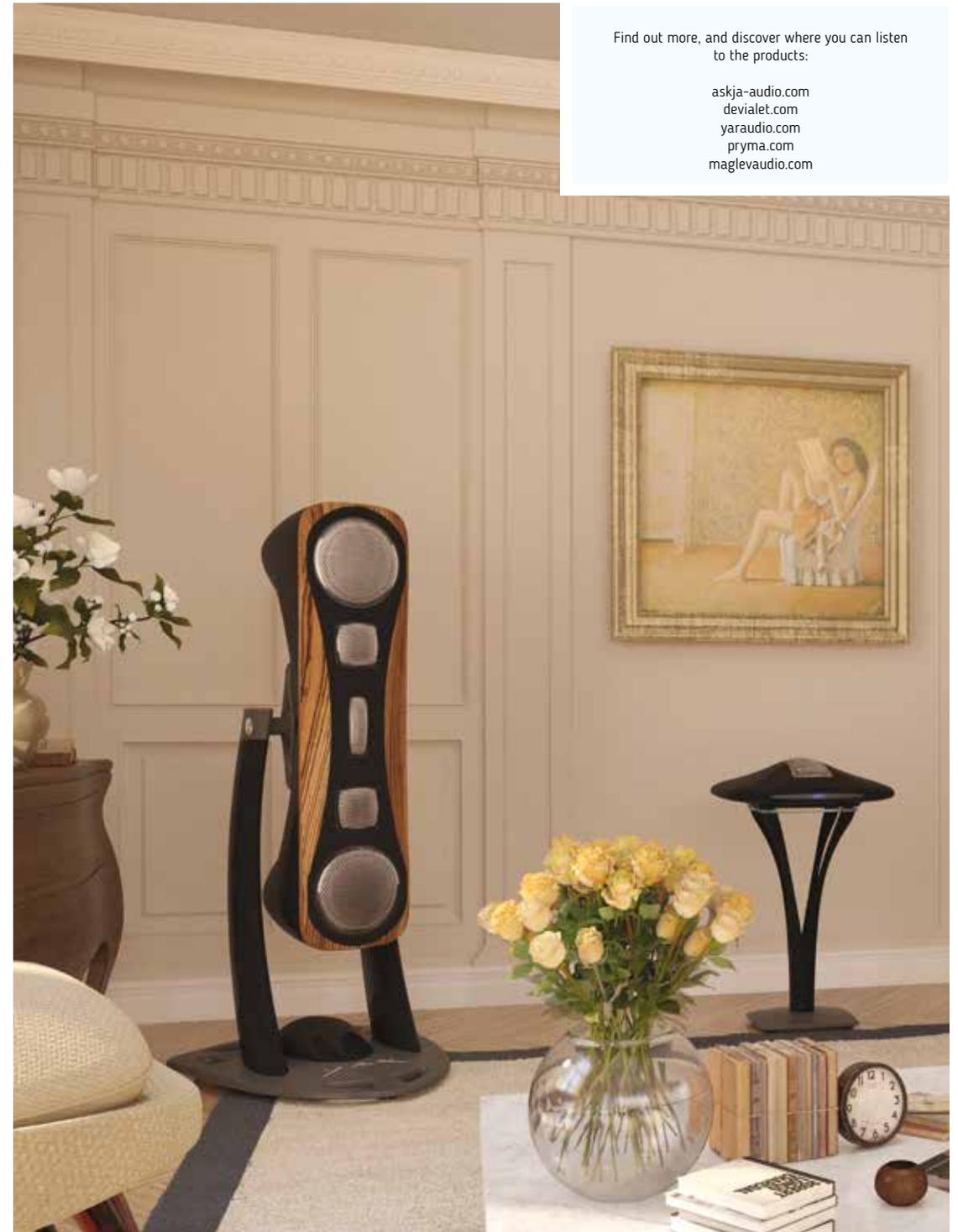
While ASKJA and Devialet are both based in France, YAR was founded by Adriano Marconetto in Italy. The YAR sound system comprises the B-yond integrated amplifier, the Y-der loudspeakers, and the Feeld stand, all designed to eliminate unwanted vibration and offer a truly immersive sound experience. This is a limited edition, comprising just 100 systems, each of which can be given a personalized finish, using aluminium, titanium, silver and gold. After hand-crafting, it is delivered and installed by the same team.

Pryma is a recent arrival on the luxury sound scene, and their trendy, leather-cloaked headphones are perfect for anyone who loves fashion – such as Beyoncé who wears them in the music video for ‘Sandcastles.’ They are adjustable in size by means of an ingenious snap-adjusting headband operating like a belt and buckle, and their technology by Sonus Faber makes them sound as good as they look. They are available in a wide range of colours and finishes.

I can't help mentioning a turntable which looks as good as it sounds. Mag-Lev Audio is the world's first levitating turntable. It uses magnets to suspend the platter in the air. It is a Kickstarter success story, and the first backers will receive their turntables in August 2017. Taking old-fashioned vinyl to new heights. ■



On this page, two photos of systems by ASKJA. On the opposite page, a Y-der speaker by YAR, in personalised finish including quality timber



Find out more, and discover where you can listen to the products:

askja-audio.com
devialet.com
yaraudio.com
pryma.com
maglevaudio.com