

# SOUNDMAG

THE NEW DIGITAL HI-FI MAGAZINE: [SOUNDMAG.COM.AU](http://SOUNDMAG.COM.AU)

## IN THIS ISSUE WE LOOK AT:


- + Turntables from Pro-Ject & Thorens
- + Panasonic's AllPlay Multi Room Sound System
- + We Talk to Len Wallis about Networked Audio + High Res
- + We also take a look at the all new Life Style Store

**ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**  
+ YAMAHA MUSICCAST  
+ YAS-306 SOUNDBAR

**REVIEWS:**  
BOWERS & WILKINS 805 D3/  
AUDIO RESEARCH GSI75 AMPLIFIER/  
ANTHEM MRX 1120 DOLBY ATMOS RECEIVER

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# THE LIFE STYLE STORY

There's a growing consensus within the high-end sound market that the industry's biggest challenge is yet to come – that of courting the younger, millennial market. It's the industry-wide pivot everyone is trying to accomplish - and Parramatta's Life Style Store is already several steps ahead.

The store's Managing Director Vinod Christie-David says that his store has been designed and built with the growing divide between the young and old in mind.

"You've got the traditional hi-fi customer who comes in and the younger customer who doesn't understand hi-fi and is just looking for sound," he says.

According to Vinod, the growth opportunities here are "significant" and the only thing separating these customers from making their next hi-fi purchase is a good education.

"We've modelled the showroom very much [with that in mind]," he says.



Located near the commercial heart of North Parramatta, The Life Style Store's two-floor showroom features 16 home entertainment demonstration rooms including seven dedicated custom home theatre rooms, two speaker comparison rooms and seven hi-fi music rooms.

Vinod says that "there is no better way" to demonstrate the potential of high-resolution audio and audio systems than in person, and that's a task the Life Style Store is well-equipped to handle.

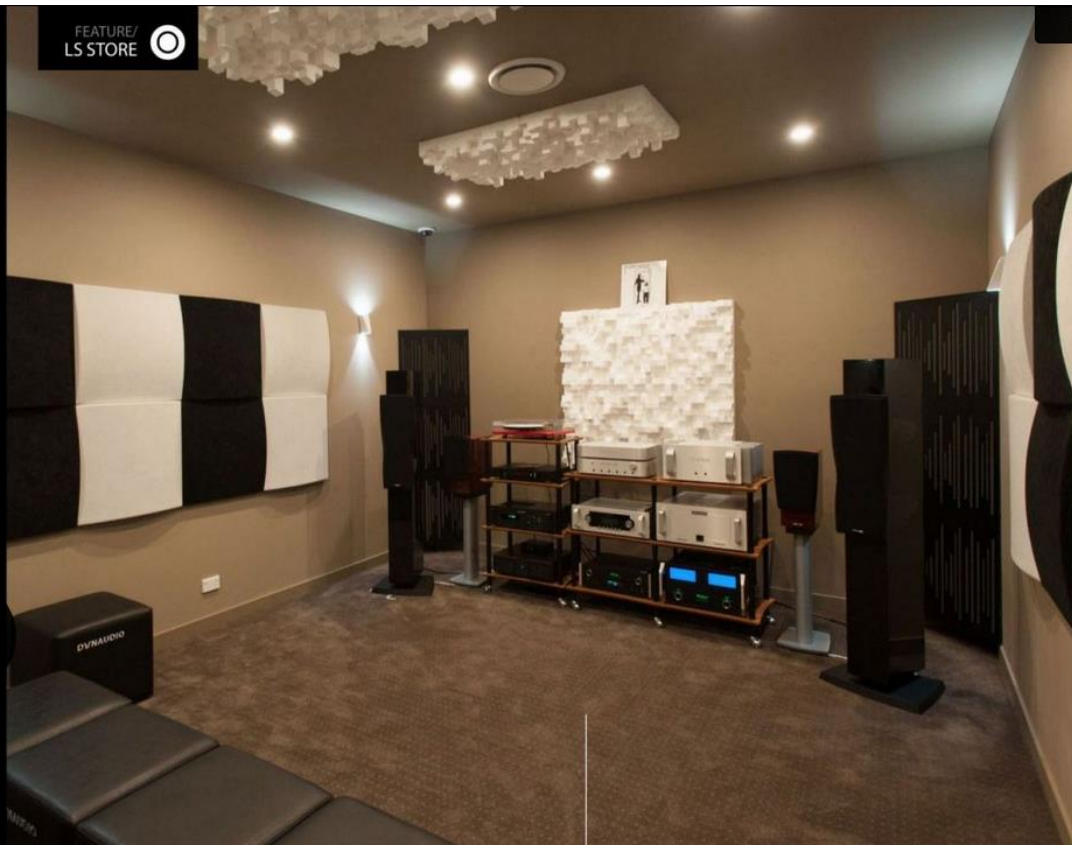
"We can take people through different levels of systems. Show them what a \$1000 system sounds like."

"For us we see both home theatre and speakers as very important."

He says that the two floors of the store allow them to keep and service both markets, "properly with proper demonstrations."

"The market is not just a cash and carry sale, that for customers to truly get the value from what they're buying and feel comfortable in the high value of the purchase"





DYNAUDIO ROOM

LINN ROOM



"We've had double-digit percentage growth in all three categories [over] the last few years," Vinod says. As a result, he says, the business is "continuing to invest back into demonstration facilities."

The chief challenge for retailers like The Life Style Store then becomes less about selling younger customers on the benefits of high-end audio and more about getting them in-store in the first place.

Vinod says that while the Life Style Store has done some print advertising, those channels just aren't

reaching that millennial market.

"A lot of the millennials don't look at that as much," he says.

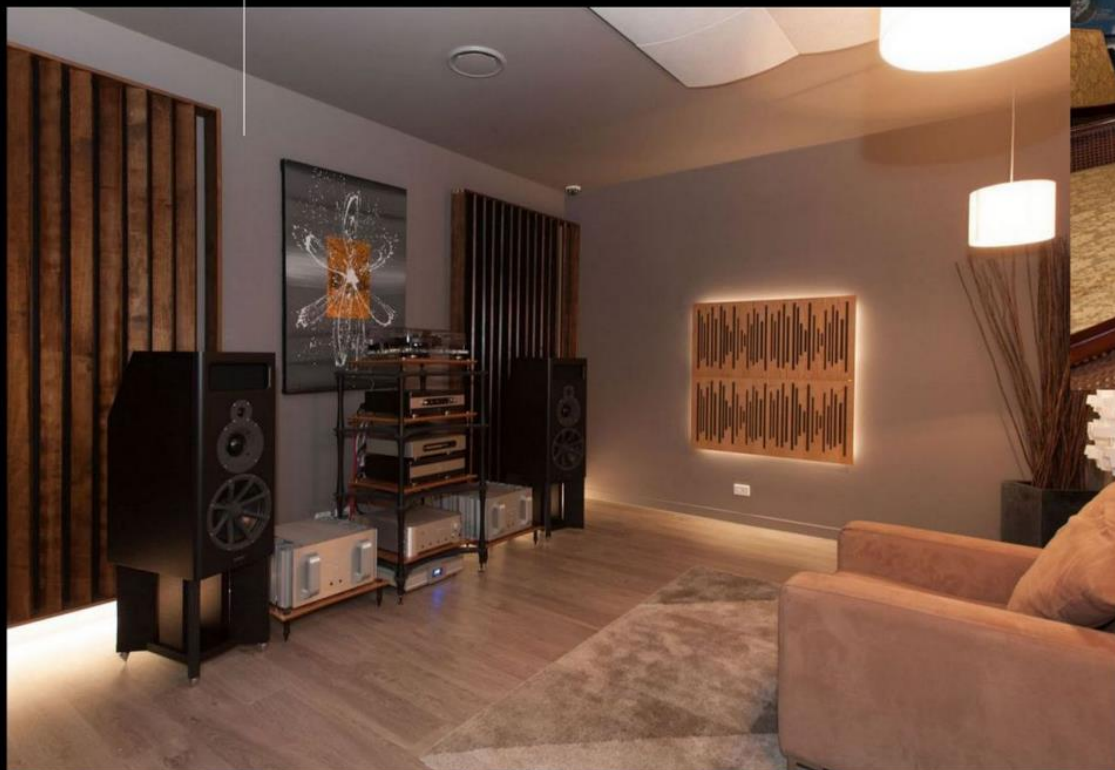
Vinod says that the car audio component of his business has helped them make some in-roads here.

He says "A lot of them start in car audio. They'll buy their first car system, and as they get older they'll get married and buy a home and want a home system. It's part of [our] system of servicing the customer over a long period of time."



VIENNA ACOUSTICS & PRIMARE ROOM

PMC & PLINIUS ROOM



Something else that catches the eye of millennials is branding.

"It is the brands that attract them first because they don't understand it," Vinod says.

He says wireless streaming players like Sonos are key here.

"I think for that younger segment they expect to have technologies like wireless [and] streaming. It's a starting point for them and learning it's simple to get a better sound than that of their

smartphone speaker," he suggests.

He says the rapid growth of wireless sound is one driven by both parts of the sound market.

According to him, "the millennial will accept it faster because they understand it but the older market will make an effort to understand it because they want it."

Vinod notes that while demonstrations, marketing information and online articles all have a role to play in educating millennials about high-resolution audio, "one of the hindrances has been in content."





ONE OF THE 7 CUSTOM THEATRE ROOMS

He says "A lot of sites are available overseas but not easily accessible if you live in Australia. It's not easily accessible for our local market. If it's hard for them to get digital content, they're not going to source something"

That said, he's hopeful that the eventual involvement of major streaming players like Apple or Spotify could pave the way for further growth.

"I think they will go down that path, I think that will happen," he says, "as customers get into music, and they want the next step up and somewhere to go to - that is obviously the next step for them."

Trends also suggest it's the natural next step for the industry as a whole. Vinod says "the digital side is very strong" and that headphones and wireless playback is poised for a big Christmas season in 2016.

"Custom-speakers, in-wall, in-ceiling, stealth and invisible speakers are becoming more popular as people don't want to see big speakers in their rooms."

"When we do complete home installations - bringing music into four, five, six rooms in the house - they're happy to see it in a theatre room maybe in a main listening environment but around the rest of the house, aesthetics are very important."

He goes on to say that "the love for music and the actual interaction has improved a lot, which is why things like turntables, analogue music, experience based playback has improved. I think both segments are important."

"I think the younger market are discovering something they just never knew existed. That they've never done before. It's that little bit of involvement in music. It's a little bit less of that instant society that they've grown up with."

"You've got to get involved and actually got to listen to the music from start to finish. All the little things like the album covers give them a more intimate experience of the artist than what they had."