



Technics Ottawa SC-C500

Everybody loves a comeback! And, after more than a decade's absence from our shores, Technics has stepped back into the audio spotlight to show us just what it has been up to.

Bolder, sleeker and more serious, you'd be forgiven for not recognising the brand – but hey, sometimes the best upgrades are the ones that change the game altogether.

The Ottawa SC-C500 is a gorgeous, compact performer with enough reach to hold the past, present and future of audio in its neat little paws by combining the

classic CD micro system with the wireless clout of 2016.

The main unit is a combination of sleek modernism and traditional hi-fi charm. The brushed metal casing, minimalist switchgear and swinging perspex CD cover remind me of why I fell in love with hi-fi as a kid.

And yet, the digital display and twin Wi-Fi antennae confidently remind one of the modern engineering waiting for you inside.

The accompanying speakers have a slightly more modern feel, with hints of brushed metal at the top and bottom

providing a subtle link to the main unit's styling, while remaining unique enough to exude individual appeal. Altogether I think they're a good fit.

It's worth noting that the Ottawa is offered in two different incarnations. The SC-C500 comes with its own, native speakers, while the SU-C500 allows owners to add their own speakers.

In the case of the SC-C500, the accompanying speakers house a dedicated amplifier for their tweeters, while the SU-C500 has this hardware built into the main unit. For the SC-C500, this means that the connection



to the main unit is made through two proprietary, three metre speaker cables to work with this bi-amp design.

The CD player steals the overall design spotlight here. The manual, swinging mechanism for opening and closing is charming, in my opinion, and may remind one of the layout typical of old hi-fi separates, which saw the record player positioned on top. A visual homage to the vinyl heyday, then.

But the homage buck stops there, because the rest of the SC-C500 is all cutting-edge modern. It sports two USB inputs, one for playing music off a storage device and the other for direct connection to your computer.

Also included are a headphone jack, an optical digital input, an Ethernet port for wired network connectivity, and dual wireless antennae. Bluetooth? Of course! Its own app? You bet!

Although its primary function is to be a music system, the 500 is ready to connect to the multitude of devices we as modern humans more than likely use daily. Wireless connections are made with relative ease and the app is friendly and clean, with a sleek interface that is intuitive to navigate.

Technics is also ready for the high-resolution streaming game with its seven digital-powered Technics Tracks service, which provides up to 24-bit/192 kHz quality.

Sound quality is impressive for such dainty native speakers. The 100 watts of power is enough to fill a medium-sized room with wide, enveloping sound. The 270 degree three-tweeter arrangement does a great job of ensuring there are



no audio dead spots in the room. This feature, combined with the speakers' small footprint, makes for ease of use as well as several options when it comes to placement.

Bass response is also impressive for this size. The two full-range drivers face each other in an effort to reduce cabinet vibrations and are combined with spiral acoustic tubes to squeeze every last drop of low-end out of these small packages.

The result is a rich, full-sounding bottom end that leans a bit more toward creating spacious sound rather than an ultra-refined, accurate base foundation.

The midrange is the star of the overall performance, providing clean vocals and good instrument separation in this neck of the audio spectrum woods. Treble is well mannered and spacious, providing clarity from all angles, and there is an overall pleasing balance on a flat equaliser setting.

It didn't take a lot of flirting for me to fall for the SC-C500. I really just love the way it looks. The only thing that gave me a bit of visual OCD frustration was the speaker cables, which I felt were bit untidy.

Other than that... just take my money.

The Technics Ottawa SC-C500 will be available in SA from early 2017.

Justin Beachcroft Shaw

VITAL STATS

Output Power	100 watts
CD Player	Yes
Inputs	Digital optical, USB-A, USB-B, Ethernet
Outputs	3,5 mm stereo headphone jack
Wireless	802.11n Wi-Fi, Bluetooth (AAC, SBC), AirPlay
Dimensions (WxHxD)	
Main unit:	360 x 91 x 249 mm
Speakers:	110 x 277 x 110 mm
Weight	
Main unit:	3,9 kg
Speakers:	1,9 kg each

Verdict

Old world charm meets New World prowess in a beautifully executed package.

Price R32 999

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OUR RATING: 84/100

