



1920s VINTAGE

iPHONE® & iPAD® GRAMOPHONE

\$249 / \$299

FOR iPHONE

FOR iPAD

A

B

A. iPhone® Gramophone
8½"sq. x 3¾" h (base)
3505,0583

B. iPad® Gramophone
16¼"l x 9"w x 3¾" h
(base) 3505,0584

WORDS BY LAURA CAVALUZZO

MATT RICHMOND

THE GRAMOPHONE SCULPTURE MEETS SOUND

A SOULFUL VICTROLA FROM THE 1920s LEADS AN INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER ON A 21ST-CENTURY MUSICAL JOURNEY.



Sometimes serendipity succeeds where school falls short. Matt Richmond could have traveled any one of several roads. His passion for the saxophone might have led to a career on stage, had the act of studying music not taken the fun out of playing his instrument. After shifting his focus to microbiology, he found that hours spent in the library overshadowed his love for tinkering in the lab. And finally, while industrial design tapped his life-long desire to know how things work – “Since I was a kid, the first thing I’d do when I got something new was to take it apart” – his graduate studies deconstructing toasters and hair dryers proved not nearly as interesting as the modern furniture he began collecting on the side.

So, ultimately, Matt left school and devoted himself to furniture design. But it wasn’t until he walked into an antique store near San Francisco that all of his interests and aptitudes finally – and brilliantly – converged.

“I found this old Victrola horn that had a shape I really loved, and I thought, ‘How cool would it be if I could use this with my phone?’ I held up my phone to the opening on the speaker, and I could immediately tell it was something that would work.”

He crafted a base for that first horn – a clean-lined piece of hardwood, carved with a slot for his phone, a hole for the

horn, and an internal channel to conduct sound from one to the other, with no plug or battery required. The result was elegantly simple, and amazingly functional – a witty juxtaposition of vintage and modern technology that brought something new to each. A sculpture that made music.

Everyone who saw the original wanted one of their own. Soon, by virtue of word of mouth and the Internet, Matt had more orders than he could possibly fill. After handcrafting nearly a hundred, Matt refined the design and determined exactly the combination of horn shape and wood type that works best, and that would allow him to replicate it on a larger scale.

The Gramophone from Restoration Hardware is based on that very first horn Matt found in an East Bay antique store, a Magnavox metal speaker from the 1920s. The base is crafted from solid walnut, for good looks, horn-balancing heft, and bright, full-range sound. “It’s not overpowering, so it’s great in the background,” Matt says. “And it’s directional – you can point the horn where you want the sound. If you put it in a corner it’ll really fill a room.”

It doesn’t sound like a conventional stereo, he adds, and that’s the beauty of it. “There’s something about listening to a record on an old phonograph...it doesn’t have the fidelity of a CD or MP3 but it evokes a feeling. It’s the same with this. It’s about eliciting a feeling.” ■

