The idea was simple – make a CD player with the touch and feel of vinyl, and the convenience and tweak-ability of digital audio. And with that, plus years of research and development, the Pioneer CDJ-1000 digital turntable was born. The focus of the imposing piece is the jog dial, which is large and touch-sensitive and moves just like a platter. Scratch, house and trance DJs alike love the emulation factor while getting added bonuses like pitch-locking amid change of CD speed, seamless looping capabilities and removable cards to remember all the tricks made in the mix. Because of this product, everyone from Paul van Dyk to Jurassic Five’s Cut Chemist, Deep Dish to Linkin Park’s Joe Hahn is starting to get on the CDJ-ing kick where the mere mention of the idea once brought scowls to pro-faces. The CDJ-1000 is fast becoming what the analog 1200s are to a former generation – the tool of turntable creativity. – DC

It’s hard to stay atop the digital market but Denon’s DN-D9000 is determined to do so with a versatile and resilient dual CD player made with the pro-grade in mind. First there’s the tricks, things like simultaneous playback of two tracks from the same CD on one deck, seamless looping and application of effects. Then there’s the splice function that allows DJs to cut out sections of a track in real time, allowing on-the-fly remixing from the booth. The real vision is in things like implementing the first user-replaceable CD drives, which makes a downed unit a momentary problem where it was once a night-killer. The six D9000 plug-ins announced this month, including those for MP3 playback, also point to Denon’s commitment to keeping their products and the DJs behind them at the forefront of the digital sound revolution. – DC

“So you’re gonna get a 2016, right?” That’s the question all varieties of DJs pose when the subject turns to a hefty new gear purchase. Taking up where classic rotary the UREI 1620 left off, the MP-2016 offered DJs and nightclubs a similar design with modern versatility and instantly became the new standard. It has six separate stereo input channels, three-band EQ for the master outputs, and a headphone cueing section with a six-position Source switch. The channel and auxiliary inputs enable DJs to use just about any imaginable combination of turntables, CD players, samplers, drum machines, or whatever else they choose. The legendary Little Louie Vega endorses the product so heartily that he appears in its ad campaign, and even Paul Oakenfold recently sacrificed the drama of the crossfade for a 2016. – EG
TTX1 TURNTABLE, NUMARK INDUSTRIES

Very few things in the nightclub industry combine a space age look with a space age function. That amoeba-shaped, blue backlit bar still serves olde thyme liquor and those funky handles still open doors, but Numark’s sleek TTX1 lives beyond the promise of its looks with truly 21st century engineering. On back order since its May ’02 launch, this turntable was made asking not just what DJs needed, but also what they dreamed. It’s got the most powerful motor in the business, so much so that a special function of the machine is to tune down the torque in case the traveling DJ needs something more like their (weaker) home set-up. Key lock keeps the pitch for a track even as the beatmatching begins and redundant start/stops help DJs stay where their hands need to be in the mix. Little things, like un-snagglable beveled edges and a lit cable connecting area, are a testament to Numark’s observations of a DJ’s daily tangles, and the dual-packaged and fully interchangeable S-shaped and straight tone arms assure that turntablists and trance DJs alike will be signing their names onto that waitlist far into the future. – DC

XONE:V6 ROTARY CLUB MIXER, ALLEN & HEATH

Allen & Heath product developer Andy Rigby-Jones really dug deep when he started work on what would become the XONE:V6. He researched the Bozak mixers of the 1960s – heavy, expensive, but pristine analog pieces that DJs still seek out. He talked to countless jocks about their mixing preferences, and watched how they put XONE’s other models to use. He even “went back to school” to relearn traditional audio circuit design. His finished product is a rotary mixer with a thesis, a piece of equipment that does more than just its given function – it also makes a statement about what historically aware engineering can do for modern artists. The V6 has six dual stereo channels with switchable sources (channels 5-6 each have a tube preamp, perfect for mellowing harsh digital music sources), a large rotary control for high pass filter (30Hz to 600Hz) on each, and precision Penny & Giles conductive plastic rotary controls. Already in place in Miami’s new Maze, XONE:V6 is well on its way to becoming as classic as the units it’s modeled after. – KLM