



Madly addictive

NO OTHER AMPLIFIER LOOKS QUITE LIKE THE RA 180, THE FIRST VENTURE OUTSIDE THE NETWORK PLAYER ARENA BY SOUTH KOREAN COMPANY HiFi ROSE, WITH ITS 'PARTS BIN RAID' STYLING. BUT AS ANDREW EVERARD DISCOVERS, WHEN HE LISTENS, THERE'S METHOD IN THE APPARENT MADNESS

When I was young, back in the days when everything was still in black and white, my grandfather had a shed. Well, it was actually the wartime Anderson shelter, made from corrugated iron, excavated and parked on a base at the end of hostilities, then fitted with a workbench. Tiny, dark and cramped, it smelt of old wood and creosote, and it was there I learnt now long-forgotten rudimentary carpentry skills.

It also had an extensive collection of old jam-jars and tobacco tins packed with nails, screws and all sorts of odds and ends. In the days before the throwaway society, these could be drawn on to repair just about anything in the house, and anything beyond my grandfather's bodging skills was stripped for any potentially usable parts before being put out for the rag and bone man who yelled

his way along the road on his horse-drawn cart. Yes, real *Steptoe and Son* stuff!

I mention all this because all those memories came back when I first encountered the RA 180, the debut amplifier from South Korean company HiFi Rose, until now best-known for its striking-looking network audio players, their full-width high-definition display panels able to show video content