

**Brooklyn, N.Y.**—Hard to believe perhaps, but not every American techno DJ has fled to Berlin. While top talents like Jeff Samuel and Butane now call the German capitol home, outfits like Hidden Recordings still fly the flag Stateside for the genre's minimal sound.

Run by DJ Deepak Sharma and studio maven Dieter Krause, the Brooklyn-based imprint has been gaining attention with unique tracks like the duo's guitar-driven "Palace in the Sun," Karri O's popular download "Ajaton," and The Monkey Brothers' bumpin' "Manuela," Hidden's latest release.

Sharma also pushes the sound at residencies in New York (Bar 13) and Washington, D.C. (his roving Hidden Sessions) and during global guest spots. We caught up with Sharma to get his take on making tracks and running a modern label.

**DJ Times:** Why has the minimal sound gained such ground?

**Deepak Sharma:** It's fresh and clever music. It can completely destroy the dancefloor, but not in the typical drum build-up or vocal-house fashion. Tracks are subtly arranged and focus more on rhythms and basslines. It's the only genre where a crowd will burst out cheering in the middle of a track an hour or two into a set, with no build-up or vocal, just because they click with a sound they haven't heard before.

**DJ Times:** What's your ideal DJ-booth setup?

**Sharma:** I use vinyl, so it's two Technics 1200s, two CDJ-1000s, and a mixer with three or four EQs—Allen & Heath preferred. It's important that the mixer have EQs, especially low-end, because my style is very bassy.

**DJ Times:** DJs you admire and why?

**Sharma:** Minimal DJs who play deeper, big-room music that has an edge—it doesn't have to be fast BPMs. But what makes me smile is when I hear that rumble over and over from a DJ, who knows what they are doing, such as Butane and Magda. I find myself curious about their track selections—it's memorable. For more musical sets, I enjoy someone like Luciano, who has a very tribal and spacey feel.

**DJ Times:** How do you work with your partner, Dieter Krause?

**Sharma:** All producing, mixing and mastering is done in Ableton Live 7, so he'll start on a concept and send me the file—either a loop or a "first draft," as we like to call it. I will provide feedback on altering the track—or, if possible, I'll help program the track sequence out in Ableton. This goes back and forth until the track is completed. Sometimes I create a drum loop in Fruity Loops, send it to him, and he'll construct a "first draft" in Ableton, and we begin the process like that.

**DJ Times:** How do you approach your tracks?

**Sharma:** We use a lot of guitars and spacey sounds, but always with a deep beat and groovy basslines. Our tracks stand out, but, again, not in an obvious way. I definitely think our style is unique to everyone else pushing minimal.

**DJ Times:** You were commissioned to do a Heineken Global ad spot back in '07. How did that happen?

**Sharma:** Through a friend, we gained contact with the Musical Director for Ogilvy & Mather [ad agency] in Singapore. We sent him some loops, which he liked, but we did about 50 revisions before we won the job. The project was great for our development because we now know the pressure and demands of producing music for TV. I'm most proud that, even though this was for a TV commercial, we didn't stray from our style. The payday wasn't bad either.

**DJ Times:** Advice for DJs who want to run a label?

**Sharma:** Ask yourself why you're starting a label and what you hope to accomplish. Believe in your sound and push it passionately—it's not about gigs or making money right away. Don't worry about the number of releases per year. Expand, but do it slowly. Create a strong foundation so artists will be attracted to your label. Press vinyl, as it helps separate you from the digital labels—but you don't have to do this overnight. Introduce yourself to DJs and artists you enjoy and send them promos for feedback. Communicate well with your distributors and ask for feedback on how to grow your label.

Most importantly, remember it's a marathon and not a race.

— Jim Tremayne

## DEEPAK SHARMA'S HIDDEN RECORDINGS