My Opinion

The following is merely my unbiased personal opinion based on manufacturer and Tux Plot user experiences.

Small Inexpensive Desktop Vinyl Cutters

Cutok

The Cutok cutter found on Ebay in the $200-$300 range is a nice simple cutter.
It's firmware is very basic and lacks any sophisticated features such as Tux Plot controllable speeds or blade pressure (must be manually changed on cutter itself). It also has no offset function in it's firmware but Tux Pot can handle that with a software offset feature. It's "Print and Cut" is totally useless but Tux Plot has a universal print and cut feature for all cutters without that built-in ability so that's no problem. Support from manufacturer is none existent, you would have better luck getting a question answered from Santa Claus! USB port was a bit problematic to get Linux to use but I can email some simple instructions if needed.

This cutter is built like a little tank though with solid metal housing and very little plastic apart from the decorative accents and can plot very fast if needed. Simple to use and control so lack of technical support is not really a big issue.

Because of it's small size it's been very helpful running Tux Plot tests for me in my crowded office!

Silhouette Cameo Series

The $300 range of Cameo cutters are more complex but also more capable series of cutters.
It's firmware is very sophisticated and feature rich, most importantly is it's ability to "Print and Cut" using it's firmware to scan and find the registration marks. The cut accuracy is VERY good!
Unlike the Cutok most of the Cameo is plastic so weight is lower and easy to transport.
Firmware settings like speed, blade pressure offset etc are all software controllable from Tux Plot.
I use both the original Cameo and Cameo3 for Tux Plot testing.

Bluetooth is not really reliable enough to be used in the Linux environment so I didn't bother to develop this in Tux Plot.

Usb is a snap, plug in Cameo launch "add printer" and there it is in the printer list! Couldn't be easier.

Technical support is superb from the website or user forums.

KNK (Klick and Kut)

Nice quality and features but support is lacking and gave up trying to get a simple question answered! Command codes are a bit non-standard but Tux Plot handles that.

Cricut

Run do not walk away!
Search in Facebook for "Cricut Boycott" or "Provocraft Boycott"

RedSail

Firmware is quite basic and lacks features but useable. Built quite well and follows standard command codes. Falls into the $300-$350 range. Technical support quality is unknown but is a fairly wide used brand so if an issue arises vinyl cutting forums should have a wealth of help for you.

Larger Commercial Quality Cutters

Of course any of the top quality brands like Roland, Graphtec, Summa, Mutoh, Gerber, Mimaki rank as the best but the price is high.

UsCutter, Redsail, GCC, GRC, Rabbit, Liyu are just some of the "Best Of The Rest" brands.
In this category of cutters many manufacturers have tweaked to command code language to make their cutter unique, that in itself is not a problem but to enable Tux Plot to properly format the command codes for each one of the non standard cutter command languages has taken many hours of testing and some help from Tux Plot users from all over the world!

Starting A Business Or Hobby On An Extreme Budget

Buying used equipment when starting out is a good option but always test cut something first before you buy!
If the cutter has USB only confirm with me Linux will support the usb chip, especially if it's not a well known and respected manufacturer.

Quality will outlast any poor quality newer cutter!!

I still use thirty year old Roland pen plotters for Tux Plot testing and they work like the day they were made, but keep in mind the price was approaching $10k thirty years ago so the quality was built in! By the way old pen plotters make a wonderful vinyl cutters for a few dollars found on kijiji and other websites.

Small Business Example

Young person wanted to try vinyl cutting for car decals etc.
He bought two old 42" pen plotters on kijiji that came with two hundred dollars worth of pens, he paid $40 for everything!!
He bought a couple Roland blade holders on ebay and some blades, slightly modified the blade holders and now had not only pen plotters but two vinyl cutters also. Needless to say he used Tux Plot :)
He decided after a year to pursue this business further so he then purchased a professional vinyl cutter.

An inexpensive way to test the market............