

hi-fi news

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& Record Review

SUBLIME STEREO

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Nagra's finest?**

**'World's greatest
Rock 'n Roll venue'
The Marquee Club, p72**



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Legendary Electro amps
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• **OPINION** 8 pages of letters & cutting-edge comment • **READERS' CLASSIFIEDS** Hi-fi bargains galore

UK £4.00 US \$9.99 Aus \$9.95



Artesania Audio Prestige (£5k-8k)

From Italy comes this spectacular hi-fi scaffold, combining two structures in one with multiple tiers of damping and spiked isolation – the ‘perfect rack’?
 Review: **Paul Miller**



Why do many specialised hi-fi racks still exert so much character of their own – a simple rap test rewarding us with a ringing resonance? Rap the exo-skeleton of Artesania's Prestige rack and you'll be rewarded only with bruised knuckles for its heavyweight tubular uprights and square-section cross-members are all filled with layers of a damping material. And very effective it is too. Even the black crinkle-effect paint layer is chosen for its acoustic properties...

The business end of the rack, the inner frame that supports your equipment,

effectively hangs from spikes located into four substantial nylon bushes [see picture, right] and does not touch the exo-skeleton at any other point. This inner frame is fully adjustable, each tier locked into a

position of your choice along four stainless rods while chromed 'arms' slide left and right to suit the width of your separates. There are no flat shelves to flap about under your equipment.

Rather, your separates are

supported via four nylon discs, foam side up against the bottom plate of your amp or CD player while a steel spike locates into the arms beneath [see www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv7-ywvRGro for Artesania's step-by-step video guide].

The system is both extremely versatile and also inherently rigid once all its elements are locked into position. Spikes also couple the main frame to the floor via four conical discs while the entire assemblage may be crowned by a huge three-sheet laminate of glass and transparent mastic – as 'dead' a platform for your turntable as you'll encounter.

SOUND OF SILENCE

I auditioned products as diverse as SME's 20/3 record player [HFN Mar '11] and Aurender's S10 computer transport [review, p26] on this precision scaffold. Its influence was consistent – backgrounds were quieter and background detail easier to perceive while the recorded ambience of a venue seemed to grow. There was no sense of exaggeration here, illustrated by the sound of Beoga recorded live at the familiar Stockfish studio [SFR 357 4053] as the edges of the compact soundfield seemed

'There are no shelves to flap about under your equipment'



ABOVE: The inner frame is supported on spikes that locate into nylon bushes near the top corners of the rack's substantial exo-skeleton

to dissolve into the recesses of the room along with the sizzle of the fiddle and resonance of piano and keys.

Artesania's substantial steel 'dampening discs' are also worth experimenting with, not only for their effect in knocking-out resonances in the top-plate and pinning under-nourished kit to the rack but also in focusing any electromagnetic fields associated with the PSU transformer(s) within. Bass tightens up while individual performers are heard to play with greater alacrity and precision. Hours of fun! ☺

HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

The Artesania rack system succeeds in offering extreme flexibility – indulging large and under-sized kit of every description – without compromising the security of the structure as a whole. The 'shelf-less' Prestige model is also available in both tower and two or three-tier tandem guises, to suit your room. If you can justify the cost within the context of your system it's arguably the best equipment support bar none.

Sound Quality: 89%

