



A STEREOMOJO EXCLUSIVE WORLD'S FIRST REVIEW



Bassocontinuo Accordeon S Equipment Rack

Price as tested: \$2,300

Review by
James Darby



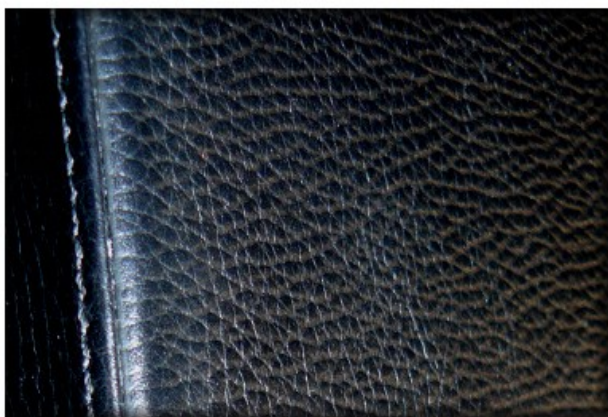
First, thanks to Charlie Harrison, Distributor of Ayon and Bassocontinuo as well as a number of other top audiophile brands.

The first question you might ask is, do audiophile equipment racks really improve the sound of stereo systems? Let me address that like this: we have visited many audio shows over the years and virtually every demo room includes some type of audio rack. With the high cost of shipping, insurance and set up as well as the extreme time and effort it takes to set up and tear down displays, exhibitors would not use such racks if they didn't think they contribute to the sound of their systems. In addition, most reviewers I know also use some type of rack designed for audiophile stereo systems. I have two systems in my home and I have two audio racks implemented in each of them. Trust me, as value oriented and frugal as I am, if I thought I could get by with a 6 foot folding table I would.

The truth is, an appropriately designed audio stand does make a difference; but more than that, like stereo components themselves, they each have different levels of effectiveness as well as differences in sound. And, like every other stereo component, matching them to your system from an audio perspective as well as with the budget considerations, is not easy. And, also like every other stereo component, it's our job to give you the best information possible to help you make a selection.



NICE RACK



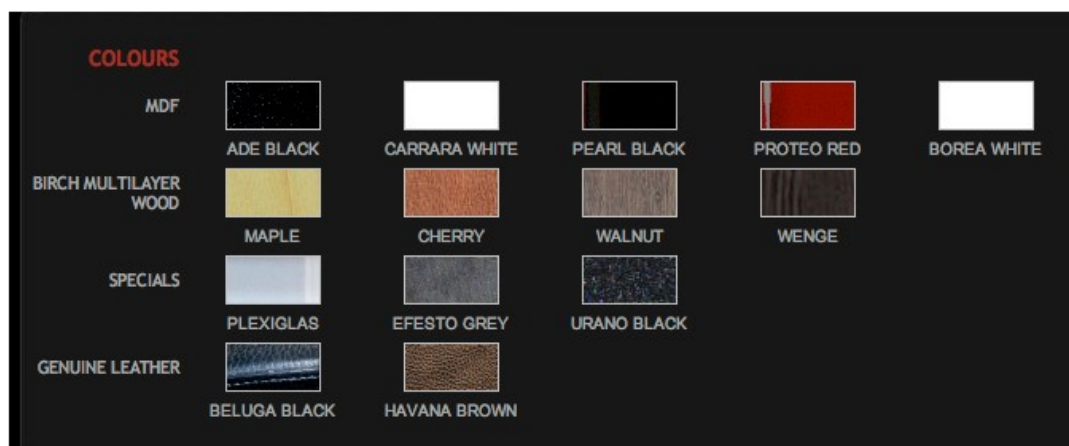
Bassocontinuo is an Italian company led by Lorenzo Belloli that has been in business since 1980. They make one thing and one thing only: audiophile equipment racks. They have an amazing assortment of stands from entry-level to ultra-performance that are all highly configurable to accommodate any system from small to enormous.

The "Accordeon S" is not their best model, that would be the "APOGEO" reference rack. The "Accordeon S" is about right in the middle of their lines. Perhaps the best Bang-for-the-Buck.

They offer an amazing selection of colors and finishes.

The one I received (above) is an almost neon lime green. My wife Linda loved it right away - a big surprise - but when I first saw it my thought was, "Why in the heck did Charlie send me this obnoxious green colored thing? it's available in so many incredible finishes. Heck, it even comes in GENUINE LEATHER! (see left) But I have to say it has grown on me and now I really like it. Even though I usually don't like anything green growing on me.

Choices include clear, solid colors in almost any imaginable hue as well as beautiful wood finishes. I don't know of any company that gives you more aesthetic choices.



SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

I don't usually comment on packaging unless it's very substandard or well beyond the norm. I have to say as I unpacked the container and began to assemble the various parts, I felt like I was some sort of James Bond character assembling a futuristic thermo nuclear device! Each part had its own little custom shaped



compartment, but beyond that, just handling the solid steel support structure modules was an exercise in superspy fantasy land. Especially screwing the highly polished solid steel parts together. I'd almost have to say it was sexy. Okay, we don't hedge here - it was downright sensual! The level of craftsmanship in both the honed steel parts as well as the gorgeous piano lacquered wooden shelves is extraordinary. Not only is it functional, but you get the sense that you're working with a true work of art; something that you would be proud to own.

Now I know that sounds like hype and none of it really has anything to do with its ability to reject vibration and resonance which is the purpose of any audiophile rack, but the experience I described was real and not just sales talk. There is one important quality that was established in the set up and that was the sense of confidence it gave me that my precious components, no matter how hefty, would be safe and secure. You can take it for what it's worth, but obviously I thought the experience was important enough to take the time to tell you about.

Putting the emotional part aside, assembling the stand is quite simple. Mine had three shelves and 15 individual cylinders, nine with long, tapered spikes. Since there are three supporting columns, that gave me the option of five different levels. Shelf height is determined by how many lengths of the cylinders you stack between the shelves. I chose to have the first shelf above the floor for the first shelf so I didn't have to bend down as much to position a component. The middle double stacker where a large amp could go without having to lift it too high. The top shelf then was a single where you could fit a player, DAC or shorter component could fit. Then, of course, I have the top shelf where a component of any turntable immediately comes to mind. I suppose if you have something like an AC filter or something that d much isolation, you could place that on the floor beneath the bottom rack since there's plenty of room there.

Needless to say, this is a pretty basic configuration, but Bassocontinuo makes many different sizes whe whatever you have, no matter how small or large.





As fortune would have it, the Odyssey complete system arrived for review about a week before I knew the Bassocontinuo would arrive, so I set up the tube preamp and dual mono blocks on the then carpeted floor for burn in as well as getting a sense of what the system sounded like sans Basso. Then when the stand did arrive, it perfectly accommodated the three components on its three shelves. I put the two mono blocks on the lower levels in the preamp on top making it easy to access the knobs. Really brilliant, right?

The difference was not subtle and immediately observable. It almost sounded as if I had upgraded the whole system. Everything improved. The already well defined soundstage expanded, but more importantly I think, the clarity and isolation of individual voices and instruments really came through with much more sense of space around them.

The dimensionality of them also improved significantly, rendering them much more 3-D with enhanced "visibility"; how they looked to the mind's eye. In simpler terms, a much greater sense of realism.

Evaluating bass, midrange and treble, the most notable spectrum improvement was the low end. Weight, definition (the ability to pick out the bass lines among the other kick drums and other low pitches) and texture all improved. The same was true of midrange and treble, but to a little lesser extent, at least in my room.

It could be just the opposite in yours. All in all, the Bassocontinuo audiophile equipment stand rendered a much more natural, less hi-fi and immersive listening experience.



COMPARING RACKS

"Comparing racks" sounds like something judges do at the Miss America pageant. No such luck, but I did want to hear the difference between the Bassocontinuo and the Stillpoints ESS XL rack I have (below). It's about six years old and has been improved and updated since then, so that must be taken into consideration. The model I have has five shelves that are about 6 inches wider than those of the Bassocontinuo. Of course, the Stillpoints is a much different design with the shelves being attached to a suspended wire system which, in principle, provides the ultimate in isolation and vibration reduction. Of course, the Stillpoints includes several other systems incorporated into their rack than the Bassocontinuo. In addition to the rack itself, there are also Stillpoints disks, rather sophisticated little marvels in themselves. Back then, this rack cost about \$10,000.

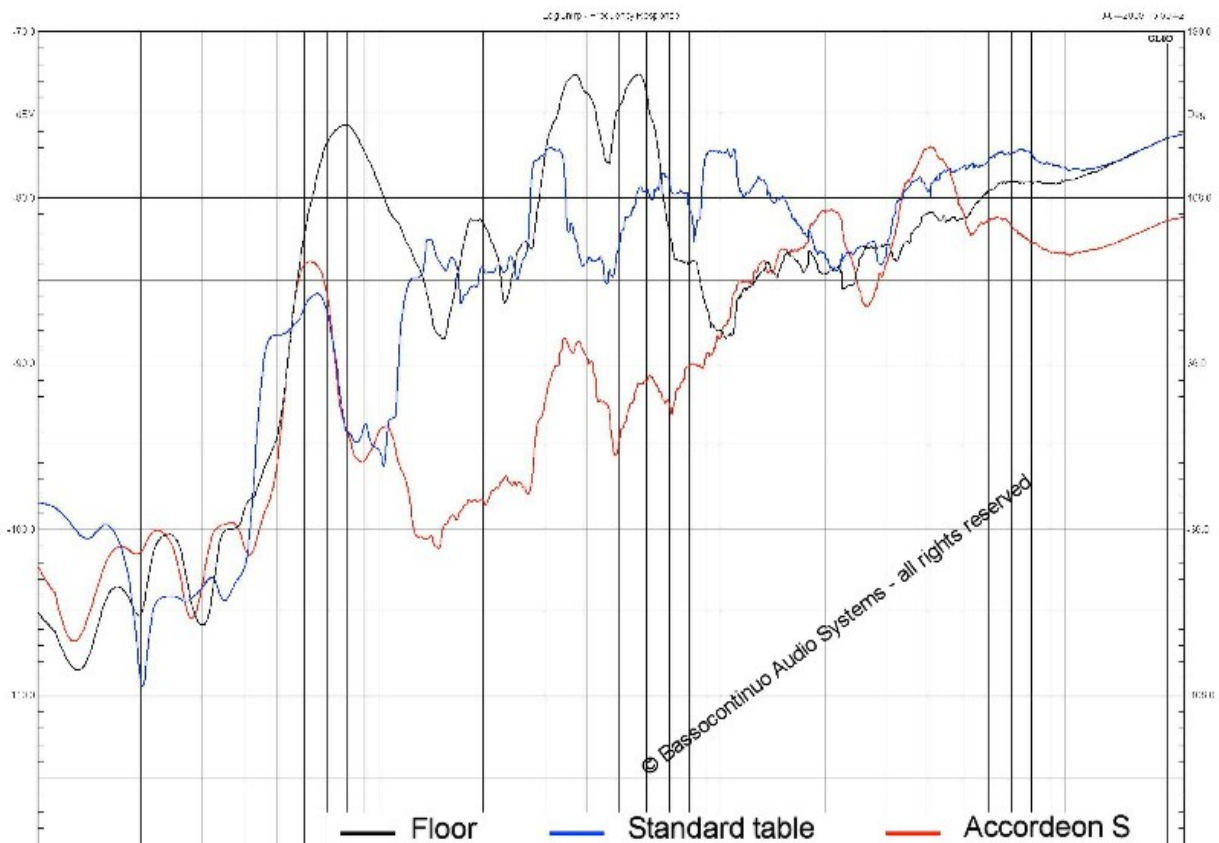


Moving the components was a pretty easy transition, so I was able to do a very close A/B. The Stillpoints did everything I heard with the Bassocontinuo except more. If I had to put a number on it, I'd say the Stillpoints added another 20% or so of improvement. Bass characteristics were pretty close, midrange was better, but the biggest difference for me was the top end. Significantly better detail and extension. Let me point out that the differences between the two racks was more than subtle, but not profound or night and day. It was not an OMG moment, but the differences were there.

There was another difference however and that was the overall tonal character of the two. The Stillpoints sounded more pristine and detailed, but its presentation was also a bit cooler and less organic. For me, the Bassocontinuo was warmer with slightly more vivid colors and textures. Perhaps the difference between the wood of the Bassocontinuo and the Plexiglas of the Stillpoints. I should point out that Bassocontinuo also makes Plexiglas shelves.

Which did I prefer? That's totally irrelevant. Our job is to tell you what products look like and sound like to the highest degree and let you decide for yourself. We strive to keep our own biases out of it. Make sense? I have no doubt that many of you would prefer the sound of the Bassocontinuo and just as many prefer the sound of the Stillpoints. And you'd all be right.

The Stillpoints of course has many different configurations and options available, more than the Basso, but your color and style choices are much more limited; Plexiglas and metal or metal and Plexiglas.



Accordeon S is an high performances modular audio rack. The measurements made in a living room by Audiomatica Clio FW and ACH-01 accelerometer, don't leave any doubts. The black line represent the response of the sensor placed on vibrating surfaces (floor). The blue line represent the response of the sensor placed on a top level rack (competitors brand). The red line represent the response of the sensor placed on our Accordeon S. The attenuation of the vibrations is average around 10 dB (9 tenths of the energy has been attenuated)

The above measurements were provided by Bassocontinuo, not us. If we were going to go measuring racks, they wouldn't be in dB, but rather A, B, Double B, C, Double C, D, DD and triple D. Let me know if you don't "get" that and I'll contact your mother... Or...google "cup sizes". Still, the measurements presented are noteworthy and pretty close to what we actually heard.

STEREOMOJO SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION

At \$2,300 for an audio rack that is extremely well built in Italy, has an outstanding pallet of not only many different custom configurations you can "build" right on their website, but beautiful, unique colors and finishes (the \$2,300 for this rack included the gorgeous, high-polish, grand piano quality finish) as well, the Bassocontinuo Accordeon S represents a good value when compared to other more expensive brands, most of which have much less in the way of selections. Oh yes...it also substantially improves the sound of your components!

The build quality inspires a great deal of confidence in sheltering your goodies as well. No toddler or even a Great Dane is going to tip these stands over. They are not going to collapse under your 150 pound amps either. The high gloss that I have will scratch though if you're not careful. Watch out for spikes for sure.

One other thing that I didn't mention is that they are easy to disassemble and move when necessary. Take your stuff off and you have, in this style, 3 tables sitting atop of each other. Just lift two of them off and move 'em. No disassembly or tools required.

Of course, these racks will expand as your system grows. Just add another level on top or on the side or...whatever you need. Match or contrast 'em.

We like this product and think you probably will, too.

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