



THE ENFORCER OF ORDER

Let's assume that you are fairly advanced in terms of quality with your hi-fi system. The components match; actually, everything sounds excellent. And now what?

All strands optimized to the point? Mains voltage filtered in precise doses? What's left to do now? Maybe it's time to take care of the components' accommodation. It's all quite nice with the hi-fi furniture from the discounter; the birch multiplex panels screwed together using thick threaded rods worked quite well. I wonder if any other options beyond that bring about comprehensible progress.

Company history and portfolio

If anyone can provide a definitive answer, it's Finite Elemente, a company based in Paderborn in eastern Westphalia. The veterans among us will remember: they've been around long. Or rather, they've been around again for quite some time. The first incarnation of the company came to an economic end after the opening of the business field „loudspeakers.“ It took a while until the resurrection, but in the meantime, Finite Elemente is back in the race under the old and new technical head, Luis Fernandes. And it is doing what led to considerable success on the market back then: Creating optimum working conditions for hi-fi components.

In the first place, this means hi-fi racks, but it also includes bases and feet. There are four series of shelves, which differ in the degree of effort involved. There are no „simple“ solutions among them, only those that deliver a large part of the results of the top models but only cost a fraction of those.



*The Finite Elemente Pagode Signature MKII
in maximum configuration with four shelves*



Rattling is part of the trade: The magnificent nameplate adorns the front edge of the lowest level

Pagode Signature MKII

And I won't hide the fact I'm happy that we're approaching the Paderborn uncompromisingness from the civilized side. In other words, the prices for the „Pagoda Signature MKII“ model in question start at EUR 3,300. However, this variant has only two shelves and matt anodized aluminum side profiles. For the variant we are discussing here, you must pay around EUR 5,500.

However, there's much more to it than just a simple shelf that arranges five hi-fi components on top of each other. It starts with the unique suspension of the individual stands, which was already propagated in the company's early years. Namely, they are held on both sides by two spikes that form a force-fit connection with the side panels under high pressure. This looks delicate but proves very stable in practice: each base can be loaded with 25 kilograms. An exception is the lowest platform, which is directly bolted to the side beams and supports the four height-adjustable feet. This level can even be loaded with 75 kilograms. The second stable connection between the two side panels is formed by the cross brace located under the uppermost shelf. Combined with the bottom bracket and the two side panels, the result is a stable frame structure that can easily absorb the considerable tensile forces caused by the other shelves' clamping.

Laterals

The side panels are aluminum T-profiles loaded toward the „T-center beam.“ A statically lovely solution, the rack's stability proves the design right. Precisely fitted strips of Canadian maple complete the side panels. The hardwood is used for all wooden parts of the Pagode Signature

Teammates

Turntable:

- Rega Planar 3 50th Anniversary

Phono preamp:

- Audiomat Phono 1.7 MKII

Integrated amplifier:

- Krell K-300i
- Fezz Lybra 300B

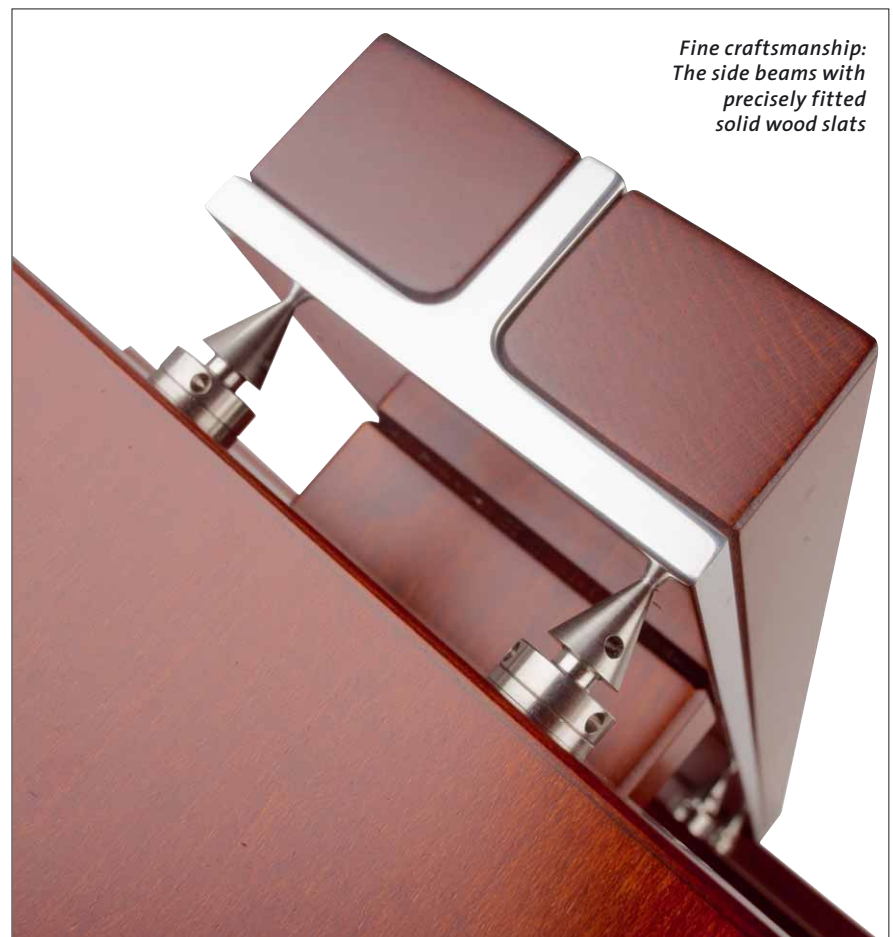
Loudspeaker:

- Epos ES14N

Competitors

Furniture:

- Ikea Lack, Kallax



Fine craftsmanship: The side beams with precisely fitted solid wood slats



Monk Big Band And Quartet - In Concert

What we played

Monk Big Band And Quartet
In Concert

Dominique Fils-Aimé
Stay Tuned!

Ten Years After
Recorded Live

Ryan Adams
Heartbreaker

MKII. At this point, it causes a damping of the vibrations that are coupled to the aluminum profile via the stands. Overall, this is a brilliant construction with a clever distribution of forces.

Footprints

The most significant differences to the larger and more expensive Pagoda series can be found in the platforms for the devices. There, for example, a very interesting resonator technology is used, effectively dampening surface vibrations, similar to the enormous free-swinging suspended masses that dampen the urge to move in modern skyscrapers - but that's a topic for another story, just like the use of carbon fiber as a lightweight and very effective energy dissipator.

Nevertheless, the Signature MKII series shelves are far from plain boards. The manufacturer calls the astonishingly light decks „HCCT device levels,“ which means „Honeycomb Compound Technology.“ This means, in practice, that there is a honeycomb structure in the core, which offers very high stability despite a high air content. The whole thing is surrounded by a layer of HDF (high-density fiberboard), a harder and stiffer version of the ubiquitous



One-piece spikes with integrated floor protection

MDF (medium-density fiberboard). The outer finish is a veneer of Canadian maple - see above. This applies to all seven standard colors, and a stain provides the appropriate hue. The construction of the bottom panel is a bit different: There are two layers of honeycomb structure, with an additional multiplex board in the middle. This is necessary because it has to absorb the tensile forces of the frame construction.

The brace under the top level is crucial for the stability of the rack



All the way down

It remains to be clarified how the Signature MKII connects to the floor. It does so utilizing four spikes of a somewhat different kind. The stainless steel parts are spikes and spike shims in one, which means the plate is screwed onto the „thin end“ to protect the floor. This leads the „spike“ principle ad absurdum because the question must be allowed: why it couldn't have been a plain cylinder? On the other hand, audiophiles worldwide have been arguing about the sense and nonsense of the spike itself for decades. You can see this pragmatically and shrug your shoulders. In any case, it is to its credit that it can be easily and sensitively adjusted in height via side holes using a pin, and stability is ensured thanks to the fine thread with a lot of contact surface even when the thread is turned out far – that's something, I guess.

The side T-profiles are available in a polished or matt anodized finish



Small centering holes in the side panels determine the grid in which the device shelves can be adjusted in height

Sound

The listening test of a rack is relatively easy if you have a comparison model right next to it and sufficiently long connection cables. Enough „HiFi furniture“ from the Swedish discounter was also present - the perfect opponent. To make it abundantly clear: In most cases, you shouldn't use something like this once you've noticed the differences to the Finite Elemente rack. The relatively simple Anniversary Rega turntable does the trick to show how much more air fits between Thelonious Monk and his collaborators, how much better you can guess where on stage Alvin Lee and his men were standing during the recording of „Recorded Live“ – quite impressive. The game works pretty well even with supposedly unsuspecting semiconductor electronics, as the Audiomat phono preamp featured in this issue demonstrates. The Krell K-300i integrated amplifier, which is not a slouch even „on Ikea,“ displays even more heat. Not surprisingly, tube equipment is even more grateful for the blessings of the Finite Rack. The Fezz integrated amplifier sounds noticeably more elegant and fluid here and intones Ryan Adams to howling beauty. I, for one, am immediately convinced of the blessings of the Pagode Signature MKII.

Holger Barske

Finite Elemente Pagode Signature MKII



· Price	3,300 Euro
· Distribution	Finite Elemente, Paderborn
· Phone	+49 5254 64557
· Internet	finite-elemente.eu
· Warranty	2 years
· Dimensions (W x H x D) Testmodel	660 x 1110 x 540 mm



» I highly recommend giving "equipment storage" at the Finite Element Rack level an opportunity. You will be surprised how much sound potential there is.