

Artesania ISBAIEBW Standalone Isolation Bases – part 1



CHRISTIAAN PUNTER 27 January 2018



Standalone Isolation Bases with Beech Wood Discs

Price (ex VAT, so for the Netherlands, add 21%):

ISBAIEBW – Standalone Isolation Bases: 458 euro for 4

Artesania is not a company to issue updates of their products on a regular basis. Why would they? Lots of thought has gone into the lineup and their racks are perfect just the way they are. However, adding extra options that allow further tweaking of existing products is always welcome. Cayetano had announced the shipping of new products for me to test but had not indicated what they were, so when the box was delivered to me and I unpacked it, I had a Christmas feeling all over again!

Part 1 of 3

This is part 1 of a 3-part review, starting with the Standalone Isolation Discs. These really are universal so not specific for Artesania Audio Racks: they can be placed under any component and be used on any surface.



Included in the shipment were several real wood boxes with the Artesania logo branded on them. They look solid and nailed shut, but upon closer look, it becomes clear that the top part is a lid that can slide open. The boxes exert a feeling of a real artisanal product, very classy! Maybe I'm spoilt due to the ever-increasing prices of high-end audio but I really do not think these accessories are priced extravagantly at all. The pricing is in line with some other accessory brands and actually a lot lower than one competitor in particular. By the way, there is a nice reduction in cost when buying multiples.

Audio System

The basis for this comparison is an [Artesania Platform](#) on which a [PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium](#) tube power amp is placed. The amp is compatible with a wide range of tubes and currently [KT150's](#) are used. Tubes are very sensitive to vibrations and as such probably ideal for comparisons such as these. However, from experience, I know that the influence of such accessories is audible in just about any component. The rest of the system consists of an [AudioAanZee Reference Flow](#) Music Server with [Euphony Drive](#), an [Aqua Formula xHD](#) DAC and [Jeff Rowland Corus + PSU](#) preamp, all supported by [Artesania Exoteryc](#) racks.

My regular speakers are Wilson Watt/Puppy 8 but for this review, I used the artfully sculpted Franco Serblin Accordo speakers that are simultaneously over for review.

ISBAIEBW Standalone Isolation Bases



These are a totally new addition to Artesania. Similar to Finite Elemente, Harmonix or Stillpoints feet, these can be used anywhere to support audio components: on the floor, on top of shelves or on top of Artesania platforms. The principle behind these Isolation Bases is similar to the one used for [Finite Elemente Ceraballs](#), but the influence on the sound is a little different.



Same principle as the rack level Isolation Discs: a pointy spike for direct vertical contact and a soft plastic surround for damping vibrations in the horizontal plane.



The Isolation Bases are super-sturdy and adjustable in height.



The underside has a very thin Felt layer.

Listening

So far the PrimaLuna amp was placed on its own rubber feet. All listening for the 8 or so recent reviews in which it was used so far was done like this and I never had the feeling that its feet were in any way insufficient. Hearing them now, however, I could almost call them mandatory!

Prior to placing the Artesania Isolation Discs between platform and amp, I figured that they would likely make the sound tighter and more articulate but also drier and less voluptuous. Oh, how wrong I was! I was going from experience using Ceraballs, Stillpoints and other such devices but the Artesania feet work out differently.

Although the Artesania Isolation Discs also tighten up the sound and enhance transient sharpness to make the music more rhythmic, they do so in a very musical manner without sounding dry or hard or adding an analytic quality to the music. To really carry this point across I should not rely on my memory but perform actual comparisons. Finite

Elemente is no longer active but fortunately, I have retained various sets to work with.

Switching to Finite Elemente Universal Ceraballs, the sound is still nicely upbeat and open, but the bass is less sonorous and the overall sound appears thinner. It is a very neutral presentation but it is a bit as if there is an imperceptible accent on the midrange. It's an engaging sound for sure, but it is not in any bit more lively or dynamic than the Artesania Isolation Discs. The latter sound harmonically richer but without adding any colouration.

I also tried the larger CeraPucs because I know that these sound tonally fuller than the Universal Ceraballs and they do indeed make for a better match. While I have sometimes favored the Universal Ceraballs for their more energetic performance, the CeraPucs are much more in line with the Artesania Isolation Discs and now appear to provide a more balanced performance. Bass is nicely sonorous and midrange quite a bit richer, while still lending better pacing to the music than do the PrimaLuna's standard rubber feet and while also maintaining the overall feeling of neutrality.

Going back to the Artesania Isolation Discs, I now notice that the Discs are tonally not quite as solid and as full as the CeraPucs but airier in the treble and quite a bit more refined. Also while not at all any more forward, they reveal subtle details and spatial cues that the CeraPucs seem to gloss over, or implement in the larger whole. The CeraPucs are also great, but the Artesania Discs really are quite fascinating.



While many Artesania coupling devices come with various different discs to cater to different situations and tastes, the ISBAIEBW Standalone Isolation Bases are supplied only with Beechwood Isolation Discs. Then again, they sound perfect like this.

More to come

This is only part 1 of a 3 part review. Look out for the next installments detailing the other new Beechwood inspired Artesania accessories.

Conclusion

The Isolation Discs far exceeded my expectations. They are beautiful to look at and greatly enhance the sound without introducing any downsides. While I have so far only tried them under the PrimaLuna power amp I have no doubt that they will work similar wonders when combined with other audio components.