

Artesania ISBAWB30, 60 and 100 Beechwood Isolation Bases – part 2



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Beechwood discs for Artesania Isolation Bases

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

ISBAWB30 – 30mm Isolation Bases: 330 euro for 4

ISBAWB60 – 60mm Isolation Bases: 450 euro for 4

ISBAWB100 – 100mm Isolation Bases: 560 euro for 4

This is part 2 of a 3-part review, now focussing on the Isolation Bases and the accompanying Isolation Discs made from 3 different materials, now also featuring Beechwood. These bases and discs are delivered when purchasing Artesania racks but they can also be purchased separately. They work with any speaker or audio rack, not just the ones made by Artesania.

The accessories come in real wood boxes with the Artesania logo branded on them and they 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 and actually in line with some other accessory brands and even a lot more affordable than one competitor in particular. Further cost can be saved when buying multiples.

Audio System

The basis for this comparison is an [Artesania Platform](#) on which a [PrimaLuna DiaLogue Premium](#) tube power amp with KT150 tubes is placed. 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 xHDDAC](#), 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 Franco Serblin Accordo speakers that are simultaneously over for review.

[ISBAWB 30mm, 60mm and 100mm Isolation Bases](#)

Inside the first three boxes are Isolation Base footers in 3 different sizes, complete with stainless steel bolts in various sizes and underlay-discs made from various materials. Normally the 3 base sizes (30, 60 and 100mm) are delivered respectively with the [Platforms](#), [Prestige Racks](#), and [Exoteryc Racks](#) but they are also available separately.

30mm Isolation Bases



The main new aspect of these accessories is the inclusion of Beechwood discs and the change from white to black for the Nylon discs.



The Bases work not only with Artesania racks but with any other rack or stand using standard spikes but those spikes can also be replaced with the round-top stainless steel Artesania bolts with M6 and M8 threads, as shown above.

60mm Isolation Bases



The 60mm Discs are the same as normally delivered along with Artesania Prestige Racks. They come with three sets of round-top stainless steel Artesania bolts with M4, M6, and M8 threads.



These Bases are also supplied with Nylon, Neoprene and Beechwood Isolation Discs.

100mm Isolation Bases



The 100mm Discs are the same huge units as normally delivered along with [Artesania Exoteryc Racks](#). They come with three sets of round-top stainless steel Artesania bolts with M4, M6, and M8 threads.





The 100mm Bases are also supplied with Nylon, Neoprene and Beechwood Isolation Discs.

Listening to the Isolation Bases

First I listened to the Isolation Bases directly coupled to the floor, so without any underlay discs, starting with the SolidSteel bases that I have been using so far.



The smaller discs on the right-hand side belong to a SolidSteel rack. The larger ones on the left are the 30mm Artesania Isolation Bases.



Switching from the SolidSteel discs to the smallest 30mm Artesania bases (shown above), without any underlay discs, the sound becomes more direct and incisive. Bass is even tauter and articulate but there is also less body lower down and a more forward midrange, with leading edges now more pronounced than before.



Going from the 30mm bases to the 60mm bases, still, without any underlay discs, the sound is definitely fuller and more sonorous, while retaining pacing and overall articulation. Although the sound of the 30mm bases is arguably even more articulate and exciting, this is definitely the more neutral rendition.



Bigger is better? It certainly seems to be so in this case. Going from the 60mm bases to the 100mm bases, still, without any underlay discs, the sound is even better balanced but seemingly also more extended and with a more airy treble, while retaining the solid and sonorous tonality and adding back in some of the excitement of the smallest discs.



Just why the 30mm bases would sound more articulate than the 60mm ones, and the 100mm ones somehow strike the best overall balance is a bit of a mystery. But if it sounds good, it sounds good. I'm simple that way.

Listening to the Underlay Discs



These discs are used under the Isolation bases, as an intermediary coupling material between floor and base. In addition to the Neoprene and Nylon underlay discs that were available before, there are now also real Beechwood discs. Because all 3 size Bases come with the same set of Disc materials, I opted to use only the best sounding

100mm Bases for the Disc comparisons.



Adding the Neoprene discs to the bare footers yields a more free-flowing midrange and even more fluid and airy treble but at the expense of the force and incisiveness in the bass. The latter is still bouncy, but now lacks a bit of power. The Neoprene discs might be useful though in very lively rooms or setups that tend to an overly clean presentation.



Going from the Neoprene discs to the Nylon discs presents music with an immediately likable balance. The discs improve the bass articulation to the point where it resembles that of the 30mm footers, but without any of the leading edge over-pronunciations. Additionally, the midrange becomes a little smoother but remains open and communicative and treble is just perfectly airy and articulate, without being in any way sharp, as can be the case with some recordings when using bare footers. Call it a suggestion or expectation-bias, but for the first time using the Nylon discs, I believe I hear a hint of a synthetic character in the midrange, as opposed to using bare footers without any discs. It's really just a hint and not obvious at all unless comparing directly as I do now and the Nylon discs absolutely do provide a very well-balanced sound.



Substituting the Nylon discs for the new Beechwood discs makes for a remarkable change. The midrange becomes superbly natural with a very convincing timbre of strings and percussive instruments. The aforementioned very slight hint of synthesis in the midrange is now definitely gone. The bass is still taut and energetic, and quite articulate but not as detailed as with the Nylon discs or with bare footers. Another aspect that now makes its entrance into my conscience is texture, which with the Beechwood discs is now laid out more clearly in front of me, somehow more easy to unravel. Or maybe the wood just accentuates certain frequencies, or even adds harmonics, who knows. In any event, the presentation is very pleasant and still quite neutral.

The only small downside that I detected with these Wood discs, is that the bass is now also a little less articulate and a bit thicker, slightly more “wooden” if you will, which can be a benefit or an undesired effect depending on personal taste and system synergy. Note that this effect, just like the “synthetic” effect of the Nylon discs, is very slight and presumably not at all obvious in less than perfectly neutral setups. Nevertheless, it should be noted that if the tightest, fastest and the most articulate bass is what is desired, then the Nylon discs or even no discs are probably a better option.

Just to make sure that I heard it all right the first time, I went back to the Nylon discs once more but sure enough, the nicely pronounced and timbrally very natural timbre of the Wood discs is now diminished, back to the usual delivery which is more neutral, but also less fascinating and involving. These are quite interesting results I must say!

System Synergy

The system used for the above comparisons sounds timbrally rich, very pure and excels in natural tonality. Therefore, in this system, natural and pleasant though they sound, the wood discs are not a necessity. I also like the sound of the Isolation Bases directly on the floor, so without discs. With more analytical sounding systems, however, or with clean sounding magnetostatics and certainly with Martin Logan electrostatics which can sound a little synthetic themselves I can imagine these wood discs being absolute lifesavers. Likewise, while the PrimaLuna amp has surprisingly powerful and articulate bass, tubes are not known for having the absolute tightest bass, this remains the realm of transistors. And so, the neoprene discs prove a little bit too much in this system. As I always say: matters in audio are relative!

Alternative uses

So far I have only applied these Isolation Discs as footers under an Artesania platform. But every box of footers comes along with a range of round-headed bolts that allow using not only with Artesania platforms and racks but also with any other rack or piece of (audio-) furniture with regular spikes. One could even replace those spikes with the M6 or M8 threaded Stainless Steel Artesania bolts. The 60mm and 100mm Discs come with M4 bolts as well, in addition to the M6 and M8 ones.



Above: if so desired, the M8 bolts could also be used to replace the standard Artesania level footers, although I would not recommend this as the footers may damage components stacked below if they slip away.

More to come

This is part 2 of a 3 part review. Look out for the last installment detailing the other new Beechwood inspired Artesania accessories.

Conclusion

The Artesania Isolation Bases are very nicely finished and incredibly solid. They don't only work with Artesania racks but are universally applicable. I for one use them not only for the racks but also under the Wilsons as well as under speakers that are over for review. The great thing about these Bases is that the user is given the option to use the 3 disc materials to tune precisely as preferred, with the possibility to change this later on after component changes.