

finite elemente pagode Signature mkII equipment support

Alan Sircom

Finite elemente is the company that taught the European high-end community that equipment supports can make a difference. Its pagode and pagode Signature ranges have stood the test of time; which is why you rarely see any finite elemente equipment on the second-hand market.

Recent rationalisation of the finite elemente range – and the return of Luis Fernandes at the head of the brand – has meant many of the ‘nursery slopes’ products from the brand have gone away, and the company now focuses on its Cera products and just two pagode ranges; the top-end mkII Carbon Edition, Edition and Master Reference, and this the Signature mkII.

This is likely a good idea; these intricate stands are not something that can scale down to ‘affordable’ easily, and the more lower-level finite elemente stands often struggled to compete with more mass-produced designs. By thinning out the line, finite elemente can concentrate on the good stuff once more. And Signature mkII is very definitely a drop of ‘the good stuff’.

Taking a new stand

The pagode Signature mkII is the latest product out of the finite elemente factory, using a lot of what went into the Edition mkII, but doing without the Resonator Technology featured in the more elaborate, cost no object stands. However, pagode Signature mkII uses the new HCCT lightweight

honeycomb core platforms and shelves. These are internally braced, and replace the solid wood platforms of the original Signature. This uses a double honeycomb platform for the amplifier stand or the base of the multi-tier stands, with a single-honeycomb platform used throughout elsewhere. These platforms are clamped in





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» place from the two upright arms (and crossbar) of the equipment stand; this is called 'sidespike technology' in finite elemente speak and is a very effective way of channelling vibrational energy at 90° to any possible means of transfer into or out from a product.

As with the mkII version of pagode Edition, the overall lines of the equipment support system have been cleaned up from the previous version. That is outstanding as the lines of the original Signature were already good looking. The previous version had platforms sitting in what looked like picture frames. It looks sufficiently similar to be able to sit next to the originals without drawing attention to itself, but also sufficiently different to form the start of a new relationship with finite elemente from scratch.

My new relationship starts with the E14 four tier stand and the E21 amplifier platform, both of which are easy to build, relatively quick to install, and reassuringly heavy without being so heavy that light cannot escape its clutches.

The relaxed approach

In moving to mkII, finite elemente had to improve something that to many people doesn't need improving. Fortunately, the move has only changed the stand and platform for the better. But the reason why people didn't want pagode Signature to change is it has one of the most graceful sounds you can get from a stand. And that is improved in the mkII version. It brings out the lithe sound of anything that comes to rest on the stand. It's almost a blood-pressure reducing sound, although I think that's asking a bit much for an equipment stand, unless it's made of beta blockers.

Also, where pagode Edition began to create more of a performance gap between Edition and Signature, the pagode Signature mkII has raised its game. Like the mkII Edition, there's a improved transient response, although this is not in the same league as the Carbon Edition, finite elemente has clearly learned a few tricks in developing that platform. There is an improved dynamic range, a lower noise floor and a more actively neutral tonal balance. Of course, you need high-grade electronics to be able to hear what the pagode Signature mkII does so well. On the other hand, no-one contemplating the use of a stand costing just shy of £5,500 is going to be using it with an entry-level amplifier.

Used in the right context, pagode Signature mkII has a calming influence over good audio. Not that such audio is in any way 'excitable' but it manages to 'chill out' audio components all the same. It brings a much-needed sense of calm and order to this unruly world and the best audio is all the better for the degree of naturalness.

Price and contact details

finite elemente pagode Signature mkII E14 stand in any wood finish with anodised side pillars, £5,490. Optional high polished side pillars and logo insert, £550.

finite elemente pagode Signature mkII E21support in any wood finished with anodised metal insert (Q or L version), £1,490. Optional high polished logo insert, £160

Manufacturer finite elemente GmbH

finite-elemente.eu

UK distributor Audiofreaks

audiofreaks.co.uk

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I think pagode Signature mkII is significantly improved over its predecessor. It's a step-change, but there probably won't be a sudden surge in second-hand finite elemente coming soon. If you've got the existing pagode Signature, the new mkII is better... and better in almost every way. It looks sharper, it builds-up slightly easier, is more detailed, tonally balanced, dynamic and 'relaxed-focused' than its predecessor. But the pagode Signature set a very high standard to begin with that people will (mistakenly) think there isn't much more to gain by upgrading. They are probably wrong, but 'upgrade your equipment support' is not high on the audiophile list of priorities, simply because it usually means removing and replacing a lot of heavy boxes.

This is a shame because I think a lot of systems with pagode Signature could benefit from pagode Signature mkII.

Effortless neutrality

I like the new look of finite elemente pagode Signature mkII. Its clean lines and reassuring build quality, coupled with the sort of effortless neutrality and focus it brings to high-end equipment make it one of the obvious choices for top-notch audio systems. And aside from the fun of lifting hundreds of kilos of audio electronics out of one rack and into another, there don't seem to be any downsides. It also has this remarkable calming ability that can chill out all bar the most teeth-grinding of angry individuals. Your music sounds like it always did, but just a little more calm and relaxed when played on the pagode Signature mkII. And yet, if you think that leads to soporific and saccharine sounds, you are very much mistaken. +