

REVIEW | Alan Sircom | Jun 11, 2024

finite elemente pagode Signature mkII



finite elemente is the company that taught the European high-end community that equipment support can make a difference. Its pagode and pagode Signature ranges have stood the test of time. This is why you rarely see finite elemente equipment on the second-hand market. The new finite elemente pagode Signature mkII will not change that!

The recent rationalisation of the finite elemente range—and the return of Luis Fernandes as the brand's head—has meant that many of the 'nursery slopes' products have disappeared. The company now focuses on its Cera products and just two pagode ranges. These are the top-end mkII Carbon Edition, Edition and Master Reference, and the Signature mkII.

This is likely a good idea; these intricate stands cannot easily scale down to 'affordable'. Meanwhile, the lower-level finite elemente stands often struggled to compete with more mass-produced designs. By thinning the line, finite elemente can concentrate on the good stuff again. And Signature mkII is a drop of 'the good stuff'.

Taking a new stand

The finite elemente pagode Signature mkII is the latest product from Luis Fernandes. It uses much of what went into the Edition mkII. However, it does 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 elsewhere. These platforms are clamped in place from the two upright arms (and crossbar) of the equipment stand; this is called 'sidespike technology' in finite element 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 element from scratch.

My new relationship starts with the E14 four-tier stand and the E21 amplifier platform. Both 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 element had to improve something that doesn't intrinsically need improving. Fortunately, the move has only improved the stand and platform. 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 rests 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 an improved transient response, although this is not in the same league as the Carbon Edition, finite element

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 hear what the pagode Signature mkII does well. On the other hand, no one contemplating using a stand costing just shy of £5,500 will be using it with an entry-level amplifier.



Calming Influence

Used in the right context, pagode Signature mkII has a calming influence on 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 its degree of naturalness.

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

This is a shame because many 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, reassuring build quality, and 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. Aside from the fun of lifting hundreds of kilos of audio electronics out of one rack and into another, there are no 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.

Price and contact details

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

finite elemente Signature Mk II E21 support in any wood finished with anodised metal insert (Q or L version), £1,490. Optional high polished logo insert, £160

Manufacturer

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UK distributor

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