

Hi-Fi Racks Podium Trio

By Alan Sircom

Audio supports fall into three categories; the good, the bad and the neutral. I believe (a belief based on nothing more than anecdote, in fairness) that what separates 'the good' from 'the bad' comes down to personal choice in most cases – with people split between 'loving' and 'hating' a potentially bewildering array of wood, metal, acrylic and glass tables, struts, wires and the rest. The harder job in a way is towing the 'neutral' path, creating a product that everyone has equal respect for. Hi-Fi Racks seems to have done just that.

Hi-Fi Racks is very much in the 'butchers block done right' school. The platforms are inch thick solid hardwood affairs, with a choice of three (Podium Trio) or four (Podium Reference) bushes designed to hold the 8mm threads of the squared off wooden uprights on the underside and three or four metal spike shoes act as isolation and prevent the 8mm spikes from scratching your wooden surfaces. Everything bolts together with great ease; just remember that one platform (the one with the little metal badge on the underside) goes on top, because it has no inset spike shoes. The uprights come in a range of sizes, from stumpy little ones for the base platform, to ones long enough to accommodate a big power amp. The whole caboodle comes in a range of woods, too.

The repeated phrases 'three or four' and 'a range of' suggests this is no one-size-fits-all arrangement. In fact, Hi-Fi Racks builds to order and to your own specs. Yes, it has off the, ahem, shelf sizes and finishes, but the main pulse of the family-run company is the

bespoke end of the business. So, when you need to find a suitable platform to house your one-off power amplifier that has the dimensions of a WWII naval mine strapped to a filing cabinet, the Hi-Fi Racks team can accommodate you.

That makes reviewing one of Hi-Fi Racks products a little difficult. We settled for a slightly oversized three-tier, three-legged platform, made of oak, which turned up in flat-pack form. Build is excellent and assembly is quick and easy, thanks to relatively clear instruction diagrams. Having encountered stands that seem to require a degree in aeronautical engineering to put together, this comes as a relief. The only build-up observation is when siting spikes into their respective spike feet. You can struggle to fill all the holes at once, and end up skidding along the top. Disturbingly, I think I've said that before, but I was under oath at the time.

Little spike shoes are provided for those not wanting to take divots out of their wooden floor, but the rest of us should go for spikes alone.

This is the ideal platform for someone who thinks equipment isolation is a good thing on principle, but doesn't want to burn valuable money on a table that explores that principle at great expense. As a consequence, the Hi-Fi Racks stand is intellectually – and tonally – neutral. It doesn't improve inter-product coherence or transform the dynamics or low level clarity of components resting on its shelves, but neither does it act like a set of boat anchors or a ringing bell, holding back the performance of the products it supports.

If you are in the market for equipment supports that cost as much as a BMW and add to the performance of a system, look elsewhere. The Hi-Fi Racks is a non-nonsense design at a no-nonsense price. +



AS TESTED:

Podium Trio from £149 per tier

Manufacturer: Hi-Fi Racks

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