

STEREO **STEREO**

MAGAZINE FOR HIFI • HIGH END • MUSIC

**Stand Of The
Art**



The Racks, sorry, Tonbasen made by Copulare are the measure when it comes to sound stage. STEREO reports on its experiences.

von Matthias Böde

It is not easy for remote subjects in the HiFi-area. The first ones who promote new findings are at best sniggered at, they are vituperated rudely at the worst. Then the community will split into three camps, i.e. "yes", "no" and "don't know". If there is something true about the issue, then trench warfare will cease fairly soon until everybody adopts the novelty and it is made part of the irremovable HiFi-inventory. It has been the case with cables, multiple sockets, CD-sprays – and HiFi-furniture.

HiFi-furniture? Pardon me? Those were the uncomprehending reactions when the Lower Bavarian Gerhard Brandl presented his high class racks to the public in 1990. By that time people put even the most precious

components in inadequate shelves, oftentimes carelessly stacking them on top of each other. The awareness for the correct positioning of HiFi-equipment was close to zero. Sure, there was sound furniture available, but usually in the form of ramshackle glass or steel structures – nice to look at, an acoustic capital sin however as we know today.

If you put these constructs on an imaginary x-axis at the very left, then those racks by the skilled mechanical engineer Brandl have their place very far to the right. I know this since a light bulb moment I had with Copulare products that showed me how important a solid basis really is. Everybody among us knows that phenomenon: The first high quality cable, the first optimized multiple socket, and in your head is a

switch turned over in a matter of seconds. You've understood.

Since that time a lot has been happening, the basic principles however have not changed. The novelties do not stay hidden from us since Brandl has very often been our rack provider at the High End Show in Frankfurt and at the

"World of HiFi" in Berlin.

We also use his shelves in our listening room – amongst those the special wall mounting for record players **Sial Wall**.

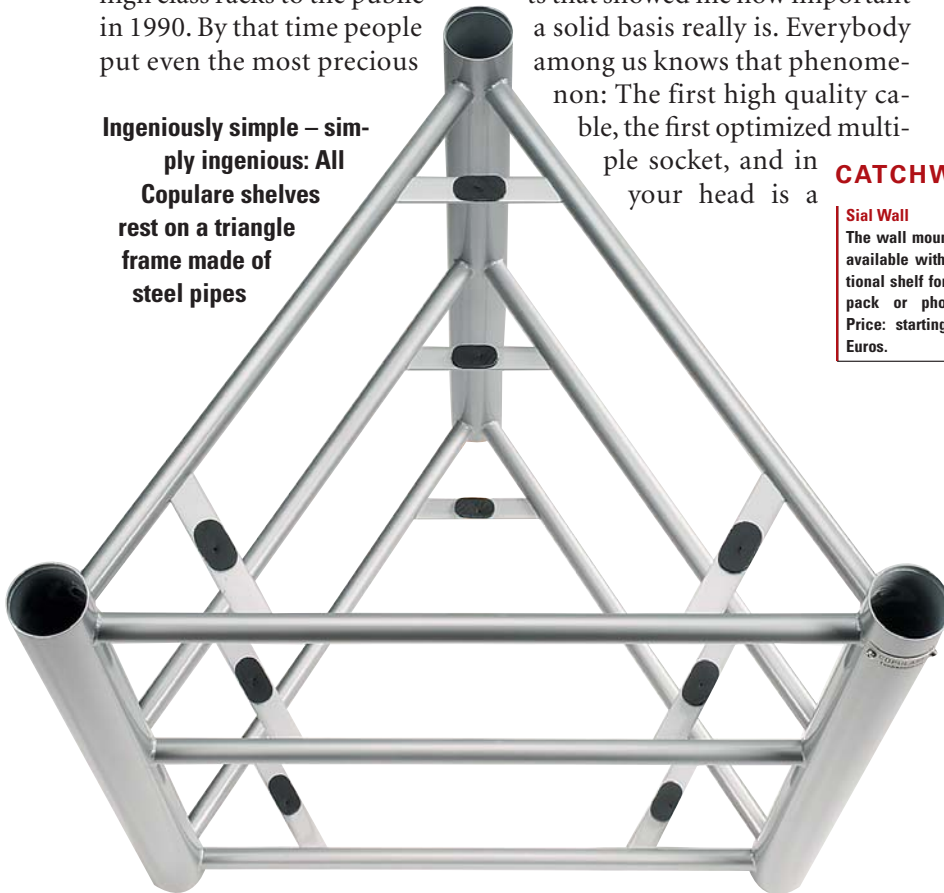
This skilful HiFi freak does not even do anything secret or mysterious, he is simply working consequently. Just like in the beginning of his

"Base Series" his shelves consist of welded steel tubes of various diameters. The three supporting columns – three to avoid tilting – are the thickest. They can be filled with sand to increase weight and steadiness of the frame and to eliminate vibrations from the get go.

On small bars in-between rest the bases themselves, the shelves as they are called in Copulare jargon. Special spikes are designed to carry the 36 millimetre thick trapeziform plates consisting of glued birch wood layers. They either remain natural or can be painted like the base frame in any colour of the RAL catalogue.

Since 1996 all shelves come with a special excavation inside which is nerved by supporting wooden tongues. The latter are positioned in a certain angle to each other which suppresses resonances most effectively. There is another aspect to this concept: The energy from airborne sound and other sources

Ingeniously simple – simply ingenious: All Copulare shelves rest on a triangle frame made of steel pipes



Pitiful smile or rude vituperations – the one who follows new HiFi concepts often has a hard time

CATCHWORD

Sial Wall
The wall mountings are available with an additional shelf for a power pack or phono amp. Price: starting at 1500 Euros.

In every shelf there is an excavation that either remains empty or is filled with sand or lead shot respectively

which affects the equipment is supposed to be deducted from it immediately. Thus the excavation in the shelves is filled with sand or even lead shot. In the course of time Brandl made the experience that components with big transformers and strong power supply units rest firmer on lead, which results in better sound.

On top of that he adjusts the shelves individually according to what components the customer wants to set up. This might bring the determining grain of performance. The dimensions of the frames as well as the clearance in-between shelves are flexible. Larger versions of stands do not pose the slightest problem, often without extra charge. The ma-



ster does not cash up in centimetres.

Some time ago we needed end stands for MBL's "accessible" 9010. Brandl delivered instantly. Since production takes place in his own factory work rooms he is able to fulfil any kind of special requests.

In this regard we brought a late-breaking three shelves Zonal rack (starting at 2800 Euros), a Sial A Table (starting at 2200 Euros) as well as an Aural End Stand (starting at 900 Euros) in the editorial office. The mighty "Analog-Ponton" Gran Porto (see box) was also there. This one is certainly the ultimate solution, takes you to price regions however where you can once again expect a pitiful smile or rude vituperations.

In fact sub chassis and mass drives find their ideal "playground" also on the more affordable Sial Table. For Chateau Veynau in which STEREO resides has metre thick walls we prefer the wall mountings. Nothing moves anymore.

Innately record players are sensitive machines. In contrary to power amplifiers – one might think. This is why they stand on the bare floor oftentimes. A false conclusion! We ourselves experiment with all different kinds of dampers: Akceptaudios SSC bases, the Taktill plates by HGP and of course Aca-

The ultimate basis...

... for high-end record players is called Copulare Gran Porto

The one for whom the best for his vinyl passion is just good enough should listen to the Gran Porto from Lower Bavaria. Not only in terms of its price (starting at 600 Euros) is it the leading-edge model in their product portfolio. The Gran Porto is available in different sizes like the other racks – one might have sighted extremely wide exemplars with a detached motor stand – and all RAL colours. The three legs are filled with a mixture of sand and lead shot which makes them very sturdy. Solid hand turned spikes in bronze threads give the structure secure hold. On the upper end there are cylinder blocks filled with construction foam that hold the eight centimetre sand-

wich shelf. The inner bars have different lengths for better resonance interception. For STEREO the best table for record and CD drives.

The Gran Porto is Brandl's masterpiece. Especially when decorated with fancy inlays.





This SialA table was painted in pallid green and grey green – very trendy. Well, wherever it might fit!

...ellas excellent Fondate Silenzio proved of value. Placed on Copulare's Aural Stands however they reached their maximum in terms of a detached, lively and full sound stage. Directly on the floor their sound becomes plump and clumsy and detaches only unwillingly from the loudspeakers. We could observe the same phenomenon at the Munich HiFi



An esthetical experience as well: the lacquered pipe with chrome fitting and spike

Venue (see box) where they have a stable concrete screed. It was easy to hear the difference.

If you switch from a mediocre rack to a Copulare Zonal you will experience a grand slam in terms of inner stability, room expansion, energy balance and concentrated dynamic. All kinds of equipment seem to love the shelves from Lower Bavaria. On them they take off for



You wouldn't believe it, but power amps sound much better on a Copulare porter too.

acoustic altitude flights. Among the currently available top level racks the stable tripods have their firm place. With a Copulare you know the stand of the art.

Racks in an "on-road test"

One workshop experience: Sand sounds different than lead

At the STEREO PREMIUM PARTNER HiFi venue in Munich visitors got an initiation on the effects of different shelf fillings Copulare offers. Mark Levinson's power amp No. 336 on an Aural End Stand with a shelf either filled with sand or lead shot. The music came out of No. 336 even feistier and livelier placed on lead shot. On sand rendition made a calmer impression, it seemed tonally more cohesive. It's purely a matter of taste! Astounding however, that one could tell a difference at all. One would think that it does not matter much to Mark Levinson's 70 kilo boulder where and on what it is placed. The opposite is the case: Pla-



Gerhard Brandl is manufacturing lavish sound furniture since 1990. He has continuously optimized and refined his basic concept

ced directly on the floor – a widespread bad habit – the sound deteriorated considerably in terms of resolution, pressure and finesse. No. 336 was only worth half.

Copulare bases are comparably beneficial for other components. For comparison purposes a rack of steel and frame was used on which the stereo system sounded tight and hard. Another surprise was Brand's phono table Gran Porto. Designed for record players it sounded even better than the smaller Sial rack in terms of naturalness and sterical depiction.



High end components by Mark Levinson and Oracle served as "test objects" to assess the influence of the Copulare racks