

Black Diamond Racing Pyramid Cones, Mk3 & Mk4

Review by Franco & Gordana Vitaliano

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Franco's reviews can also be found in FI magazine]

*"Read about one of the great cheap tweaks, and how marital
bliss can sometimes be found on the tip of a Black Pyramid"*

We are a husband and wife review team. Now you have to understand that Gordana Vitaliano is an MD/psychiatrist, as well as a hard core scientific researcher. Cold logic rules her day. In her book, husband Franco is obviously out of his mind when he says cable changes, green CD ink, rubber isolation doughnuts, and all the rest of the El Tweako goodies can make a big sonic difference in a good audio system.

Naturally Franco disagrees, and takes umbrage when his sanity is questioned by a professional. This is the old husband/wife thing, but played out in a much fun venue. So from Franco's POV, it's always great when hubby wins one now and then. Such was the case with the Black Diamond Racing Pyramid Mk3 and Mk4 equipment support Cones.

Up until just recently, our CD transport, amp, pre-amp, and DAC sat on Iso-Bearing vibration absorbing globes from Audio Prism; which in turn all sat on top of a Standesign equipment rack. Then enter into our house the Black Diamond Racing Pyramid Cones, Mk3 and Mk4, made by Black Diamond Racing, Inc. (414 747 8733).

Even before we opened the two boxes (six cones in each box), I knew Gordana and I would have problems with this review. 'Black Diamonds'? 'Racing Pyramids'? Choose between the look-alike Mk3 & Mk4's for better/different tonal qualities? No, no, no, mi dolce nutcase. This is tweako hocus pocus right out at the fringe. Get them away from my scientific sight."

Of course, Franco installed them right away. Then, without saying a thing, he sat Gordana down in front of the rig. All the Iso-Bearings were gone, replaced by the Pyramid Cones. Franco knew what he was hearing, but he was going to wait for Gordana's reaction.

Do you know that look on someone's face when his or her belief system suddenly crumbles? Like when they discover they actually prefer vanilla over chocolate? Or find out maybe Nixon really wasn't telling the truth? Well, so it was here.

Gordana's face twisted this way and that, eyebrows furrowed up and down, and her body posture squirmed all over the sofa. Yes, it was a great moment for all tweako husbands when her jaw finally dropped in astonishment.

For once, everything in a PR promo matched reality. With the Cones in place, there was a significant increase in clarity, detail, imaging, and soundstage, including a tighter, deeper bass, plus an extended, sweeter treble. Things never got too bright, or more harsh; just better.

But probably the most important benefit afforded by the Cones was the sudden upsurge in our system's musical rhythm. It is hard to define exactly, but we all know that experience when a system suddenly goes from sounding good to sounding like music. These two sonic qualities are often not the same, and sometimes even contradictory.

The best indicator of this unexpected changeover is when your feet unconsciously start tapping more than usual. Such was the reflexive case with the Pyramids. It now appears that acoustic vibration had been doing a Veg-O-Matic to our system's sound, despite the best efforts of the Iso-Bearings/Standesign. It just wasn't obvious until these wunderkind Cones were put in. And the ability of the Racing Cones to clearly and musically draw out the sound was not a happenstance affair. This happy acoustical phenomenon was occurring across all our recordings.

Quite frankly, at just \$60 for a set of three, these devices have to be one of the great high end bargains. So get into your Mario (or Maria) Andretti racing suits, and charge on down to your local dealer for a few pair.

And by the way, if you want to acoustically isolate your mobile home from all that trailer park riff raff, each small Cone can support up to 10,000 pounds. A set of six should do it.