

VENDORVIEW

By NANCY KLOSEK

‘Audio Jewelry’ for the Luxury Client

The David Wiener Collection isn’t designed with planned obsolescence in mind.



Design guru David Wiener

“Most consumer electronics products have way too many buttons, way too many menus, and too many choices. The boxes are too big and ugly and you have to read a 50-page manual before you’re not afraid to turn the thing on.”

This is not what electronics by David Wiener Ventures are anything about—not by a long shot, says David Wiener, the company’s founder. “Our products are so simple. We write a long and detailed manual, but that’s solely because on the other side, you always worry about the one person in a thou-

sand who might be so lost just plugging a wire into a wall.”

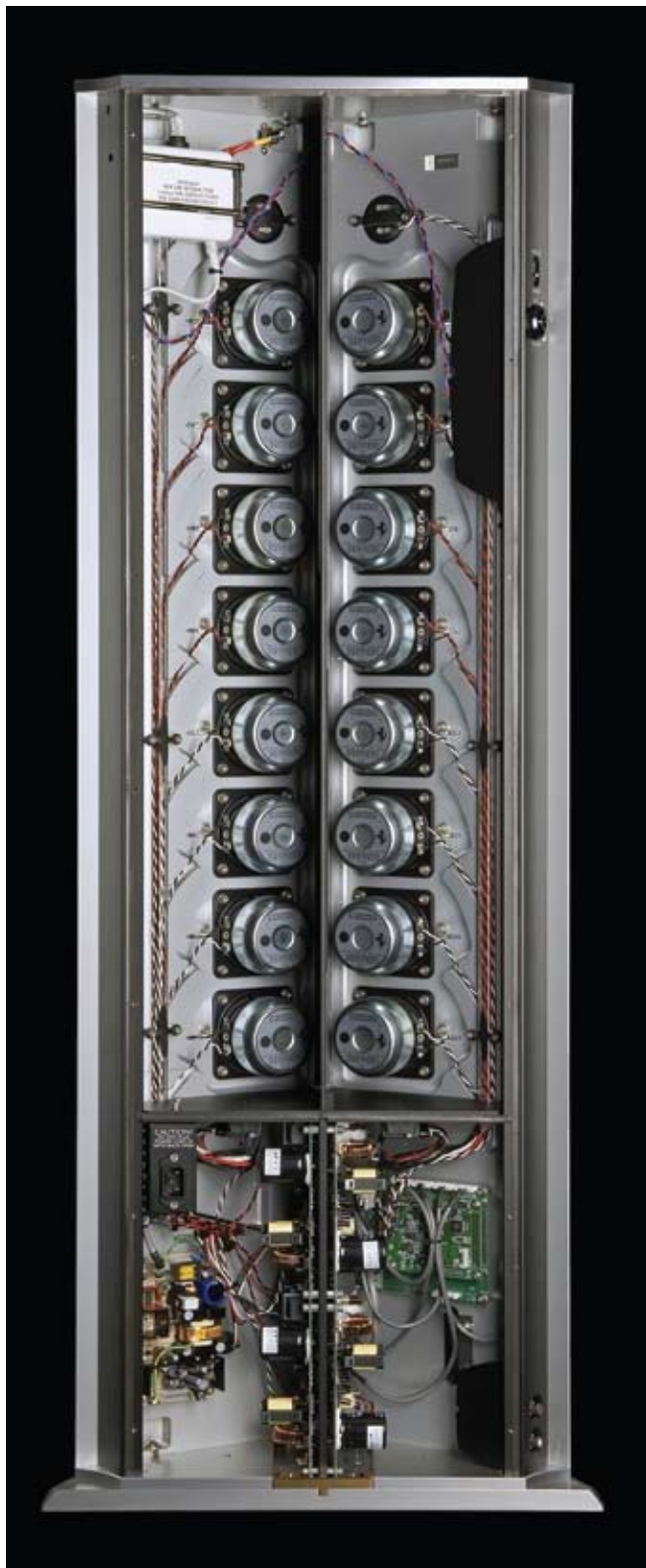
That’s what you call a circle of service, and that’s what Wiener says makes the two electronics offerings that have reached market thus far from the David Wiener Collection—the Art.Engine loudspeaker system and the Art. Suono Wireless iPod Dock and Music Transmission System—true realizations of the ideal luxury electronic product.

But Wiener has also thrown in something extra: ergonomics. Ergonomics is a consideration that informs everything issued under his brand label but most



The Ferrari-inspired Art.Engine

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The Art.Engine's interior reflects as much attention to detail as its exterior.

especially his electronics designs, based on his long history in vehicle planning. His studio, which has collaborated with companies such as Ferrari, “had an ergonomics focus many years ago, when the word was only used by designers and engineers. We got into it early on, because we were designing cars and aircraft, where ergonomics are so critical. And even there, sometimes, designers miss the boat. The right ergonomics make for a great user experience. Controls need to be where you need them—but not 20 switches and 14 plugs.”

As was the case with the flat-screen TV he recently installed in his home. “I decided to just do it myself, but there were about 50 choices for wiring it, and I wasn’t interested in becoming a TV expert to figure out how,” he says.

Wiener has lots of ideas—even about improving flat panels—that are on his expansive drawing board, which in earlier years resulted in the design of one of the first practical recumbent bicycles. “We have the ability to focus on making stuff truly extraordinary—products that aren’t mass marketed or trendy,” he says. One could even call Wiener’s products collectible. “We’re focused on performance as much, or even more, than we are focused on beauty and elegance and exclusivity. We won’t just re-package a product, like a cosmetic surgeon does, to make it look nicer. There are certainly markets for that, but that’s not our interest. And we want to make sure the brain is better, too, at the same time.”

To that end, in the Art.Suono system, the company has partnered with the well-respected recording industry company Apex Systems to introduce Apex’s Aural Exciter sound-improving technology into the consumer electronics market. The technology enhances detail, clarity, imaging and intelligibility, delivering for the listener the kind of high-quality music experience from a compressed source, such as an iTunes track, that Wiener says the artist intended. “The technology isn’t just a loudness booster or a tone control,” he explains. “It restores the music.”

The Art.Suono, which sells at \$1,499, works hand in glove with the David Wiener

Collection’s other CE product: its flagship, limited-edition Ferrari Art.Engine. Art.Engine, which reached market late last year, combines a self-contained speaker array and wireless digital receiver in a single tower. The system is able to play wireless music files transmitted from any Wi-Fi-capable Mac or PC; also included are hardwire inputs for a CD player, iPod, satellite radio, or



The Art.Suono

other portable devices. And from the stage-by-stage inspection throughout the production process to the high-gloss paint finishes (including Rosso Corsa red), the system is Ferrari-inspired—and meant to appeal to the selfsame type of client.

On the docket for the future from David Wiener Ventures are more wireless products for audio transmission, and beyond that, “some very nice home audio systems—speakers as well as complete systems like the Art.Engine.” Wiener is convinced that “people want self-contained systems but they want something way better than a boom box or a mini shelf stereo.” One such new product slated for possible release early in 2009 is a somewhat simpler version of the Art.Engine that won’t be a \$20,000 Ferrari limited-edition piece but will still be made with ►



Wiener, with one of his recumbent bike designs

hand-machined aluminum and the same attention to detail and performance. The company, because of its association with Ferrari, will exhibit its wares during the upcoming Consumer Electronics Show at the Ferrari showroom in Las Vegas's Wynn hotel.

Another future direction for David Wiener Collection will be furniture—"not strictly shelves for your gear, but real furniture. And whatever the products end up being, they will be elegant, usable, beautifully made and very unique."

Besides the cachet of "unique" that infuses each current and future CE product from the David Wiener Collection, Wiener points out that his products are also "green."

"They are, I would say, sustainable, in the sense that we design them to last a very long time. A lot of what's out there for entertainment are things people buy, have for two years, discard and replace. Even the iPod is that way. The technology hasn't advanced that quickly, but colors, shapes, and the ability to hold a bit more information are things that are promoted to people to get them to change to something newer. With our products, there aren't 140,000 on the planet, and each one is made to be kept.

"If you design a speaker or an audio system to truly sound great from Day One," says Wiener, "then you're starting it from what should be an absolute benchmark, so that with products like our Art. Suono, if you're playing compressed files, your music is still going to sound better even years down the road." **CR**



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