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BDI Stand Supports the Heaviest TV's!

BDI

Ventura 7024 TV rack
by Steve Guttenberg, E-Town

May 30, 2000 - I'm no home theater expert, but this much I know for sure: TVs are heavy, and big TVs are REALLY heavy. So it follows that if you're using a 32-inch or larger TV, you gotta use a good, solid stand. A massive 36-incher, like the Philips/Magnavox MX3691B, tip the scales at a hefty 181 pounds, and the biggest Sony Wegas go up to, gulp, 235 pounds.

The wobbly department store-grade "Entertainment Center" furniture isn't up to the task, and worse yet, it's probably unsafe. One little bump or knock could send the TV and the stand toppling over. Most of the electronics manufacturers' matching furniture and integral stands aren't much better. True, they're a bit more robust, but the lot of them is just too plasticky and generic. There's got to be a better way.

And here it is. Becker Designed, Inc.'s (BDI) graceful stands raise A/V furniture's aesthetic, engineering and safety standards to a high level. The company's Ventura 7024 stand will handle the biggest & heaviest tabletop TVs on the market. The Ventura line also includes four other less expensive TV stands, two component towers and a matching media storage cabinet.

BDI holds four U.S. design patents covering aspects of A/V furniture design; the company's been perfecting its craft since 1983.

Features:

- three-shelf TV stand
- solid Maplewood construction
- 300-pound capacity for top shelf
- 100-pound capacity for lower shelves
- high-strength tempered-glass shelves
- clearance between shelves: seven inches and nine inches
- leveling feet
- Finish: Ebonized Black Ash, Natural Maple and Cherry
- warranty: one year parts and labor
- 22 x 46 x 22.5 inches (HWD)
- total weight: 98 pounds (shipped in two boxes)

BDI's solid Rock Maple and tempered-glass stands absolutely trounce the veneer-over-chipboard variety. The

top glass shelf was designed to handle 300 pounds without raising a sweat. That number wasn't dreamed up by the PR company; BDI had North Carolina State University's engineers test its stands with static loads weighing up to 500 pounds. They didn't stop there, though; the testers had a little fun repeatedly dropping a 250-pound bag of lead shot from as high as eight inches onto a Ventura glass-topped cabinet. They even whacked it on its side while it was weighed down. Did it keel over and die? No way!

So it's safe to say that even the biggest TV won't challenge the Ventura 7024's capabilities. The double-wide lower shelves can support four 17.5-inch-wide components, perhaps a DVD/CD player, an A/V receiver, a VCR and a cassette deck. You can pile on up to 100 pounds on each of the two lower shelves.

Casters aren't in the game plan for the Ventura 7024, but I don't have a problem with that. Wheeling around a monster TV and components might be dangerous.

Features Rating: 85

Connectivity: The cabinet's back panel has four 2-inch diameter holes for cable routing. The tangle of wires and cables can be hidden behind your Ventura 7024.

Connectivity Rating: 78

Look & Feel: BDI's innovative furniture manages to combine two normally opposing qualities: extreme strength and a wonderfully open and airy design. The vaguely Scandinavian Modern style should blend in with a wide range of decors. The Ventura 7024 will enhance the look of most TVs and A/V components. Ventilation won't be a problem for high-powered A/V receivers and amplifiers.

My review sample's sumptuous Cherrywood was finished with a durable Satin Sheen lacquer.

Look & Feel Rating: 90

Performance: The Ventura 7024 comes well packed and well protected in two large, flat cartons. Yes, it's one of those "ready-to-assemble" affairs, but it's as hassle-free as can be. Due to the large size of the glass shelving, assembly is definitely a two-person endeavor. With BDI's



straightforward instructions and the precise fit of all the parts, my wife and I cruised through the setup chores in less than half an hour. I fully enjoyed the process of putting together this gorgeous piece of furniture.

The lower shelves are firmly supported by padded slots in the upright sections of the stand. The top glass shelf isn't secured to the Ventura by anything but gravity. Once you put a TV on there, it's not going to budge.

One nitpick: The Ventura 7024's center support stymied my favored under-the-TV position for the center-channel speaker. Oh, well. Most of you will put the center speaker on top of the TV anyway.

Loading gear is a piece of cake. Thanks to the Ventura 7024's 17.5-inch-deep shelves, even the deepest A/V receivers and DVD/CD changers will have room to stretch out. Big-screen TVs have plenty of real estate too; the 7024's top is 46 inches wide in the front, 24 inches wide in the rear and 22.5 inches deep. Of course, even deeper TVs would be OK, if you don't mind them hanging over by an inch or two.

Plan B: Use a 20- or 27-inch TV off to one side, and put a DVD player right next to it.

Performance Rating: 88

Value: Yes, at \$795 list, the Ventura 7024 is a good deal more expensive than rickety generic stands, but you really do get what you pay for. It's built to last and to safely support the biggest TVs, and it will look great for a long time. BDI offers less expensive Ventura TV stands such as the \$425 list 7020, which would make a nice home for a 27-inch TV, and the \$525 list 7023, which can handle a 36-incher along with two components.

Value Rating: 85

Combine the 7024 with other Ventura stands, say, one or two component towers, to assemble a complete Ventura Wall System. BDI also offers a bridge to connect all the pieces and to serve as a shelf for a center-channel speaker. You can add each new Ventura piece as you need it.

Overall Rating: 85