



AXPONA 2015

Unraveling the Mysteries of the Westin O'Hare's Floor 5

By Jason Victor Serinus • Posted: Apr 25, 2015



If I had visited AXPONA as a consumer rather than as press, I would have spent an hour luxuriating in the sound of the Goerner Audio room. Reinhard Goerner, who got into this business after he found himself consumed by the sound of the Beethoven Violin Concerto that he heard and learned to sing from memory at age 8, assembled an absolutely beautiful-sounding system. At its heart were the Italian Grandinote Shinai dual-mono integrated amplifier (\$16,000), whose unique, no feedback circuit topology outputs 37 watts/channel in pure class-A; brand new Grandinote Volta music server (\$12,000); Audio Physic Avantero Plus+ loudspeakers (\$28,000/pair); superb full-range and ultimately transparent Nordost Valhalla 2 cabling; and Creaktiv Midi Reference audio rack (\$5500).

Playing the piano version of Beethoven's Violin Concerto—yes, there is such a thing, arranged by Beethoven—Goerner invited me to sit in the sweet spot. Given that there was no room treatment, and all reflective surfaces were uncovered, the speakers were extremely toed in to minimize the effect of first-order wall reflections. The by-product of this was a huge, enveloping soundstage. But beyond that, the sheer musicality of the sound, just a bit toned down on top but very clear and ultimately seductive in the midrange, was so, so beautiful.

Switching to M•A Recordings' LP of *Sera una noche*, which we heard courtesy of a Funk Vector V turntable (\$2595) with Funk FX-III 9" tonearm (\$2695) and London Jubilee phono cartridge (\$3000) and the Grandinote Celio phono stage (\$8750), all I could do was marvel at the gorgeous midrange and really nice top. Switching to a different track from the same recording, this time in 176.4/24 file format, I was entranced by the fabulous depth of the presentation. This system was a triumph. I sure hope I encounter Grandinote electronics again in Munich.