

ANALOG CORNER

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The Incredible Inedible Egg

I've been sitting on the Bardaudio eggs for almost a year now, and it's about time they hatched. I first saw Bardaudio's wireless products at the *Hi-Fi News* Heathrow show a few years ago, then again at the 2005 CEDIA Expo, imported by May Audio Marketing. I was intrigued, so I requested samples of the Bardone, Bardthree, and BardUSB. (Bardaudio is made by FTM Marketing Ltd., a UK company.)

The Bardone (\$825) consists of two egg-shaped plastic devices: a transmitter and a receiver. You connect the analog line out of your iPod or other portable player, or the Rec Out of your preamplifier, to the transmitting egg's RCA input jacks, and the analog outs of the receiving egg into whatever device you wish to use to hear the signal. The transmitting egg converts the signal to digital and sends it wirelessly and *uncompressed* at 2.4GHz (like your wireless telephone) to the receiving egg—or to up to eight receiving eggs—which can be located at least as far away as your wireless telephone is from its base unit. I was able to receive the signal from one end of my house to the other, as well as outdoors, quite a distance from the base unit.

Bard claims 80dB for dynamic range and separation, a 90dB signal/noise ratio, and a frequency response of 20Hz–20kHz, –1dB. I have my Audiovox Sirius satellite radio's output connected to a Mission M-Time A/V receiver. Using this unit's selectable Tape Out switch, my wife can watch and listen to *The Today Show* while getting ready for work while I'm listening to *The Howard Stern Show* in the bedroom with the receiving egg hooked up to my Tivoli Audio table radio. I need a roof-mounted satellite antenna to get the signal, and even then, Sirius is iffy here because of trees, so the Bardone is the ideal solution.

If I want to hear Sirius outside, I connect the receiving egg to a portable radio. I can't change stations, but when I'm on a favorite Sirius channel I usually find I can happily leave it there all day. If

I want to listen to television, I hook the transmitting egg up to my A/V receiver's Tape Out and turn on the cable box.

The Bardone system sounds very good. It's quiet, dynamic, and wide-band, but I can't give a complete sonic

report on it because I didn't use it for critical listening. It's a versatile system that allows you to set up a wireless network that's *not* tethered to a computer. It's especially great with satellite radio.

that lets you transmit music—from iTunes, Internet radio, or from CDs ripped to your computer's drive—to a receiving egg and whatever it's connected to. Or it can transmit to a Bardthree (\$1295), a 25Wpc digital amplifier-receiver with built-in volume control that's the size of a large wall wart. The Bardthree is designed to plug directly into the wall. Connect a pair of speakers to it and you have a complete stereo system.

Use the Bardthree with a nice pair of efficient stand-mounted speakers, such as the Sonus Faber Domus

Concertinos (\$1495/pair) I was reviewing as part of a 5.1-channel system, and you've got a complete system that you can feed wirelessly via the BardUSB from your computer, or from another source



L-R: Egg transmitter, 25 watt per channel amplifier/receiver, typical wallwart.

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There are two potential problems: First, the Bardone can interfere with your wireless computer network or cordless phone, but with eight broadcast channels to choose from, it's easy to resolve the conflict. Then there's the cost: A transmitter-and-receiver set costs \$825. That may not be steep in the world of \$10,000 interconnects, but it's a lot for a gadget. Still, the Bardone is a really smart, handy system.

The BardUSB is a USB transmitter

using a Bardone. It makes for a great-sounding, space-saving system for a dorm room. Or you can also set up an active wireless network with multiple Bardthrees. But the Bardthree costs \$1295, which ain't cheap. Bardaudio also sells its egg transmitters and receivers separately, so you can mix'n'match and build your system as needed. While the stuff is expensive, consider the cost and hassle of rewiring your house and the price drops dramatically. Cool stuff.