



> italian renaissance

Italians have always been known for designing stylish cars, clothes, and furniture. The introduction of ClaraVox's Dogma speaker system may also indelibly link Italian designers with audio/video equipment. Years in the making and limited to just 99 examples, the Dogmas promise to be cherished by owners as both an object of art and a focal point of a home entertainment system. ClaraVox describes Dogma as a non-conventional loudspeaker in which "technology and design harmonize perfectly" and in which impeccable sound quality is "enclosed in an incomparable aesthetic expression." It will, of course, be up to the listener to determine whether the Dogma performs as its creator claims and delivers unequaled spaciousness, refinement of timber, and optimal reproduction of voices and instruments. But even a casual glance establishes immediately that its styling is unsurpassed. Price: \$52,000 per pair. (claravoxdogma.it or 39.0585.254756).—S.W.

COURTESY OF CLARAVOX

rant >> Digital Video Disconnect

Today's mid-priced A/V receivers come packed with good stuff like USB connectivity, XM satellite radio, and HDMI switching—features that even flagship models of just a few years ago lacked. A number of new receivers even sport setup/calibration systems that automatically determine the number and size of connected speakers, establish how far they are located from the "sweet spot" listening position, and adjust equalization and fine-tune the bass management for optimum sound quality.

But over on the video side, sorry pal, you're on your own. You have to deal with the technical minutiae of upconverting analog video input sources—VCRs, cable boxes, game consoles, etc.—to HDMI in 480p, 720p,

1080i, or 1080p resolutions. The owners' manuals are of little help. They are typically loaded with arcane and dense technical jargon and descriptions related to assigning inputs, converting interlaced and progressive-scan video, and determining what signals will or will not be routed through the HDMI output.

It is enough to make your hair hurt. And if you get the settings wrong, you will wind up with inferior quality video on your TV or—worse yet—no picture at all. Even if you are a technical whiz or a connectivity expert, the inconsistencies of HDMI implementations and incompatibilities between HDMI-equipped players, surround processors, and TVs threaten to foil all of your efforts. There simply has to be a better way.—*Steve Guttenberg*