



Cable Guy

Wired for sound

The Vicar of Tonbridge might seem an unlikely individual to inspire a column in a hi-fi magazine, but the Reverend Mark Brown – a serious music and hi-fi enthusiast in his leisure hours – was, to my knowledge, the first to import some very interesting and inexpensive cables from the US Midwest.

The company concerned calls itself Anti-Cables and principals Paul and Judy Speltz set out the philosophies and rationales clearly and succinctly on their website (www.anticables.com) and their point of view makes a lot of sense. But the theory can come later.

I first heard the speaker cables when some guys from the New Ash Green hi-fi club (NAGfi) brought a set when they came over to visit. I immediately e-mailed America and soon an 18ft set of Anti-Cables speaker cables terminated in Eichmann Bayonet 4mm banana plugs arrived, along with a pair of (Eichmann Bullet) phono-terminated interconnects.

“The Vicar of Tonbridge – a serious music and hi-fi enthusiast – was, to my knowledge, the first to import some very interesting cables from the US Midwest.”

Sonically and musically speaking, the speaker cable fully lived up to my expectations. The sound has excellent focus and coherence, very clean tonal neutrality, a wide dynamic range, and lovely spacious, airy stereo imaging. The only downside – typical enough of a solid-core type cable – seems to be that the bass end is a little dry and weak.

The actual speaker cables I received cost a remarkably reasonable \$248 (plus a bit extra for the Eichmann plug option), yet their excellent performance can comfortably match cables at many times that price.

The reason they're called Anti-Cables is that they're very different from the usual cable stereotypes and therein lies the reason for both their fine performance and their inconvenience. Instead of a sheaf of wires wrapped in some sort of plastic insulation, this is a solid-core type cable based on a length of substantial continuous cast-oxygen free copper. The unusual bit is that the wire is then coated by an ultra-thin (unspecified) red coloured layer – either enamel or more probably some form of varnish one suspects – which provides insulation and also prevents oxidation.

By removing nearly all the insulation, the undesirable dielectric effects that adversely

affect cable sound quality are also removed, ensuring a very 'fast' and coherent sound. While I wouldn't call it particularly user-friendly, it does offer exceptional sonic value for money, and the rationale behind it makes a whole lot of sense too.

Paul Messenger is a former editor of Hi-Fi Choice and has been writing about his favourite hobby for nearly 30 years



Bargains Galore!

How reliable are price comparison websites?

If you use the Internet then you're probably familiar with price comparison websites. Indeed, most of us will probably have benefited from them at some time, even if it was just to sort out some home insurance.