

Superior Sound

The new Element Superior interconnects from Atlas Cables get Jon Myles's feet tapping.

Talk to anyone at Atlas Cables and you'll quickly discover they are pretty passionate about their trade. The Scotland-based company is one of the few that actually demonstrated how they build their cables at hi-fi shows around the world - emphasising the importance of correct termination.

Managing director Kevin Kelly can wax lyrical about the merits of ensuring signal integrity throughout a cable. Which is why the company has introduced its new Element Superior interconnect which eschews soldering the plugs in favour of cold-weld crimping. Atlas says it's the first of its range to feature 100% calibrated compression fittings for both the signal and return conductors.

Kevin said "We were staggered at the difference in performance that this new cold weld technology has over traditional solder terminations. It might seem like a small thing but when you are working to create the most transparent cable at the price the benefits were obvious. Although a budget cable within our range we are delighted with the results".

Atlas developed a new tooling system at its Kilmarnock base to

implement the cold-weld crimping and ensure a secure bond between the signal and return conductors and the plugs.

Other changes include increasing the amount of copper in the conductors by 20% and using a stabilised foamed polyethylene dielectric with the whole encased in a pearl-silver polyethylene sheath. Atlas's own low-mass non-conductive Integra RCA plugs are fitted as standard.

Despite all the improvements this is still a relatively budget interconnect - starting at £60 for a 0.5 metre pair and rising to £122.50 for 3 metres.

SOUND QUALITY

Swapping out a standard pair of interconnects and inserting the Atlas cables between an Oppo UDP-205 universal disc player and a pair of Longdog Audio LDA P6 monoblock amplifiers saw an immediate improvement.

This interconnect is extremely clear and open, with impressive transient speed. With The Pixies' 'Debaser' Joey Santiago's lead guitar was fast and crystal clear - the strings simply zinging as his fingers crossed the fretboard.

Bass was also well-defined, being tuneful on Led Zeppelin's 'Dazed And Confused' - not simply the thump some cheaper interconnects make it sound like.

Moving back to the original interconnects made this track sound rather leaden - the pace and space between the instruments seemingly closed in.

Back with the Atlas cables the sound of Sinead O'Connor's voice on Peggy Gordon from her Sean-Nós Nua collection of Irish ballads was spine-tinglingly good, the slight echo on the track coming over clearly.

Admittedly, some higher-priced interconnects will bring out a little extra detail and nuance but at the price these Atlas Element Superiors put in an impressive performance and can be recommended as a system upgrade.

CONCLUSION

There's definitely something in this cold-weld crimping technology - and I know other cable companies are looking at its benefits. These Element Superiors are clean, open and detailed. They also sound extremely pacy, bringing the best from up-tempo tracks.

ATLAS ELEMENT SUPERIOR £60 0.5 METRE PAIR (OTHER LENGTHS AVAILABLE)



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

A relatively budget interconnect that belies its price in terms of performance. Fast and open with excellent detail.

FOR

- pacy
- open
- detailed

AGAINST

- nothing

Atlas Cables
+44 (0) 1563 572666
www.atlascables.com

