

Signal Projects Hydra

Searching for untainted signal transmission? You might want to audition these interconnects from Signal Projects. Review: **John Bamford**



Looking sufficiently robust to tow a caravan, Signal Projects' cables may be considered the stuff of high-end audio dreams. Company proprietor Nick Korakakis hails from Greece where he founded Signal Projects in 2007. His company's 'entry-level' Lynx interconnects start at £725 for a 1m pair while these Hydra cables are the next models up. Hold onto your credit cards: a 1m set of top-of-the-line Golden Sequence interconnects costs an eye-watering £10,125!

It's unusual to see balanced (XLR) and single-ended (RCA) cables priced identically, but here the construction is the same – with individual signal cores and screening. In these Hydra models the conductors are 0.84mm diameter twisted pairs employing what's described as a 'hybrid design' of 6N purity copper, gold and silver, with a dual-layer PTFE plus polyolefin insulation. Shielding is 1mm aluminium foil with a high-purity copper braid, the cable finished with a hard-wearing outer sheath.

The cables are a little unwieldy. They're not inflexible, but their over-sheathed terminations necessitate a



ABOVE: Signal Projects' hand-assembled cables are individually serial numbered and auditioned before shipping

wide clearance at the back of a rack and will preclude their use with components with cramped sockets.

SCALE AND TRANSPARENCY

My DAC and amplifier both offer balanced connections and tend to sound slightly 'cleaner' when used with balanced cables, although when listening to these Hydras both the XLR and RCA versions sounded exceptionally vivid and open. There really wasn't much to choose between them.

Playing some hi-res recordings by the Helge Lien Trio [highresaudio.com] revealed a clear midband with tremendous image depth, width and focus. The piano, acoustic bass and drums were depicted graphically, seemingly with acres of space around them, and cymbals appeared vibrant with breathtakingly

realistic sparkle and zing. The cables' vividness also helped dig out buried details in murky prog-rock productions where multi-tracking and over-dubbing tended to conceal instruments and vocal lines. The Hydra cables made it easier to listen into such recordings, rather like giving clean windows a final polish.

HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

If you already own a splendid high-end system, any upgrading will probably involve fine-tuning its installation – including trying different cables to see if they get you closer to 'being there'. Of course you'll need to justify their high cost; however, with top-notch recordings I found Signal Projects' Hydra interconnects helped make music sound truly alive. They appear wonderfully transparent to source signals and can be highly recommended.



LEFT: Supplied in a wooden presentation box, each cable also comes with a signed test certificate