

Diamond Life

Italian cable specialist HiDiamond's entry-level interconnects offer high-end sound at a reasonable price, says Jon Myles.



The role of good interconnects in a hi-fi system is often overlooked. Perhaps it's because they are shorter than loudspeaker cables and usually hidden out of sight between components. But their importance cannot be overstated. They are the first link in the signal chain – carrying the all important musical information from source to amplifier.

If they're introducing smear, artificial tonality or simply restricting tonality then there's nothing the amp can do to correct it. So choosing the best set for you is vital.

Which brings us to HiDiamond – an Italian company which has been specialising in cables for the past 17 years. The Diamond I is its entry-level RCA interconnect priced at £60 for a 1 metre length.

Taking it out of the box, 'entry-level' were not the first words that sprang to mind. It's a chunky beautifully-finished cable with a thick braided external jacket housing the 4VRC copper/graphite conductors – which have been baked four times at different temperatures, something HiDiamond says helps retain signal integrity.

These cables are terminated with sturdy locking connectors which, once tightened, provide a firm grip on the sockets.

SOUND QUALITY

I used the HiDiamonds with an Oppo UDP-205 universal disc player connected to a variety of amplifiers from a muscular McIntosh MC152 to Creek Evolution 100A and then an Icon Audio Stereo 30SE valve integrated.

What came over was an open, honest sound with plenty of detail so the individual characteristics of each amplifier shone through.

The punchy, powerful nature of the McIntosh was evident on David Bowie's 'Diamond Dogs' with the guitars sounding raw and full-bodied. The Diamond Is were free of dynamic compression with an excellent sense of instrumental separation.

Playing the same track through the Icon Audio revealed a silkier sound – no less detailed but with a smoother, more organic flavour. What I was hearing was the inherent nature of these two very different amplifiers which is exactly what a quality interconnect should be doing.

What was consistent no matter what amplifier was attached was the pace and timing of the music. With Keith Jarrett's live 'Sleeper' LP the rhythmic dexterity of his piano playing had a pleasingly propulsive quality with no blurring of the notes in the faster passages. Everything was clean and clear; Jan Garbarek's saxophone coming over as bright and tonally rich – without the thin and edgy sound that some cheaper interconnects can impart.

This openness does mean the HiDiamonds won't flatter poor recordings but the upside is that they will make the most of good ones, bringing out transient information and micro-dynamics that others might mask.

CONCLUSION

The Diamond Is are everything a good interconnect should be. They allow the music to flow unimpeded across the entire frequency spectrum with a sense of natural ease. They are good enough to be paired with high-priced electronics but will also bring benefits to mid-priced systems. If you are looking to improve on what you already have I'd recommend an audition.

**HIDIAMOND
DIAMOND 1S £60
(1 METRE PAIR)**



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

A high-end sounding interconnect at a reasonable price. Natural, open with no artificial character they allow music to breathe as it should.

FOR

- organic sound
- revealing
- detailed
- price

AGAINST

- won't flatter poor recordings

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