



Wireworld Silver Electra 5² and Stratus 5² Power Cords

Counter to conventional wisdom

Neil Gader

Wireworld has taken a fresh look at the power cord, and in so doing has produced a line that runs counter to conventional wisdom. The five models in the 5² Series bear little physical relation to the heavy and unwieldy things audiophiles are used to. Wireworld's AC cords are defiantly lightweight and flat in profile, and pliable enough to negotiate corners—critical when hunting for outlets. I listened to two of the new models—the second-from-the-top Silver Electra (\$700) and the entry-level Stratus (\$100).

The Silver Electra uses OCC (Ohno Continuous Casting) silver-clad copper conductors and silver-clad brass contacts in a composite insulation, which was chosen over single-material insulation for its ability to absorb high-frequency energy. As David Salz, president and chief designer for Wireworld, explains, the flat geometry reflects a coiled conductor design which “exploits inductive and capacitive filtering effects.” In other words, the point is to pass only the 50/60Hz AC power signal, while attenuating other frequencies to prevent line noise and harmonics from “infiltrating the component’s power supply.”

The Silver Electra has a balanced midrange, a rich bass response that’s

solid and well defined in pitch but not overly controlled, and excellent dynamics. Backgrounds and silences between notes are as quiet as I’ve experienced. The Silver Electra is mellow and dark in overall character; sibilance is kept in check; and hard transients are lightly rounded rather than honed to a razor edge. As a result, when a player’s hand glides up the fingerboard of a string bass the metallic growl of the strings is not quite as pronounced. Soundstaging is unerringly neutral, neither laid-back nor forward. However, during Patricia Barber’s “Hunger” from *Mythologies* [Blue Note], the high-octane rhythm section wasn’t presented with quite the pinpoint imaging I expect from this track.

The Silver Electra elegantly balances the qualities of two of my favorite power cords—delivering the hard-charging dynamism of the Virtual Dynamics Reference and the naturalistic spatial qualities of the Kimber Palladian. Although it doesn’t quite capture the full impact of the snare from Elton John’s “Someone Saved My Life Tonight” on *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy* [Island], or the sustained piano notes during Tom Waits’ “Take It With Me” on *Mule Variations* [Anti/Epitaph], in both instances the

differences are subtle. In keeping with the Silver Electra’s slightly darker personality, cymbals suggested a different flare pattern and pitch with the Wireworld than with the Kimber—the Wireworld imparting a broader spread and slightly deeper tonality, while the Kimber seeming to be pitched a little higher and crisper, with a more compact spread.

The Wireworld Stratus relies on less expensive materials than the Electra, but at a fraction of the price it imparts the *essence* of its more expensive sibling in a slightly warmer, softer version. As it’s not as lively or open as the Silver Electra, it should be matched with components proportionate to its price. And that goes for the Silver Electra, too—an excellent power cord that consistently performed at its best when coupled to the best gear. **TAS**



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Prices: Silver Electra, \$699.95/2m; Stratus, \$99.95/2m