

Wireworld Cable Range Review

Mark Gusew auditions Wireworld's Mini Eclipse 8 BiWire speaker cable, plus its Chroma 8 Ethernet, Platinum Starlight 7 USB and Supernova 7 Toslink optical interconnects

The world of audio and video interconnects can be pretty daunting to first-time buyers. Every brand offers its own particular proposition to customers, and it can be hard to keep track of who does what and why. One of the more distinctive players is US-based Wireworld Inc., which is a long-established and well-respected cable manufacturer that has shown greater technological innovation than many rivals. Not content to repackage generic OEM cable designed and made by other companies, it has gone its own way – for example, Wireworld pioneered the use of parallel conductors for audio interconnects.



Wireworld Mini Eclipse 8 BiWire Speaker Cable — \$1,299 per 3m pair

David Salz founded this American company back in 1980 and is also President, chief designer and technical evangelist. Wireworld has several patents under its belt, and through distinctive design has sought to deliver a sound akin to a direct connection – which is his guiding philosophy. This unique architecture is now seen in a variety of applications, from HDMI video cables, audio interconnects and USB cables, to digital audio leads and loudspeaker wiring. It also makes mains power cords – which are available in many countries but not currently in Australia and New Zealand.

Several important patents differentiate Wireworld from other cable manufacturers – including DNA Helix technology. The Delineated Neutralising Array is designed to counter the negative sonic effects of electromagnetism; as cables are twisted together, there's an increase in eddy current resistance, the company says, which causes the masking of information. As a result, flat conductors are used in parallel runs. Wireworld's third-generation composite insulation is called Composilex 3, and is said to counter so-called triboelectric noise; DuPont Teflon is used here, claimed to bring greater focus and dynamic contrast.

Wireworld only uses oxygen-free copper or better materials in the least expensive

cables, right up to ultra-pure copper and solid silver with 99.99999% purity for the flagship models – these are long-grain and very carefully drawn in the casting process. Expensive to manufacture it may be, but it delivers ultra-high conductivity, says the company. The best silver has 8% better conductivity than standard copper, and on this same scale gold is 35% worse, it's claimed. The combination of the type and weave of the inner cores, the dielectric, the metallurgy and quality of the conductors, materials and connectors all combine to give a signature sound. On audition I found that Wireworld cables responded well to being run in; one week in and they sounded noticeably more transparent and dynamic.

SPEAKER

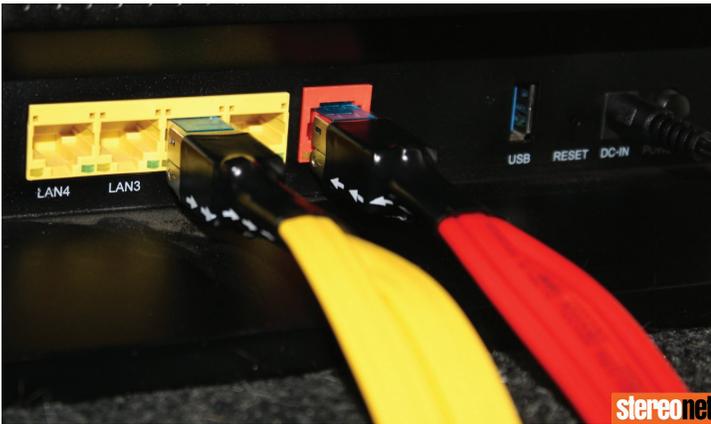
There are thirteen different cables in the extensive Wireworld speaker cable range. The Mini Eclipse 8 BiWire tested here costs \$1,299 per 3m pair, and is ninth up the range, with a significant price rise to the next model up – this being the \$3,899 Eclipse. Top of the range is the silver conductor Platinum Eclipse 8 which retails for a cool \$47,000. The model tested here is a series 8 cable, the improvements over the previous generation being the use of the latest Composilex 3 (rather than 2) insulation as well as having more strand groups.

The latter are said to encourage stronger electromagnetic fields that allow the signal to pass through the cable better.

With Revel F228be loudspeakers, this cable made an immediate impact on me. Tonal balance is very good – although the midband is perhaps not as forward and fleshed out as some of the finest cables I've heard – with treble proving extended and smooth. There's an enjoyable and pleasant bass that digs deep, but with no thumping monotone. It also served up very decent soundstage with fine instrumental separation. Classical music and electronica were served equally well – a sign of a fundamentally transparent cable. Bi-wiring yielded an appreciable improvement – it was clearly and substantially better than using a metal link or a short piece of copper wire between the pairs of connectors.

ETHERNET

Digital cables also play a key role in Wireworld's latest range. I looked at two Ethernet leads, the Chroma 8 at \$189 for a 1m run, and the Starlight 8 at \$399. These come with high-quality metal RJ45 connectors, and although they could be used for connecting your computer to the router for general surfing of the internet, they're a bit too special for that purpose. They have been designed to allow digital audio data streamed



Wireworld Chroma 8 Ethernet, Wireworld Starlight 8 Ethernet — \$189/m, \$399/m respectively

around your network – from your NAS drive, computer or streamer for example – to be as quiet as possible with ultra-high bandwidth signal speeds. At the same time they are claimed to reject noise, which is exactly what's needed for high fidelity music or video playback.

The design is again a flat cable with parallel conductors, but these are triple shielded or have 12 separate internal shields. This cable is rated at CAT 8 speeds or 40Gbps which is four times faster than CAT 7 cables. Although household networks run well below those speeds, some say that cables that support higher speeds and bandwidth sound better.

Connected to my Bluesound Node 2i, I heard a subtle decrease in background noise that I hadn't previously thought existed. Digital networks generate copious amounts of RF and EMF noise, and it is widely agreed that this masks detail. I heard a real improvement in soundstage, depth, detail, texture, harmonies, clarity, focus, dynamics and realism. Bass extension was also improved with better definition, tonality and deeper pitch.

Both Wireworld cables proved noticeably better than my existing Cat 7 cables, and also worked very well together with an Acoustic Revive LAN Isolator. The combination proved very special and gave my system levels of quiet that I didn't think were possible. The difference between the cheaper Chroma 8 and pricier Starlight 8 is in the choice of materials used to make the cable. The Chroma uses high-grade oxygen-free copper conductors, while the starlight uses silver-clad oxygen-free copper conductors. I compared the two grades of cables and

world makes, made from solid silver conductors which are said to bring speed and bandwidth gains. With better conductivity than copper, its properties are believed to be well suited to audio applications. The cable tested is the latest series 7 version with a six conductor DNA Helix and claimed precise 90 ohm impedance. It's also nicely flexible and thin and not too heavy to hang when its inserted into components. This proved the most transparent and quietest USB cable that I have heard to date, and so it should be at this price. It has a super-clean and neutral sonic balance, with particularly realistic stereo imaging – the soundstage is expansive without sounding in any way overblown or unnatural.

TOSLINK

This is the top TOSLINK optical cable in the Wireworld range and is relatively affordable with 0.5m lengths starting at \$349. Unlike standard optical cables made from a variety of plastic materials, the Supernova 7 uses 338 individual glass-fibre optical conductors made from Borosilicate glass. The ultra-fine individual fibres allow the cable to remain highly flexible and easy to handle. In fact, the connectors on either end of the cable are not fixed and can spin, allowing easy connection to your devices.

Wireworld triple polishes its cheaper acrylic optical conductors and micro polishes the Supernova range. Don't be tempted to touch the ends as contaminants from your finger

could clearly hear the difference they each made, with quieter backgrounds and better dynamics coming from the Starlight 8.

USB

Wireworld Platinum Starlight 7 USB

A to B — \$1,249/m

This is the best USB 2.0 audio cable that Wire-

will hinder the optical connection. Surprisingly, the cable was not supplied with end covers to protect the tips, but did come in a classy aluminium carry box. Wireworld makes the cable with both standard TOSLINK ends and with an optional 3.5mm end to suit a variety of portable devices.

Listening to the Wireworld Supernova 7 optical cable was a pleasure. As per the brand's other cables I auditioned, it had a balanced and neutral sound – but with greater detail, clarity, spatiality and frequency extension than generic plastic TOSLINK cables. It proved better in every way, making standard cables sound muffled and opaque. Indeed, there's a sense of quietness and calm – a basic lack of noise – that allows detail and transparency to issue forth out of lovely black backgrounds.

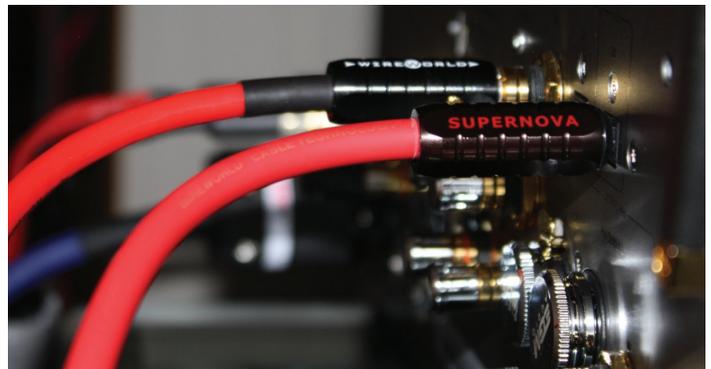
VERDICT

Overall, a big thumbs up for this selection of Wireworld cables. The company makes a product for almost every need and price point – so as soon as you know your requirements, it's well worth seeking out an approved dealer and booking a demonstration. It should also be remembered that this company's products can be custom ordered for users with specific non-regular requirements at no extra cost – for instance, those requiring extra-long bi-wire leads or the combination of banana and spade connectors.

Highly recommended for quality and value, then.

Mark Gusew

Starting his first audio consultancy business in the early '80s whilst also working professionally in the electronics industry, Mark now splits his time between professional reviewing and AV consultancy.



Wireworld Supernova 7 Toslink Optical — \$399/m