

Wireworld's Eclipse 8 Cables Reviewed

November 26, 2019 by Howard Milstein

Wireworld's 'Eclipse 8' Cables, interconnects and power cords are fully evaluated and they are nothing to sneeze at!

For forty years, the sonic effects of Audio Cables have been the subject of controversy and debate by audio enthusiasts and have been often noted in our many cable reviews over the past year.

While trying to achieve the best sonic performance out of your audio system can often become a fleeting quest, we know for a fact that people's opinions on audio cables can often be quite polarizing. Some believe cables do make a difference and then there is the other camp that believes all cables will produce the same results. Many audiophiles secretly keep an agnostic belief as such; just let me hear the proof! If you're a hardcore audiophile with a top-of-the-line system, (particularly with regards to your front end and loudspeakers) you probably will notice a cleaner, more detailed and accurate sound when switching to a premium set of audio cables.

As for many enthusiasts with systems in an average state of tune, one can forgive those who prefer to

devote resources on buying more music instead. Understandably when compared against the many scores of premium and expensive audio cables, some low-cost cables will inevitably appear disappointing. In this sense, the choice of a cable may not make that much of a difference to justify the expense but may still represent good value in a more modest audio system. An example might be, as a



wine enthusiast myself, like asking if you need to spend \$50 or \$100 to buy a good bottle of wine? Unless you're a wine connoisseur; most folks are perfectly happy with a nice \$10 variety.

For those audiophiles who are very perceptive— routinely expecting and achieving a high caliber of performance in their music system, cables have become an increasingly important part of the finest high-end audio systems.

There is also another incontrovertible fact that comes into play when evaluating the sound differences in cables; particularly loudspeaker cables. That is that most speaker cables will have some subtle audible differences when used with different amplifier designs that they may be mated to.

It's not overly hard to establish that cables can and do sound different,

if only on the basis of their conductivity and the effect of their series impedance (mainly resistance and small series inductance) upon the generally non-uniform load impedance presented by most loudspeakers.

With zero amplifier source resistance and zero cable resistance, the frequency response of a given loudspeaker will be as defined by the

designer. If we introduce some series resistance, say 1 ohm, then a nominal 8 ohm speaker will lose a barely audible 1 dB of sensitivity. In addition, if it has the usual complex impedance variation over the frequency range, then this will now be reflected as errors in the loudspeaker's frequency response.

For the dedicated enthusiast, (some) of whom just might have a great ear for music and sound,

we can acknowledge the reasons why people spend lots of money on cables – and in many instances, (maybe far too much?). My personal experience has shown that as the price of audio cables increases, you start to hear small changes of subtle musical nuances in your system that immediately become undeniably hard to live without. Unfortunately, auditioning cables is something to put off until you have to do it as it takes lots of dedicated and hard evaluation time—preferably in the confines of your own home and system to be able to fully appreciate these performance augmentations.

THE ECLIPSE 8 SPEAKER CABLE

The Wireworld Eclipse series of speaker cables has consisted of a few tier levels in quality and performance: the basic 'Eclipse', which is the subject of this assessment, followed by the Silver, Gold, and the super top of the line, Platinum model. While the Wireworld Eclipse Silver cables feature the patented Octo DNA Helix design with OCC-7N silver-clad copper conductors, the addition of this silver-cladding on the 'basic' Eclipse 8 improves on the 'sound definition and resolution; thereby making them sound closer to the solid silver Gold Eclipse 8. The Eclipse 8 loudspeaker cables also boast an increased number of strand groups than Series 7, which strengthens the electromagnetic field that moves the signal through the cable.

As you will come to see, the Wireworld Eclipse series are one of the few cabling systems I've lived with that is surprisingly and totally 'neutral' in its balance when matched with most of the finest high definition audiophile electronics made today. The designer, David Salz, obviously and most graciously, has been duly concerned

with providing the listener a totally 'natural' sound presentation (hopefully assuming that this is what the listener wants!) and his testing methods have determined that eddy current losses are the most problematic issue plaguing signal transfer through wire conductors. He is preoccupied with the effects of eddy currents; deeming them to be an insidious form of coloration and the prime suspect in the loss of detail in cable design.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Larry Smith, National Sales Mgr. of Wireworld, I was sent a complete package of the Eclipse 8 series. These included the Loudspeaker Cables, Eclipse Interconnects, the Electra 7 power cords and last but not least, a prototype and final version (now



available) of the Gold Starlight 8 75-ohm coaxial digital cable, the latter of which is included here in this analysis.

THE SYSTEM

The Wireworld Eclipse 8 cables were delivered to me in the most beautiful and finely packed boxes in and of themselves. My first order of business was to replace my excellent Stager Silver Solid interconnects and Tellurium Q black II loudspeaker cables with the much thicker and substantial looking Wireworld Eclipse 8's. I also replaced my reference Audio ArtD-1se 75 ohm digital coax cable for the Gold Starlight 8 being reviewed here. At this point, I was

using the just reviewed CIA power amplifier and passive preamplifier, both quite outstanding at their individual price points as well as the new PS Audio Gain Cell Monoblock amplifiers and Gain Cell Preamplifier for moving coil cartridges. Alongside this, the latest incarnation of The Peachtree Audio Nova 300 integrated was employed and has proven to be an extraordinarily accomplished integrated, with a superb DAC onboard. This was switched back and forth with the Wyred4Sound 10th Anniversary limited edition DAC, which will be warranting an upcoming review. My consistent Marantz SA10 all in one Disk Player as well as the Audio Note (UK) CD-3.1x/II Vacuum tube CD player/transport. (review forthcoming) were also engaged for use here.

Vinyl duties were maintained by my Linn Sondek LP12, updated (circa 2006) and the beautiful sounding combination of the Naim Aero tonearm /Ortofon Cadenza Bronze cartridge. When not reviewing new loudspeakers, my standard reference loudspeakers are vintage Spondor BC1's, Quad ESL63 USA loudspeakers, Spondor SP1's and SP2/2 originals.

It should be noted that the Wireworld Electra 7 power cords were inserted into my digital front ends/DAC's as well as the CIA C•100S stereo amplifier, the PS Audio 700 gain cell monoblock power amplifiers and the Peachtree Nova 300 (2019) integrated. Last but not least, these were all used with an Inakustik AC-3500P power station.

THE SOUND

As things began, I was expecting some subtle, yet noticeable incremental improvements in the overall sound reproduction of the sturdy, though somewhat hard to bend Eclipse 8 cables. I was more

than inspired when the first CD disk was cued up and the music began. What a way to start off a session with the Eclipse 8's inserted. And what a magnificent sound these cables created! Notwithstanding the fact that the Eclipse 8 speaker cables, interconnects and Electra 7 power cords were all used as a complete system, I was initially able to get a firm, sonic grip on the SPEAKER CABLES, as they were connected before the interconnects and power cords.

Colin Davis Mozart Symphonies

The 1980 Colin Davis Mozart Symphonies disc was the first piece of music that I played and indeed, this breathtaking, realistic recording brought forth the Eclipse 8 speaker cables duly acknowledged claim to fame 'neutrality'; displayed here in all its essence and beauty. Lush orchestral strings and a wide soundstage expansiveness was delineated with the utmost precision. The Eclipse 8 speaker cables yielded a superlative, pure and totally natural tonal clarity on all instruments on this fabulous recording, especially as compared to the Tellurium Q Black II's. (quite excellent in their own right).

Although the Eclipse 8 cables are flat out approximately 5 times the cost of the Tellurium Q's, the former cables were good enough that a pretty fair comparison was totally justified. Let's just say that the Eclipse 8's brought this music to life as I've never heard it before. The sound improvement and complex qualities this cable produced was simply quite startling...and do not at all betray its value even with a retail price of \$1800 for a 2.5-meter pair!

The Film Scores Remastered Salonen conducts Herrmann

More music was compiled on my test list, including soundtracks of Bernard Herrmann's best scores with Esa-Pekka Solonen, and "3 Worlds of Gulliver" conducted by Joel McNeely. Here again, the Eclipse 8 displayed these recordings with a subtle yet distinctly sumptuous and meticulously broad and deep soundstage while each individual instrument was produced with much more clarity, detail and a simple type of 'exact' precision of image locational effects while never sounding forward or strained.



The 3 Worlds of Gulliver Bernard Herrmann Score

In spite of an improvement in bass impact and 'slam' (I hate this word) not being overtly noticeable over my previous cables, there is no doubt that the Eclipse 8 was totally authoritative in this area of its frequency response. In fact, Wireworld should be proud of this. These cables' overall design and effective sound reproduction qualities never—overemphasized any area of the frequency curve. From bass to

mid-bass, midrange and treble, the Eclipse 8 speaker cables integrated the full audio spectrum like some of the finest loudspeakers available today!

One must not overemphasize what these cables are truly doing to the reproduction quality of one's system. The increased definition you hear is not as much a 'dramatic' change in the full range of sound one observes in your preferred listening room but small, ardent nuances and audible awareness of harmonic and tonal clarity. The inspired, dedicated listener over a short period of time will observe these effects as their personal and definitive program

sources sound more 'live' and detailed to his or her ears. With good program sources, massed violins will be reproduced with that resinous sound of the bow strings along with excellent, realistic concert hall ambience and delineation—but, without any 'stridency' whatsoever. Put on a vintage, well recorded vinyl record or CD of a female singing voice. The Eclipse 8's will let your loudspeaker exhibit all the liquidity, definition and smoothness (if) inherent in the artist's voice. (I love to use well defined, minimal microphone female operatic aria recordings (Kathleen Battle in this instance) for testing the best audiophile equipment).

Kathleen Battle sings Mozart

Hopefully, you may have a taste for classical music as an abundance of great recordings are profusely available, allowing these cables (as well as all your components) to show off their ultimate authority. This type of program material will hardly fail to please and will ultimately bring forth a much more 'enticing' listening experience. Here are the moments when an audiophile and music lover may proclaim that maybe.... the extra cost of a great pair of audiophile

cables is worth every penny spent. As such, the Wireworld Eclipse 8 Speaker Cables do this in spades!

ECLIPSE 8 INTERCONNECTS

Although I did not have the opportunity to use and/or evaluate the preceding Eclipse 7 series of interconnect cables, but besides Wireworld's patented DNA* Helix cable technology and 'Silver-Tube plugs, the newest Eclipse Series 8 interconnects has been upgraded to contain an added number of strand groups which will give the listener an audible perception of increased soundstage separation, detail and depth perception. The newly added "Composilex 3", as stated by Wireworld, "preserves the purity of the signal by minimizing triboelectric noise better than any conventional low loss insulation material, (including DuPont Teflon®.)"

With the OCC-7N copper conductors, Composilex 3 should ideally provide rewarding improvements in 'focus' and dynamic contrasts in music. My next move in this evaluation was to insert the Eclipse 8 interconnects between my preamp and or/power amps and digital sources—when using the LATTER with their own built in DAC's

Anne Murrays Greatest Hits

I first proceeded to connect the Peachtree Audio integrated amp pre-output (using its terrific DAC) and into the PS Audio Gain Cell M700 mono block amplifiers. To my surprise, it took no more than 10 minutes to hear the amazingly fine, added detail and pure 'musical tonality' of the Eclipse 8 interconnects. The sound was grain free, smooth, clean and exquisitely precise. As the music emanated from my Quad ESL loudspeakers, it was keenly displayed within the deep, full soundstage. The sound on some well

recorded popular/country recordings featuring the voice of Ann Murray was beautifully centered while Ann's voice showed a distinct purity and silky softness. Here, the Eclipse 8's addition to the component mix kept the sound balance excellently refined on her vocal sibilants and not to forward or laid back. When employing the Sendor BC1, loudspeaker, the sound became even more subtly nuanced and musically detailed.

The Eclipse 8 interconnects are



built with parallel layers of Ohno Continuous Cast Copper, and the characteristics of this wire produce a sound that copper-based cables are known for and are a formidable compliment to the Speaker cables. However, while the terminations on the interconnect are impeccably built, I do wish that they might have made the termination plugs a wee bit tighter upon insertion, allowing a touch more gripping ability.

THE GOLD STARLIGHT 8 – 75 OHM DIGITAL CABLE

I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to audition a prototype and final production version of the Wireworld Gold Starlight 8 coaxial digital cable and this pure 75-ohm cable is arguably, Wireworld's most understated yet incrementally revealing product in the line.

Using solid silver copper conductors, the production Gold Starlight 8 is of reference-standard and displays improvements in harmonic instrumental clarity; more specifically, a deserved hint of instrumental sharpness (no fizz or roughness!) along with fine image specificity and subtle dynamic contrasts as compared to the prototype. My sample specifically came with RCA terminations but Wireworld makes it available with RCA to BNC, BNC to BNC and BNC to RCA.

I currently use the excellent Audio Art D-1se 75 ohm digital coax cable as my reference digital cable and was quite curious as to how Wireworld's new Gold Starlight 8 compared to it. After having had the Wireworld cable in my system now for over 2 months as a digital out on 2 CD disk players, I must admit that my initial findings found it to be a touch "cloudy" in its overall performance as compared

to the prototype. However, with more comprehensive listening, this suddenly changed within about 3 days of break in time. I then pleasantly discovered my favorite program material, singing voices, and orchestral music started to exhibit a more finitely clean and improved midrange clarity with increased sonic midrange definition while most importantly, remaining smooth and refined without a trace of hardness or edginess.

In comparison to the Audio Art D-1se, I would say that the differences were slight, and I would have to re-evaluate them side by side to get any type of conclusive subjective pronouncement. However, when the Wireworld digital cable lost that slight layer of 'haze', I can now confidently say, without any doubt, that the current production coax cable is beautifully musical, exhibiting a true improvement

over its prototype. It is a real winner at its projected price point and within the context of the Eclipse 8 line!

ELECTRA 7 POWER CONDITIONING CORD

The Electra 7 Power Conditioning Cord is the middle cord of the 5 power cords offered in the Wireworld portfolio. This power cord continues on with the unique advantages of Fluxfield Technology and OCC copper as well as Wireworld’s Composilex 2 insulation.

Having had a few excellent power cords already employed in my system, I found this power cord to offer a decidedly low noise floor, particularly when going into my Inakustik AC-3500P power station. Initial and sustaining sound impressions produced refined quietness and within that hush, it offered a small amount of transient stop and start definition to the already defined, stark background. The Electra 7 is a well-made and confident addition to any high-end audiophile system, particularly at its relatively fair price point compared to many of the other high definition, power cords currently available to audio enthusiasts.

WRAP-UP

One might still ask, “Can high definition ‘Audiophile Cables’ be considered ‘good value’ for your money? The Wireworld Cables examined here could be considered to be in the mid- upper level price point when considering some of the various other ‘endearing’ audiophile cables now in vogue in the high end segment of the market—some (including Wireworld’s own ‘SILVER’ Eclipse model) costing more than double the prices represented here!

On the surface, and for the ‘average’ audio enthusiast, it might appear not. However, take this to heart: there is a bit more going on here than meets the eye.

In a recent discussion I had with a sharp minded ‘unnamed’ distributor of luxury up market cables and power conditioners, he stated that the MOST IMPORTANT part of a top-quality audio system is your sources, cables, and Loudspeakers. After the last few years, and with my discrete and intense auditioning of the Wireworld Eclipse 8 series cables here, the above-mentioned information may indeed be right on the money!

Without a doubt, the Wireworld

range of cables, interconnects and power cords; particularly these newest Eclipse 8 models examined here never fail to produce a high standard of consistent, stable and natural sound reproduction. The whole Eclipse line simply exploits all the components in your system with an honest, truthful and exemplary balance of qualities while at the same time integrating your system in a way that will be quite hard to beat at these prices.

More importantly, upon longer listening sessions, they exhibit an expression of musical reproduction enjoyment that is just completely “right” sounding; meaning: they are so well balanced and tonally accurate that you feel a supreme sense of confidence in them; while acknowledging that you cannot get much better than this within their relative scale of quality. As such, when listening to these cables in your home system, you feel a definitive sense of trust that Wireworld has given you all the goods- and at the right price. The Eclipse 8 combination can, therefore, be regarded by this reviewer as an absolutely excellent value and is wholeheartedly recommended!

Reference recordings used:

Bernard Herrmann – The Film Scores Remastered Esa-Pekka Salonen

Mozart: Symphonies Nos. 39 & 41 Sir Colin Davis and Staatskapelle Dresden

Mozart Symphony 33 / Iona Brown ASMF

Johann Strauss Waltzes and Overtures / Barenboim Chicago Symphony

Tchaikovsky 1812 Overture/ Romeo and Juliet / Royal Liverpool Philharmonic

Beethoven Symphonies 2 & 4 -Gunter Wand / N.German Symphony Orch.

Peter, Paul, and Mary – Best of 10 years together -vinyl recording

Ann Murray Greatest Hits

PRICING:

Eclipse 8 speaker cable,
2.5 meter pair \$1800.00

Eclipse 8 interconnects,
1.0 meter pair \$450.00

Electra 7 power cords
3 meters..... \$480.00

Gold Starlight 8-75-ohm Coax cable
1meter \$500.00

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