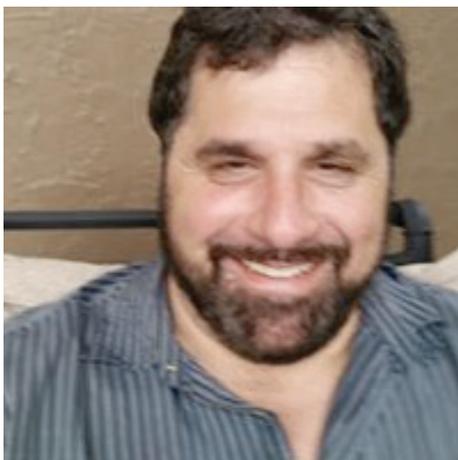


Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet Cables – Turn Up The Quiet!

by Mike Girardi



Some two and a half years ago, I evaluated a series of Ethernet cables and the Uptone Audio JS-2 Linear Power Supply (here). One of the Ethernet cables included in the cable shoot out was the Wireworld Platinum Starlight Cat8 Ethernet. During the evaluation of the Wireworld Platinum Starlight Cat8 Ethernet cables, it was determined that despite its many strengths, its only weakness was more of a system matching issue with my SET amplifiers (I later discovered, it turned out to be a system-related noise issue). After making many significant AC power improvements, which included replacing an

underpowered Square D AC load center with a Cutler-Hammer AC load center, eliminating certain types of breakers, and upgrading from an aluminum load center ground plane to a copper-plated silver ground plane, I decided to reinsert the Wireworld Platinum Starlight Cat8 Ethernet in my system. Immediately, I determined that the system matching issue no longer existed, and Wireworld Platinum Starlight Cat8 Ethernet bested my previous reference at 3x the cost. The Wireworld Platinum Starlight Cat8 Ethernet had all of the strengths of my earlier reference. However, it was still less colored, more detailed, and projected musical images deeper and broader into my listening room. I reported my findings to Larry Smith, Wireworld's National Sales Manager. Larry responded that Wireworld had improved the dielectric shield on all Ethernet cables and that a new reference product known as the Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet was available. This new

reference Ethernet cable is the subject of the review.

Addressing the Ethernet connection correctly is often overlooked in many digital-based server applications. Most streaming occurs with the UDP/IP protocol, where bits aren't error-checked or resent. Although the Ethernet connection between digital components is known to have a robust protocol, there is still the timing of the departure and arrival of packets of data and the jitter/RFI/EMI within the cable itself. "Even Ethernet connections, which are perfectly reliable when saving files, tend to degrade the fidelity of streaming music and video in comparison to a local file source." "People don't realize how



much musical detail is being lost by their Ethernet connections until they compare their network sound to an internal drive or USB stick,” states Wireworld designer David Salz. “These cables (Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet) isolate network noise to minimize that loss and provide sound quality that approaches the clarity of a local solid-state drive.”

The new Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet, Wireworld’s reference ethernet cable, utilizes higher density triple-layer shields and a quieter Composilex 3 insulation dielectric (the previous model employed Composilex 2 insulation dielectric), which is said to have a more significant impact on noise isolation as the cable length increases. The Composilex 3 was found to better address internally generated ‘Triboelectric noise’ that, when heard, masks musical detail. The Platinum Starlight 8 is a triple-shielded layer flat conductor design with 23 gauge OCC-7N Solid Silver conductors that also provides excellent flexibility. The flat style yields a wide band that splits the eight ethernet wires into two groups of four. The patented “Tite-Shield” design utilized in these cables places the conductors in parallel, with each of the four pairs isolated from the others by dense triple-layer shields. No other Ethernet cable on the market is designed like this.

An Ethernet Cable Without Equal

My reviewing system includes the Uptone JS-2 Linear Power Supply for Qnap TS-251+NAS drive, Ayon Audio S-5 Network Player/Preamplifier, Ayon Audio Odin III Build 4 amplifier fitted Siemens signal tubes, Tidal Audio Impact, PranaFidelity Vayus loudspeakers, SOtM dBCL-CAT7 Special Edition Ethernet cable/filter block, SR Galileo UEF Ethernet, SR Galileo UEF speaker cables, interconnects, and SX AC power cables, SR PowerCell 12 UEF, SR UEF Black outlets, SR HFTs, SR Active SE Grounding Block SE and UDG cables, SR Black Box, SR MiG 2.0 isolation footers, and PerfectPath Technologies Gate. My PranaFidelity Vayus loudspeakers are located 40” from the front wall, 6.5’ apart center to center, with the listening position eight feet from the front baffle, which approximates the Cardas Audio speaker set-up guide recommendations. My listening area is 14.5’ wide and has a 9’ ceiling, and has an open back wall to 1500 sq ft of first-floor living area.

Waltz for Debby (Riverside), another hidden gem in my jazz recording collection, is a live album by pianist and composer Bill Evans and his trio, featuring bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian. Recorded at the Village Vanguard in 1961, shortly before Scott LaFaro’s death, Waltz for Debbie is the second album issued from

that historic session and the final one from that legendary trio. Evans chose the material here, and, possibly, in some unconscious way, revealed on these sessions - and the two following LaFaro’s death (Moonbeams and How My Heart Sings!) - a different side of his musical personality that had never been displayed on his earlier solo recordings or during his tenures with Miles Davis and George Russell. “There is a kind of impressionistic construction to his harmonic architecture that plays off the middle registers and goes deeper into its sonances to set into motion numerous melodic fragments simultaneously. The rhythmic intensity that he displayed as a sideman is evident here in “Milestones,” with its muscular shifting time signature and those large, flatted ninths with the right hand. The trio’s most impressive interplay is in “My Romance,” after Evans’ opening moments introducing the changes.

Here Motian’s brushwork is delicate, flighty, and elegant, and LaFaro controls the dynamic of the tune with his light as a feather pizzicato work and makes Evans’ deeply emotional statements swing effortlessly. Of the many recordings Evans issued, the two Vanguard dates and Explorations are the ultimate expressions of his legendary trio”. What stood out after for me after swapping in the Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet was how music flowed



so effortlessly, full of life, highly resolving, and grain-free. When the piano appears at the start of the track, the midrange and high-frequencies' clarity was reproduced with a lifelike dynamic range, accurate tonal balance, and a 3D holographic image. With the Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet's lower noise floor, all instruments' macro and micro dynamics were more accurately

reproduced, better focused, and exhibited more extraordinary texture. I also appreciated how the piano appeared in the background while having a distinct separation within the soundscape. Upgrading the insulation dielectric on this cable allowed me to finally hear the music of high precision, utterly free of white noise distortion and signal compression.



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I recently discovered an album composed by Herbie

Mitchell, who delivers a gorgeously sensual vocal on "The Man I Love," then provides an airy, worldly take on "Summertime." Stevie Wonder's unmistakable harmonica complements Mitchell's singing on "Summertime" and shares lead instrument space with his own voice on the W.C. Handy classic "St. Louis Blues." Jazzman extraordinaire Wayne Shorter smokes a solo spot on Duke Ellington's "Cotton Tail" and

carves out some space for his soprano saxophone in the midst of "Summertime." Gershwin's wonderful, extended "Lullaby" finds Hancock teamed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, as does an attractive arrangement of a "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra" by Maurice Ravel, whose jazz influence can be heard on the piece. "From beautiful to funky, percussive to melodic,

improvisational to tightly arranged, Hancock and cohorts take a wondrous journey through the music and world of Gershwin." The Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet better captured the ensemble's scale precisely as it was recorded on the cut "Lullaby" compared to the previous model of this cable. The blackness of the acoustical space between the instruments and the clarity of each instrument was breathtaking in such a way you

would not guess that was in the original recording. One of the most significant aspects of the Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet that resonated with me was the silence between notes that inspired further investigation. In comparison, all of these strengths mentioned above were not displayed to this extent with my current digital reference or the preceding model of the Wireworld Platinum Starlight.

Convincingly, the noise

floor was significantly reduced while I marveled at how much musical detail that was previously obscured by noise was now exposed. The increased dynamics and ability to communicate the recording's emotional context was readily apparent with the Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet cables. The greater complexity

of the micro-dynamic shadings that were more easily discerned brought the music to life when playing the album *Quality of Silence* by Steve Davis (DMP). The greater resolution across the full frequency spectrum was brought on by swapping the Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet cable models. During the review, it was

validated that a longer Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet cable had a greater impact (i.e., noise cancellation effect) as compared to a shorter cable. In terms of musicality, a 2m cable was preferred as compared to a 1m cable. One caveat, if there's a weakness in your upstream digital source, this cable will expose it.

CONCLUSION

This Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet has been a revelation in my system. It just gets out of the way of the music while not imparting any of its own flavors. The Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet is the State of Art in terms of digital packet signal transmission and delivers high performance to price comparison. My new reference.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Cost:

Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet 0.5m, \$550

Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet 1.0m, \$850

Wireworld Platinum Starlight 8 Twinax Ethernet 2.0m, \$1450

MANUFACTURER INFORMATION

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Mike's Associated Equipment

Digital Front End

Ayon Audio S-5 Network Player/
Preamplifier • Qnap TS-251+8GB
NAS drive • Uptone Audio JS-2
Power Supply • Uptone Audio
EtherRegen

Amplification

Ayon Audio Odin SET stereo
amplifier III Build 4 • Tidal Audio
Impact stereo amplifier

Loudspeakers

PranaFidelity Vayu(s) loudspeakers

Cabling

Synergistic Research Galileo
UEF speaker cables and jumper
• Synergistic Research Galileo
UEF interconnect • Synergistic
Research Galileo UEF ac power
cords, digital and analog •
Synergistic Research Galileo UEF
Ethernet • Synergistic Research
Atmosphere High Definition
Grounding cables x 14

Accessories

Synergistic Research PowerCell
12 UEF • Synergistic Research
Atmosphere XL and ATM •
Synergistic Research Tranquility
Base UEF x 2 • Synergistic
Research HFTs x 38 • Synergistic
Research FEQ • Synergistic
Research Active Grounding
Block SE • Synergistic Research
Black Box • Perfect Path
Technologies Gate • Perfect Path
Technologies Omega Mats •
LessLoss Blackbody ambient field
conditioner x 2 • Custom-built
maple wood rack with stainless
steel support rod, sleeves, and
cones • Marigo Labs Window
Tuning Dots • Herbie's Audio Lab
Preamp Ultrasonic tube dampers
• Synergistic Research UEF Black
duplexes • Synergistic Research
Black fuses • Oyaide WPC-Z
aluminum mounting frame and
carbon fiber faceplates • Two
dedicated 20 amp AC lines using
cryo treated Romex