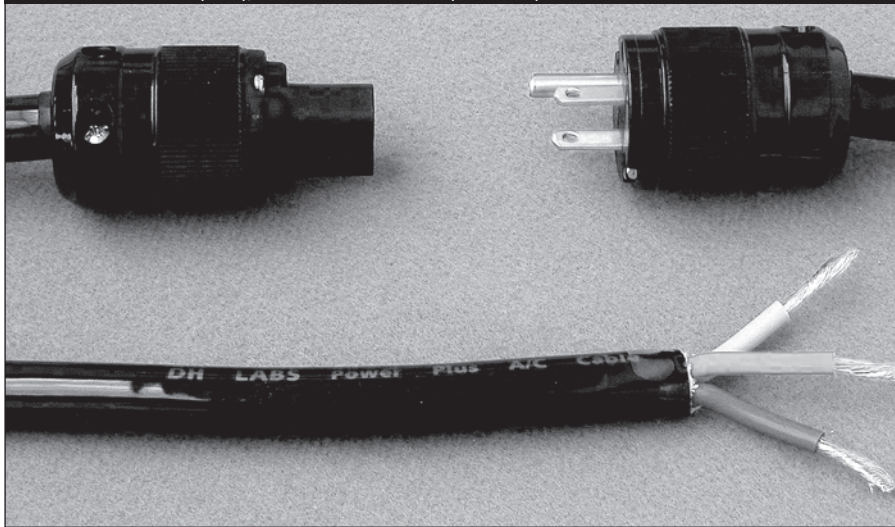


Product Review

New D.H. Labs Cables

By Gary Galo, Regular Contributor

PHOTO 1: D.H. LABS' NEW POWER PLUS AC CABLE FITTED WITH WATTGATE IEC-320I AND 5266I CONNECTORS (TOP), AND IN BULK FORM (BOTTOM).



D.H. Labs Power Plus AC Cable; Pro Studio Interconnect Cable; High Copper Alloy Ultimate RCA Connector; Pure Silver Hookup Wire. D.H. Labs, 612 N. Orange Ave., Suite A-2; Jupiter, FL 33458; 561-745-6406; www.silversonic.com. Power Plus—\$6/ft. bulk or \$176 for 1 meter with AC connectors; Pro Studio—\$7.95/ft. bulk; Ultimate RCA Connector—\$16 ea.; Pure Silver Hookup Wire, 18AWG—\$6.95/ft., 23AWG—\$5.95/ft. Available from Parts Connexion (www.partsconnexion.com) and Welborne Labs (www.welbornelabs.com).

Over the past few years, D.H. Labs has emerged as a leader in high-performance audio cables, and their broad selection of products now ranges from the very affordable to the *ne plus ultra*. D.H. Labs has recently introduced several new products that reflect their commitment to high value, and that are sure to be of interest to DIY audiophiles.

POWER PLUS

Their new Power Plus AC Cable (*Photo 1*) is a 3-conductor cable manufactured with 12AWG stranded high purity OFC copper. The Power Plus AC Cable fea-

tures low series resistance and inductance, and the three conductors are combined in a geometry that is said to reduce noise from outside sources, including the cable's own magnetic field.

I have two mono amplifiers in my system and didn't have enough connectors to make up two power cables, so I lent one to my audiophile friend Lorelei Murdie, whose ears I find extremely reliable. She and her husband now own a powerhouse NAD S200 power amplifier, so I figured that the robust D.H. Labs cable would have a good workout in their system. Their S200—much to my chagrin—was factory-supplied with a 16AWG power cord, which is woefully inadequate for a 225W/channel amplifier. At my suggestion they replaced this cable with a 14AWG power cord, and they were very pleased with the improvement in dynamics and smoothness.

Lorelei listens primarily to classical music, always at reasonable levels, and their Vandersteen 2Ci loudspeakers are a relatively easy load to drive, so she was skeptical about whether or not the Power Plus could further improve the system, beyond the generic

14AWG cord. She was pleasantly surprised by the Power Plus cable. The most impressive difference was improved smoothness in the treble region—the Power Plus took another layer of edge off her system. She also reported that the bass was tighter, and the treble cleaner and more detailed. Overall, she found the reproduction more musically pleasing to the ear than the generic 14AWG cord.

The Power Plus is available in bulk, or fitted with premium-quality AC connectors (IEC on the component end). If you buy it bulk, D.H. Labs recommends the Wattgate AC plugs sold by Parts Connexion and Welborne Labs. I am told that the Wattgate plugs are made by Marinco. Parts Express (www.partsexpress.com) also carries a full line of Wattgate and Marinco AC connectors.

PRO STUDIO

You may recall my review of D.H. Labs Air Matrix Interconnect cable (*aX 10/02*). The Air Matrix is available only as an assembled cable fitted with their Ultimate RCA Connectors. Many do-it-yourselfers have asked D.H. Labs to make a bulk cable better than their basic BL-1, and the Pro Studio is intended to fill that void (*Photo 2*). The Pro Studio cable uses D.H. Labs' proprietary 22AWG surface-treated, silver-plated, oxygen-free copper conductors, with a low-density Teflon dielectric.

The dielectric is similar to the one in the Air Matrix cable. With two conductors plus a heavy, 95% coverage braided shield, you can use the Pro Studio for both balanced and unbalanced interconnects. The capacitance is very low 12pF/ft (39pF/meter) balanced and 21pF/ft (69pF/meter) unbalanced.

Most high-end RCA connectors are made from brass or a brass alloy plated with gold. D.H. Labs' Ultimate RCA Connector is manufactured from D.H.

PHOTO 2: D.H. LABS' ULTIMATE RCA CONNECTORS (TOP), PRO STUDIOS DIY INTERCONNECT (CENTER), AND PURE SILVER HOOKUP WIRE (BOTTOM).

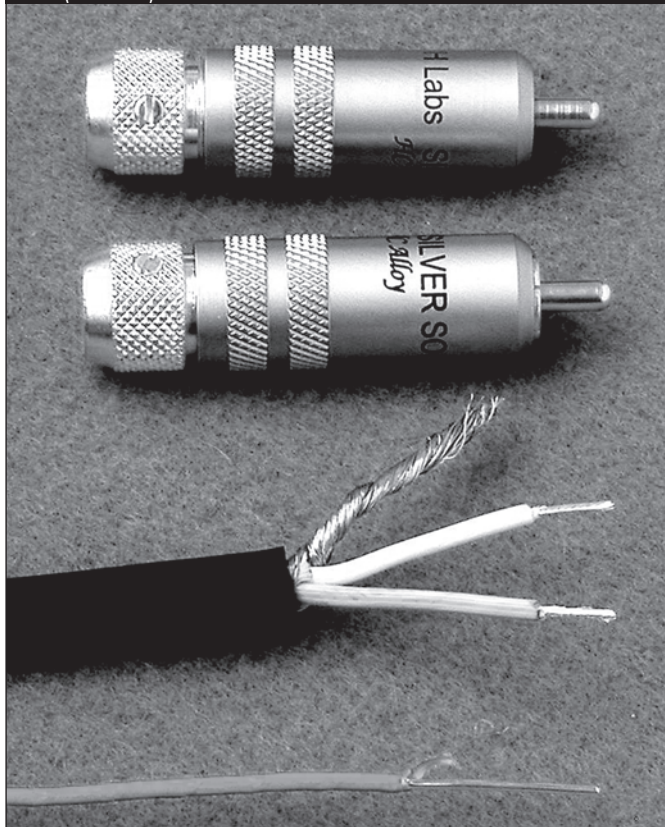
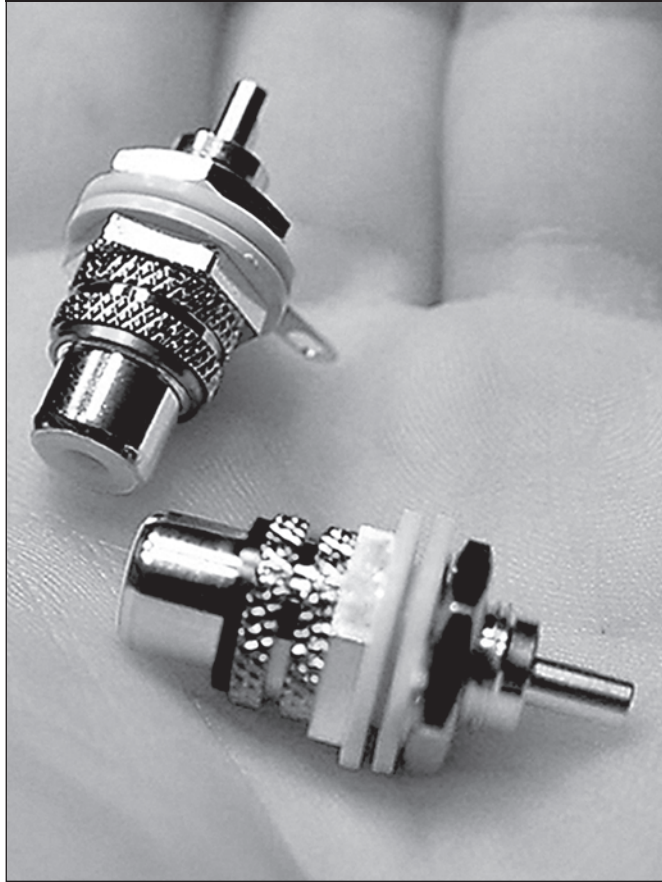


PHOTO 3: D.H. LABS' NEW RCA JACKS.



Labs' High Copper Alloy, which contains 99% pure copper with a gold finish of exceptionally high quality (*Photo 2*). The manufacturer offers concrete data showing the superior electrical conductivity of this connector compared to those of several of their high-end competitors, all of which use far less pure copper in their connectors. The outer cover on this connector is threaded onto the connector itself, forming a clamping system that makes a very tight ground connection.

The Pro Studio cable is a winner fitted with the Ultimate RCA Connector. This cable is much more than a halfway point between the BL-1 and the Air Matrix. Subjectively, the Pro Studio/Ultimate RCA combination brings you at least 75% of the way toward the exceptional performance of the Air Matrix, for considerably less money. It is clean, transparent, incredibly smooth and detailed, and availability in bulk form will make it a winner with DIY audiophiles.

The Ultimate RCA Connector is simply the finest I have used. In bulk form, the cable and connectors will cost you about \$110 for a 1 meter pair, and will

compete sonically with assembled cables costing several times more. Although I haven't tried it, D.H. Labs says that the Pro Studio also makes an excellent phono interconnect.

Just as I completed this review, D.H. Labs sent me a preliminary photo of a new, chassis-mount RCA jack, designed to interface with their Ultimate RCA Connector (*Photo 3*). This connector appears to be outside mount, and an outside nut is an integral part of the connector, which should make mounting very easy. The new connector should be available by the time you read this.

If you are looking for a premium hookup wire for your next audio project, D.H. Labs has introduced a line of Pure Silver Hookup wire designed to compete with the finest on the market (*Photo 2*). Available in 18AWG and 23AWG sizes, the conductor is 99.99% pure long grain silver covered with an air-spaced Teflon tape. Parts Connexion is carrying this wire under the D.H. Labs name, and Welborne Labs is selling it as their "Special Purchase Teflon Insulated Hookup Wire." Try this wire in your next preamp project—you won't be disappointed. aX

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