



DNM STEREO SOLID CORE PRECISION SPEAKER CABLE £18/M

When the original DNM Solid Core speaker cable was launched, the world was getting excited by talk of the new Bond movie, 'A View to a Kill', while girls swooned over the best boy band of the moment, Duran Duran. Thinking about things in these terms shows you how old the product is, and how so many things have moved on in life as well as hi-fi since 1984...

Still, DNM cable has endured. Despite being one of the oldest designs around (surely only QED 79-Strand precedes it?), people still know and love what this wire does to an audio signal, or – more accurately – doesn't do. And what it doesn't do is to rob music of its essential speed and power, as DNM cable – in true eighties 'flat earth' style – captures the music's attack transients like few (if any) other cables.

In the intervening years, the cable market has moved on apace. Indeed, you could almost say it's been the most successful of all hi-fi product lines. DAT recorders, DCC and MiniDisc have all come and gone, but the demand for high quality cables remains. Profits are big, marketing is all-important, and magazines get money from ad spend. So where does this leave DNM?

Well, given that Denis Morecroft is not one of the world's greatest self publicists, and nor does he have big bucks to hire sharp-suited PR people, it leaves him selling a small but steady amount of the cable to those in the know, simply on the grounds of performance.

In the past, I've used it in my system to get very specific results. I know what DNM Solid Core does and what it doesn't do, and if it's suitable for the job in hand, there

are few cables that come close. If you have a slow, stodgy and musically unengaging system which is possibly a little on the warm side, then this is your cable.

The new DNM Stereo cable takes everything from the 1985 design and builds on it. As per the original, its object is to provide a stable magnetic performance along with a balanced capacitance, inductance and resistance. It is 18.7mm wide and 2.2mm thick, which is about the same size as the original DNM Solid Core, but within this is a dual cable assembly that can be used to connect a pair of stereo speakers, or to bi-wire. It comes as a long ribbon, which you can 'unzip' to provide single mono wires or not (as the case may be) to give bi-wire.

As with the original Solid Core, it is directional. If you buy the terminated version, don't expect chintzy plugs that look like 'male jewellery' – the plugs are plastic bodied, as per DNM's philosophy. "Using a cable so carefully designed to minimise magnetic effects with a large chunk of metal soldered on the end would be self-defeating", says Denis Morecroft.

Driven by a selection of transistor power amps, the new DNM cable proved a fascinating counterpoint to the Black Rhodium Tango (£15/m) that I normally use. The Tango has proved a tremendously impressive product, one that's stood up to cables at five times the price, but it couldn't beat the DNM Stereo – merely offering a 'different' presentation. The DNM cable had an obviously faster, tighter, tauter and grippier nature that

revelled in electronic dance music such as Kraftwerk's 'Tour de France' outing, and also the eighties power-pop of Blondie's 'Atomic'. The Stereo cable brought tremendous urgency to the music, pushing it along apace and giving a thrilling, seat of the pants listening experience.

Interestingly, this is pretty much what the older Solid Core had done too, but the new Stereo cable added a good deal of extra transparency, giving DNM solid core more universal appeal. I found it tonally a little starker than the more euphonic, cossetting nature of Black Rhodium's Tango, but the difference was less pronounced than before. Indeed, Stereo gave an impressively clean and neutral rendition of Neil Young's 'Heart of Gold', proving surprisingly smooth and devoid of edge. By comparison, Tango was just a tad softer, warmer and cloudier.

A truly interesting and impressive product then, and one well worth consideration at a relatively modest £18/m. Most people should find it far more accessible than the original DNM Solid Core, while some folk with some systems and certain tastes will regard it as the best cable ever made. **DP**

[Contact: DNM Design on +44 (0)1480 457989 or click on www.dnm.co.uk.]

THE THEORY

DNM's Denis Morecroft believes that "once the cross-sectional area of a cable exceeds a certain size, things begin to go badly wrong with the sound. Complex interactions between the cable and the magnetic fields generated by transmission of an electrical signal cause circulating eddy currents, which also generate significant magnetic fields that oppose the original signal - the result is distortion. In short - smaller cross-sectional area gives greater clarity". He argues that amplifiers sound better when driving through a resistive or inductive load, undermining the low resistance of big, thick multistrand cables. "Large diameter high-capacitance cables connect the amplifier's sensitive feedback control system to a short circuit, a type of load that invariably worsens the amplifiers sound quality", he has said. DNM claim that their smaller diameter cables with higher resistance and inductance help to isolate the amplifier's feedback control system, improving clarity throughout the frequency range.

soundbites