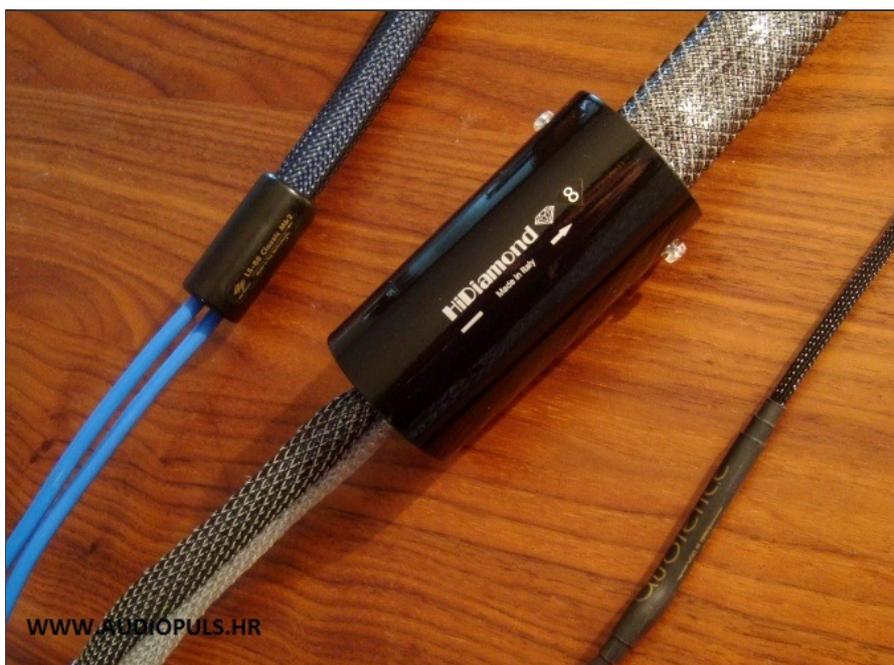


GROUP TEST OF 2.000 EUR SPEAKER CABLES



text and photo: Marko Pecotic, November 2013

This article is about speaker cables that cost 2.000 EUR, so if you are looking for speaker cables in this price range this review might perhaps be of help to you. Cables reviewed here are: the american Audience Au24 E, the italian HiDiamond Diamond 8 and the dutch Siltech LS-88 MK2 Classic. I wish I could have reviewed combinations of cables, ie. Siltech interconnect and speaker cable VS. Audience interconnect and speaker cable VS. HiDiamond interconnect and speaker cable. Cable manufacturers often tune up their cables (for example, they'll tune up their interconnect to sound detailed and their speaker cable to sound warm), and you'll often get the best results if you wire up a whole system with one cable brand. But reviewing cable combinations was not an option because, as a result of our independent writing, we have no access to croatian audio shops and audio equipment. So we have to find alternative ways to get to the equipment - Audience was borrowed from a friend, Siltech too, HiDiamond was borrowed from the manufacturer.

Cable break-in is an important part of this story. I left the cables break-in for about 250 hours (around ten days and nights). Break-in is important, eg. I've listened to Au24 E at the beginning of this test and it sounded unconvincing, undefined, with no bass. With break-in, Au24 E it sounded different.

I've listened to these cables in two Hi-Fi systems to get as many various impressions. My prior criteria for this test was to find cables that belong to the same price range. At the local dealer in Croatia ([Planet audio](#)) the AU24 E costs 1.700 EUR/2x2m and 1.870 EUR/2x2.4m. HiDiamond does not have a dealer in Croatia, in the neighbourhood (a serbian dealer [AV Impuls](#)) it costs 1.700 EUR/2x2m and 2.050 EUR/2x3m. Siltech does not have a dealer in Croatia nowadays, three years ago there was a dealer and the retail price for LS-88 MK2 Classic was 1.950 EUR/2x2m.

Audience Au24 E

Audience Au24 E is the successor of Au24. I personally know two people who claim that Au24 E sounds significantly better and different than its predecessor (I have never listened to Au24). On the outside, Au24 and Au24 E look exactly the same and they both have the same conductors and are made of the same materials. The manufacturer states that Au24 E went through "the undisclosed treatment and a much more involved and apparently labor-intensive process is used to attach the terminations to the cable" – whatever that is suppose to mean. They also claim that Au24 E version has a different conductivity. Owners of Au24 cables can upgrade to Au24 E – just send your cable back to the factory and you will get it back as an Au24 E (they will charge you this upgrade).

Au24 E is constructed of copper conductors (*Ohno continuous cast single crystal copper*) with polypropylene insulation and cross-linked polyethylene jacket material. The review sample came terminated with spades on the speaker end (Cardas) and with bananas on the amp side.

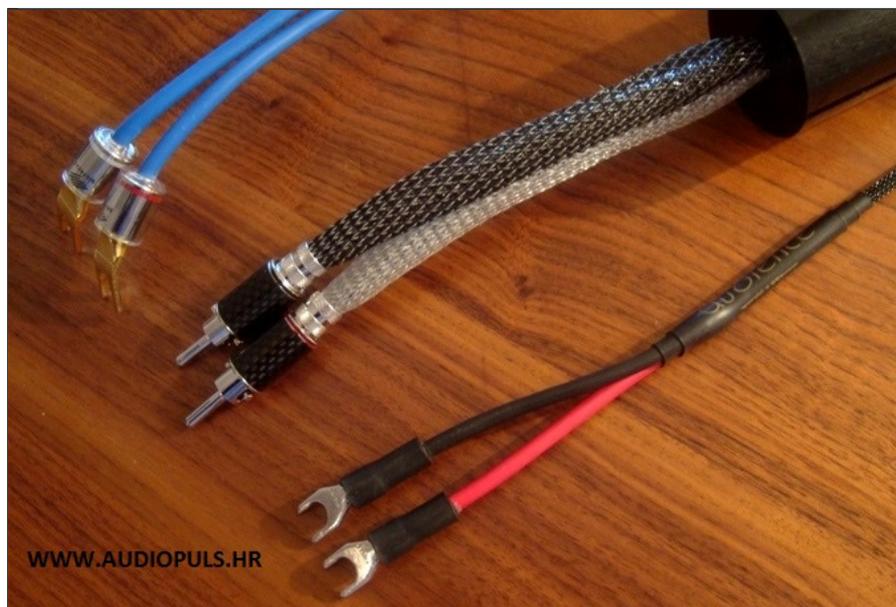
HiDiamond Diamond 8

It is constructed of copper conductors through the patented 4VRC technology, meaning the copper is being cooked for times at different temperatures in order to obtain a reduction of inductance, capacitance and resistance. Each cable has 12 conductors, the declared resistance is 7,98 Ohm/km, capacity is max 55 Pf/m. Isolator is XLPE (type of polyethylene) which is, as the manufacturer claims, much better than Teflon. The review sample came terminated with rhodium bananas.

Siltech LS-88 Classic mk2

The conductors are an alloy of gold and silver. The purpose of gold (24K) which is added to silver is to fill the gaps between silver crystals and thereby improve, in its words, "micro-conductivity." In terms of geometry, Siltech believes that when conductors are at 90 degrees to each other, the magnetic field collapses. To facilitate this, Siltech winds the cable so tightly that the angle of approach between the conductors is very close to 90 degrees. The review sample came terminated with spades.

A few words about visual impressions. HiDiamond is drop-dead gorgeous and is 27 mm thick. Siltech does not look that good and is 16 mm thick. Anorexic Audience (only 4 mm thick) looks like an intruder on this test. Since this is not a *Miss of the World* contest, the thickness of a cable may not mean a thing. What matters is the end result - the sound.



Sound quality

Siltech is a cable that will fit nicely inside a system that's neutral or bright, Audience and HiDiamond both have a tonally natural and neutral sound; bass and dynamics are Siltech's two main characteristics; Siltech gives a clear insight into all the things that are happening on the stage, but Audience and HiDiamond just do it better; Siltech is a cable that's oriented towards lower parts of the frequency range, Audience and HiDiamond have a sound that's oriented towards all parts of the frequency range; Siltech's instruments are full-bodied, but - in general - Siltech lacks more definition and clarity; Siltech's mid/treble area lacks more air, definition, clarity and breath, it has lacklustre details; Audience and HiDiamond will give you the *Someone's opened the window* impression, they'll both bring lots of precise details and lots

of air to the system, and will also give a sharp clear insight into all the things that are happening on the stage; in general, Siltech is softer and calmer in its' sound presentation, while Audience and HiDiamond are more brutal (in a positive way); Siltech has a slower timing compared to Audience and HiDiamond (although it would be wrong to claim that Siltech's timing is dead); Siltech's vocals (particular male) are big, full, but also lacklustred if compared to Audience and HiDiamond; Siltech itself is not a cable without details, but the details are presented in a completely different way compared to Audience and HiDiamond, Siltech's details are a bit hidden, they have a different colour – that can particular be heard with vocals; Siltech has great dynamics, but does not have the sparkle; Audience and HiDiamond both have a transparent, big, fresh, detailed (not irritaing or bright – unless the recording itself is bright), very rich and alive, almost concert sound; both Audience and HiDiamond have that I'm there feeling; HiDiamond has the richest sound, the richest soundstage; Siltech's hit on a snare drum sounds good, snare drum has a nice body, however it lacks more sustain, details, breath, small micro dynamics; both Audience and HiDiamond have great vocals and palpable instruments, but Diamond 8 is in general better; bass region is excellent with both Audience and HiDiamond (deep, tight, tonally correct, fast, with appropriate volume, well defined), but HiDiamond's bass goes deeper and it's more *tough as nails*; both Audience and HiDiamond are excellent cables, but Diamond 8 is in overal better: vocals are bigger and fuller with more resonance, sustain in bass is better, snare drum has a larger body, dynamic abilities are better, the sound is more energetic, guitar strings sound just better.

Conclusion and final ranking

None of these cables should be described as bad. All cables on this test are more-less excellent. The differencies in sound between them can easily be heard.

The final ranking goes like this:

1st place - HiDiamond Diamond 8, score 9/10

2nd place - Audience Au24 E, score 8/10

3rd place - Siltech LS-88 Classic mkII, score 7/10

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