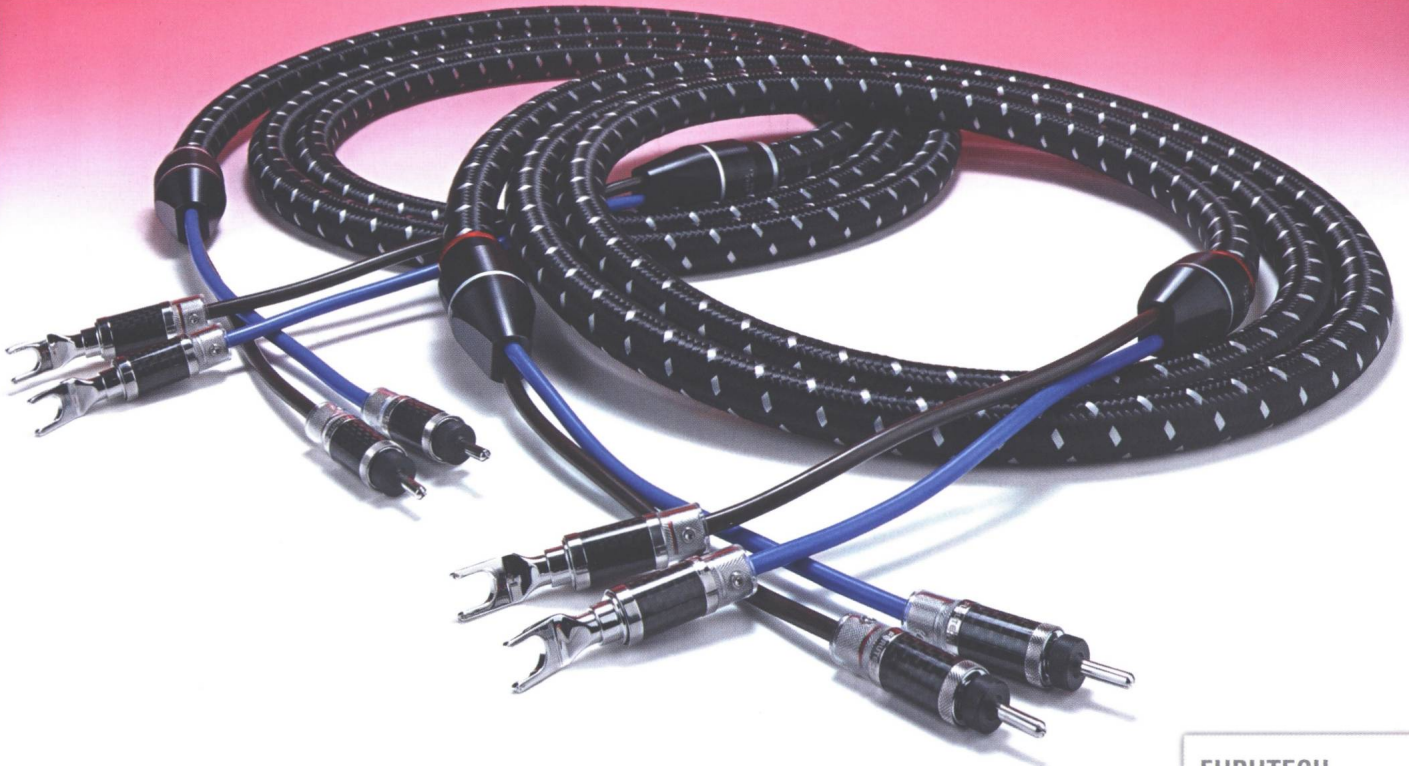


Magic rope trick

Martin Pipe samples the virtues of some pricey Furutech speaker cables.



Let us not beat about the bush. These beautifully-finished but, at £342 a metre, expensive DSS-4.1 speaker cables from Furutech are big. Really big. With an outer diameter of no less than 19mm, we're talking bigness of towing-boats proportions. And they're heavy.

What makes them so big and heavy is what makes them so expensive. The Tokyo firm kicks off proceedings with the finest copper it can lay hands on. The conductors that carry the precious audio signals are made of "DUCC Ultra Crystallized High Purity Copper...supplied and regulated under strict quality control by Mitsubishi Materials Industries".

The Mitsubishi manufacturing-process "optimally-aligns the crystals while reducing the number of crystal-grain boundaries, resulting in a tremendously-efficient conductor". Furutech refines the high-grade metal with its proprietary "Alpha Super Cryogenic and Demagnetizing treatment" and the end-product is "Alpha OCC". All clever stuff.

At the centre of each independent signal-carrying conductor is a 0.8mm-diameter black polyethylene core. Furutech's 'wonder-copper' is then applied in no fewer than three layers, each of which is wound in a slightly different way. These constructions are wrapped in two insulating layers, one fluoropolymer and the other colour-coded polyethylene.

Dealers can fit any choice of Furutech-designed spade terminals and 4mm banana plugs. Our three-metre review samples were fitted with £130-per-pair CF-201(R) spades intended to mate with an amplifier's output connectors and CF-202(R) banana plugs – £172 per pair – at the speaker end. Robust and good-looking, they feature rhodium-plated alpha pure-copper centre conductors, composite "damping rings" and non-magnetic stainless-steel/carbon-fibre body construction designed with resilience and stability in mind.

I used an Arcam A49 and Cambridge Edge W amplifiers with them. Completing my signal chain

was a Cambridge Edge NQ, the W's matching streamer, fed a diet of 320kbps AAC digital radio, CD rips and hi-res material.

Compared to my existing cables orchestral material, even from Radio 3 broadcasts, sounded noticeably more open and cleaner. With well recorded rock material improved treble clarity was evident.

Bass tautness and definition, though, proved to be even greater beneficiaries.

These refinements were noted with upper mid-range hi-fi; I wonder what might be achievable with truly high-end kit; the review samples do, after all, cost more than two grand for a three-metre stereo pair.

CONCLUSION

These sturdy and well-engineered Japanese cables turned in the performance improvements that are to be expected, given their sheer expense. They are very heavy, and their size might make them difficult to conceal. It's just as well, then, that they look as good as they sound.

**FURUTECH
DSS-4.1
£342 A METRE
PLUS
TERMINATIONS:
£130 PER PAIR FOR
CF-201(R) SPADES
AND £172 PER
PAIR FOR CF-202(R)
BANANA PLUGS.**



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VERDICT

The DSS-4.1 cables must surely rank among the world's finest – necessary for super-fi.

FOR

- astonishing attention to detail
- improve clarity, resolution and low-end solidity
- beautiful construction

AGAINST

- very heavy

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