

All power to you!

Martin Pipe tries out Isotek's no-expense-spared EVO3 Ascension mains cable – price £2750!

There is considerable interest in well-engineered mains cables, despite the simple fact that hundreds of miles of utilitarian (i.e. non-audiophile!) cable and transformers may lurk between the power station and your mains outlets. As with mains regeneration, though, there can be an audible effect. Some of these mains cables, which are designed to replace the cheap ones bundled with your equipment, are fairly inexpensive.

Not so the purple-coloured Isotek EVO3 Ascension, a 2-metre length of which will set you back no less than £2,750. It's terminated with a chunky bespoke Isotek IEC connector at one end, and an equally chunky Furutech 13-amp mains plug at the other (ours was fitted with what looks like a standard Bussmann 13A ceramic fuse). The 18mm-thick PVC-jacketed cable in between looks man enough to carry your entire street's current! According to Isotek, each of the three individually-insulated conductors within – earth, live and neutral – are pretty-sophisticated, as one might expect for the outlay...

They are “deep cryogenically-treated silver-plated Ohno continuous-cast copper conductors” of 4 square-millimetre cross-section, “wrapped in a dielectric of air, with partial FEP (fluorinated ethylene propylene, or ‘Teflon’) contact”. A further “extruded FEP sleeve seals the construction; each of these

individual conductor assemblies being wrapped in Mylar, with a further OFC (oxygen-free copper) shield, before being given a slight rotational twist with FEP tubes of air”. All clever stuff; Ohno, in case you're wondering, is the name of the Japanese professor who worked out how to manufacture the incredibly-expensive copper wire at the Ascension's heart.

And how does it perform? I used the highest-quality gear at my disposal – the Auralic G2 Aries transport, feeding a Prism Callia DAC and Focal Utopia headphones, plus revealing Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII loudspeakers. And yes, this cable does yield some subtle improvements when it comes to the timing and ‘space’ of hi-res audiophile material (among them superlative Blue Coast recordings like Emily Palen's *Light in the Fracture*, and Garrett Brennan's *Alta Powder Day*).

Listening very carefully I could hear the difference between plugging

the Ascension directly into a wall socket, and via an adaptor or distribution board (direct is better, natch). Likewise, when using the cable for the DAC or the transport; the former seemed to yield the most benefit.

To be honest, to truly make the most of the Isotek EVO3 Ascension you'd perhaps need equipment more revealing – giant electrostatics? – than I had at my disposal. And with that proviso in mind, I'd suggest to try before buying; it's state-of-the-art cable for state-of-the-art equipment.



**ISOTEK EVO3
ASCENSION**
£2,750



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

What a cable! What a price!

FOR

Perceptible improvements in resolution, space and timing.

AGAINST

Very heavy
Very expensive!

Isotek
www.isoteksystems.com