

# Excellent XTs

QED's new XT25 budget loudspeaker cables offer outstanding value for money, says Jon Myles.

**D**uring the past 12 months I've had the pleasure of listening to a number of excellent loudspeaker cables from the likes of Chord, Tellurium Q, Black Rhodium and Atlas.

Another stand-out has been QED's flagship Supremus – a cable that managed to match more expensive rivals. It still costs £150 per metre so isn't in everyone's price range. Luckily, Woking-based QED has a number of less expensive alternatives in its range, including the new XT25.

Priced at £70 for a 3 metre pair, and cold-welded with QED's Airloc 4mm banana plugs or spades, this loudspeaker cable falls very much into the budget mid-range category. Despite that it boasts many features trickled down from QED's higher ranges.

Chief of these is the use of a combination of the company's X-Tube and Aircore technologies – where the 99.999% oxygen-free copper conductors are arranged around a central hollow insulating rod.

A low-loss, low-density

polyethylene (LDPE) dielectric is also employed alongside careful spacing of the conductors to give low capacitance – which QED says has been preferred during repeated listening tests.

An aluminium Mylar wrap is used to shield the cables from EMI/RFI interference – an increasing problem from the use of wi-fi and smart devices within the home.

Despite all this the XT25 is surprisingly thin and pliant – meaning it is easy to route even in the tightest of spaces. The Airloc plugs are also well-made, fitting securely into an amplifier's outputs.

## SOUND QUALITY

Plugged into a Naim Atom streamer/amplifier the QEDs present a nicely balanced and well-detailed sound. On The Smiths' 'How Soon Is Now' they did an excellent job of conveying Johnny Marr's layered guitar parts. Morrissey's vocals sounded expressively emotional but were also intelligible and with nice solidity.

Moving to The Killers and their 'Hot Fuss' CD, bass guitar was tight and tuneful, never sounding boomy even through a revealing pair of PMC loudspeakers. Up top cymbals had

a nice zing, making them stand out – but they were neither bright nor unpleasant.

These cables won't unearth all the detail that more expensive cables can manage (QED's more expensive XT40s, for example, will give you a bit more) but they are a definite upgrade on basic 'speaker leads and match or better almost anything else at this price.

Listening to Steve Earle's 'Washington Square Serenade' the XT25s captured the bite of the guitars, as well as the rasp of Earle's voice. They also made the music hang together in a toe-tapping fashion that had me listening to the CD all the way from beginning to end. And that's just what a good 'speaker cable should do.

## CONCLUSION

The XT25 offers a fine upgrade to basic loudspeaker cables – sounding more authoritative, detailed and open than its price would suggest. Slot this into a budget or mid-priced system and the resultant improvement in quality cannot help but make you smile. At £70 for a terminated 3 metre pair they offer remarkable value for money.

**QED XT25 £70  
(PER TERMINATED  
3M PAIR)**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst  
the best.**

**VALUE - keenly priced.**

### VERDICT

A loudspeaker cable that offers performance well above its price. A well-balanced sound with excellent detail.

### FOR

- detailed
- well balanced
- expressive
- price

### AGAINST

- nothing

Armour Home Electronics  
[www.qed.co.uk](http://www.qed.co.uk)

