



Crystal Temptation , an Ultimate Dream :

Absolute Dream from Crystal Cable

All audiophiles understand, because of the relatively small customer size, competitions are intense in the audio market; especially after the financial turmoil, the purchasing power has dropped sharply, and the competitions have turned white-hot. Manufacturers would try every possible way to enhance quality and image of their products, at the same time, they would keep a close watch at the products and trends of their competitors (especially those of similar grades and prices), so that they wouldn't lag behind others, even if they can't take the lead. But, if there is a Hi End audio company with two brand names, each of which has similar policy in their designs and products, and eventually they become each other's competitor. Does it sound incredible?

SILVER-CABLE COUPLE LEADING THE TREND

Is there such a company in the real world? Yes, there is. Observant readers may have an answer popped up in their minds..... Right! The company is the IAH (International Audio Holding BV), the two brand names are Siltech and Crystal Cable.

Our readers know well that I have been a fan of the silver cable expert, Siltech, for many years. From the G5 silver-gold metallurgy (a special technique to fill in the spaces between the silver crystals with gold) series 10 years ago up to the Double Crown mono-crystal silver series today, I have stuck to Siltech all the way. Taking the opportunity of the Munich Hi-End Show in 2009, I visited the 2 directors of Siltech and Crystal Cable, Edwin and Gabi van der Kley-Rijnveld, and also the factory of IAH in Arnhem, Holland, and so I have a thorough understanding about the ins and outs of the two world-renowned Hi End silver cable brand names. Under the same roof of IAH, the development, design and production of Siltech and Crystal Cable are led by the husband and wife respectively. Needless to say, the two brands have very close relationship. But, strangely, although the basic design and outlook of the two are quite different (Siltech cables are balanced, larger in diameter, while Crystal Cables are coaxial, thinner and more flexible), the conductors use the same gold-silver metallurgy, only that the making of Siltech cables is more complicated, and so the price is a bit higher than Crystal Cable, their targets should be the same consumer group. But in the past few years (Crystal Cable was established in 2004), sales of Siltech cables in Hi-end has

kept rising, but so has Crystal Cable; they have a steady growth in more than 40 countries. Both are highly appraised by audio magazines all over the world. One couple, two different cables, both well-received in Hi-End cables is quite extraordinary.

SHINE OF GOLD

As I have mentioned before, Crystal Cable and Siltech are using the same silver-gold metallurgy for their cable conductors; but because of the difference in their production methods, whenever there is a higher quality silver conductor being developed, it is always adopted by Siltech first. Only after some time when Siltech has released a new series, Crystal Cable will launch its new product. So, when Siltech launched its Crown series made by mono-crystal silver, Crystal Cable fans were expecting the same material from Gabi. But until last year, when Siltech again launched a new Double Crown series by dual mono-crystal silver, there was still no action from Crystal Cable, and that made fans puzzled. In fact, Crystal Cable has been working on a new series, putting in some innovation designs. In this year's Munich Hi-End Show, in IAH's show room, Gabi finally showed Crystal Cable's new flagship cable series made from mono-crystal silver conductors---the Absolute Dream.

In terms of cable diameters, Absolute Dream is the biggest member of the Crystal Cable family. Beneath the transparent sleeve, there is a touch of gold in the silver braid, and that looks beautiful. All connectors (XLR, speaker spades or power plugs and sockets) are the highest grade carbon fibre from Furutech. There is a silvery metal barrel along the cable, with the serial number engraved on a golden strip. On speaker cables, there is also





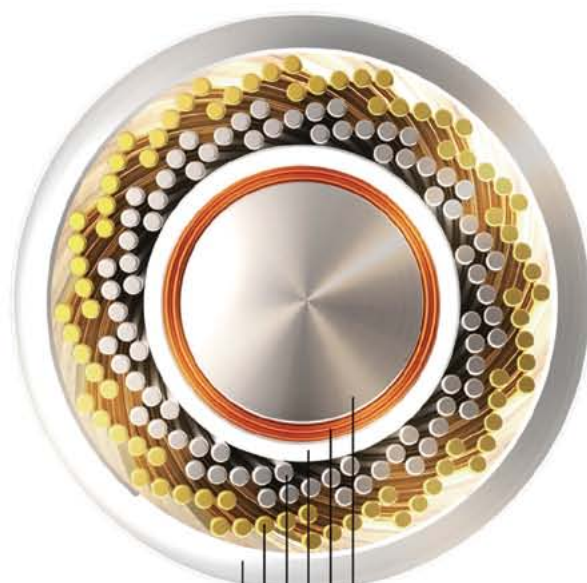
a barrel fixed on both ends where the positive and negative cables split apart. Just from the look you can tell this cable is by no means cheap.

Gabi is proud and full of confidence with the Absolute Dream. When she presented this cable to me in the show room, she promised its performance would refresh my listening experience. She offered to send me one pair for audition when they were ready for the market. And naturally, I was more than happy to accept the offer.

PURE MONO-CRYSTAL CONDUCTOR CONSTRUCTION

By the end of May, I received a set of Absolute Dream cables including power cords, balanced interconnects and speaker cables, enough for serving all my gears. Before exploring the performance of the Absolute Dream, let's take a look at its construction, which the IAH design team has taken more than 30 months to accomplish.

Basically, all Absolute Dream cables adopt the same design---in the coaxial construction, the core conductors are single-strand mono-crystal silver, wrapped helically with double layer Kapton and Teflon materials from Dupont. There are two layers of shielding; the inner layer consists of 80 silver-plated mono-crystal copper braiding, the outer layer is of 80 gold-plated mono-crystal silver braiding. The double-braid shielding functions as high as 99.99%. Lastly, the combination is protected by a transparent sleeve to complete one perfect coaxial cable. Four such coaxes are then twisted in Star Quad form to make one Crystal Cable.



Absolute Dream Structure

- Monocrystal silver core
- Dual Kapton layer
- PEEK
- Silver plated monocrystal copper shield
- Gold plated monocrystal silver shield
- Transparent sleeve

For balanced interconnects, 2 cores for positive, 2 for negative, all 4 braids are ground. The XLR plug is Furutech's highest grade CF-601MR + CF-602 (Alpha Rhodium/Beryllium copper, Carbon fiber /stainless steel housing). For speaker cables, 2 (core + braid) for positive and 2 for negative; spades are Furutech's top of the line CF-201R (Alpha Rhodium-plated pure copper spade, Carbon fiber/stainless steel housing). Since the power cables are used for a.c. power, with a maximum

rating of 6000V, the cable construction is a bit different; 2 cores for line, 2 for neutral, and the 4 braids are for ground. The connectors are again Furutech's highest grade FI-50M and FI-50 (Alpha Rhodium-plated pure copper, Carbon fiber/stainless steel housing).

POWER OF THE GROUND CABLE

From the construction of the Absolute Dream we can see how much has been done to make it perfect. The 4 cores of mono-crystal silver are the same as Siltech Double Crown. The ground and braid of Siltech use only silver-plated copper, while Absolute Dream's double braids use very expensive silver-plated mono-crystal copper and gold-plated mono-crystal silver, the cost is much higher. As a matter of fact, cable manufacturers have paid all attentions and sources on the cable cores which are responsible for transmitting signals, and because they think the ground wire and the braids are only for safety purposes or for shielding RF and magnetic distortion, they have nothing to do with the signal transmitting, high grade copper for them is more than enough. But after many testing, the IAH team discovers that, by improving the ground or shielding conductors and their purity, the distortion of a signal cable can be reduced by 30-70%. That is why Siltech and Crystal Cable have produced independent ground cables series of similar function, they can be linked up to any interconnects equipped with Zero Ohm Link and The Bridge. These ground cables are made of G6, G7 or mono-crystal silver conductors. They are connected to the connector (RCA or XLR) with mono-crystal pure silver micro HPSR high speed filter (>20GHz), so that there will be no phase shift in any frequency range. After connecting these additional



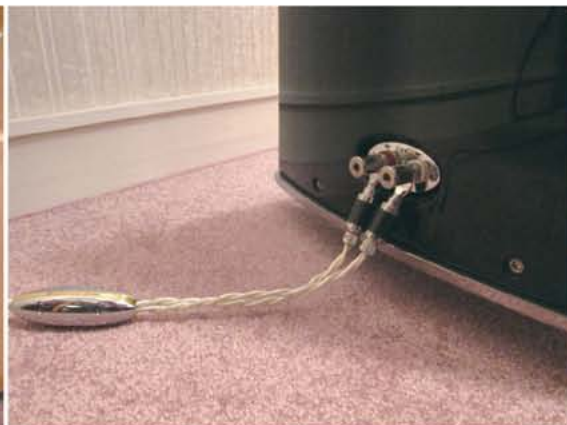
△ Crystal Bridge Diamond XLR

ground wires, the noise level will become quieter, clearer basses, higher dynamics, the advancement is obvious. The IAH team has also added The Bridge technology in the Absolute Dream, but since the core material is already mono-crystal silver, and any conductor over 300mm will have the same properties as HPSR, and by increasing the size of the braids, which are also made of mono-crystal copper/silver, so that the impedance and distortion of the ground wire or the signal feedback loop are reduced to a negligible value, the same result can be attained. (I and many of my fellow reviewers are using the Tripoint Audio and Entreq ground box, of course we know how much a good grounding can benefit to audio performance.)

USER-FRIENDLY

Besides myself, I had also invited Patrick Lee to my place to experience the charm of the Absolute Dream. Although Edwin and Gabi had emphasized many times, that mono-crystal silver and SATT treated silver-gold cables needed no burn-in, my experience told me, after burning in the Absolute Dream with burn-in device and music respectively for 48 hours, there was audible progress.

I changed the power cords of the Esoteric P-01 vU SACD/CD transport and the Audio Note Gaku-On mono Amplifiers with the Absolute Dream; and then the D-01 vU mono DAC and Boulder 2008 phono stage → Audio Note M10 Signature preamplifier → power amplifiers → Ktema loudspeakers were replaced with Absolute Dream interconnects and speaker cables respectively (Basically, I have changed the cables of the entire combination from Siltech Double Crown to Absolute Dream). Although Absolute Dream cables are the thickest members of Crystal Cable, when compared with Siltech, they are still relatively thin. Moreover,





they can keep their directions and angles after being twisted, for people of my size who have to struggle with plugging cables in and out within the limited space behind the Hi Fi rack, this was really convenient and user-friendly.

FASCINATING!

During the period of about 1 month with the Absolute Dream, I spent almost every day listening to all kinds of music, to appreciate the beauty of the cables which Gabi was so proud of.

Perhaps because of their mono-crystal silver cores were of equal capacity, both Absolute Dream and the Double Crown were appealing, and have a sense of nobleness. The noise background of Absolute Dream was even darker, sound was bright and open, with super high analytical power revealing the smallest details; basses were tight and powerful with high velocity. All these brought new impact to me.

My readers knew well that the software I most frequently listened to recently was "The Perfect

Sound 2012". "Grand March", a scene from "Aida" by the Italian composer Verdi, was a mighty and majestic march describing the triumphant Egyptian troop returning to their motherland after defeating the Ethiopian, with all people taking to the street to give them the warmest welcome. Arthur Fiedler's interpretation with the Boston Pops were one of audiophiles' favourite versions, and Absolute Dream gave full play to it. The exploding metallic sound of the brasses, the magnificent percussions from the cymbals and bass drums were exciting and brilliant, the unique tone of individual instrument, the full overtones and reverbs, and the meticulous playing of the orchestra brought out the spectacular scene surprisingly vivid, the listening pleasure was immense.

BEGUILING AND RELAXED

The high frequencies of Absolute Dream were delicate with high density, very transparent, never too bright and thin. On the contrary, because of its high density, the dynamics and micro-dynamics were extremely fine, and that brought up the balance of the entire frequency range and the smoothness of the music. In the popular Baroque piece, Pachelbel's "Canon", there were only 8 bass notes accompanying 3 melodic lines which were played in rounds. The music was simple yet never monotonous. When replayed with the Absolute Dream, from the beginning when the Double basses played the 8 notes, and then joined by violins, violas and cellos successively, wow! The scents of wood and rosin were really stimulus! The music was beguiling and relaxed, and I was totally immersed in the sea of strings. Yet, the unique character of each individual instrument, the expressions and details, the positions of the players and the hall acoustics were accurately reproduced with ease. This was really a demonstration of both musicality and hi-fidelity.

CONCLUSION

Being a user of the Siltech Double Crown cables, this set of Absolute Dream cables, which is made with the same mono-crystal silver, still brought me surprises! They possess the same brilliant sound effect as the Double Crown, only that their tone colour tend to be on the brighter side, while the Double Crown is more sumptuous and steady. But except for the power cord which has to be specially made to a maximum rating of 6000V, and so its price is close to the Double Crown, the rest of the line, interconnects and speaker cables are 30% cheaper! Crystal Cable fans should be happy to give Gabi a couple of 'Like's!

(A private tip from Gabi: if you want to have a taste of the Absolute Dream, begin with the power cords!) 音

A beautiful Cable that can't be unplugged

Crystal Cable

The **Absolute Dream** Series

試聽心得
EQUIPMENT REVIEW

Patrick Lee
(Lee388)

The cable I am going to introduce is the Absolute Dream, top series from Crystal Cable. I had experienced their charms in the Audioteknik's audition room and in Lincoln's place respectively, and they were really something! I dared not bring them home at first, because I knew once you had plugged in, it was very difficult to unplug! But in order to write a thorough review, I had to take the risk!

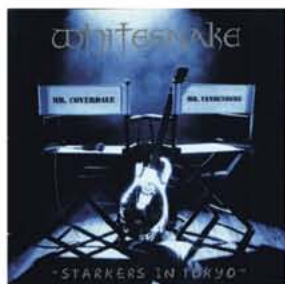
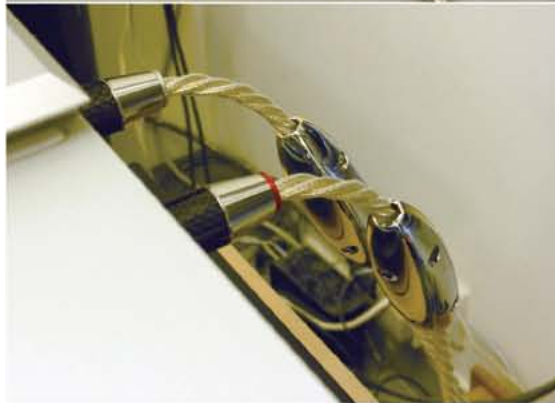
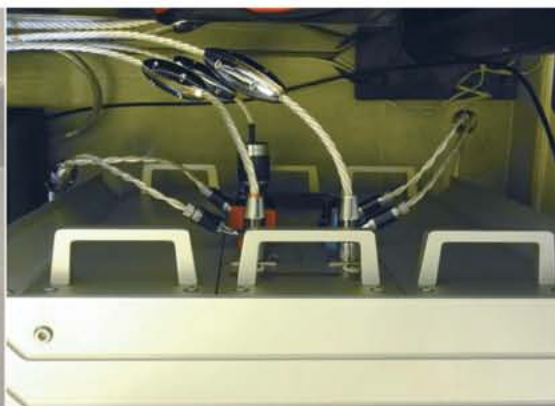
When I had finally brought these Absolute Dream cables home, which included power cord, interconnects and speaker cables, I found they were quite heavy, although they were not as thick as pythons. When I looked carefully, I found each of them was made up of 4 individual cables, no wonder! I remembered Lincoln once said, "If a silver cable is not to sound thin, it must be made to the same full material as a copper one." I had already experienced what this meant in Audioteknik's audition room and in Lincoln's place, I only understood deeper in my own place.

VERY BALANCED IN THE SYSTEM

I used the whole set in my system: 1 power cord for the Burmester 909 power amplifier; 2 interconnects from Burmester 069 CD player to Burmester 808 MKV preamplifier and from preamplifier to 909 power amplifier; and lastly, the speaker cables to my Dynaudio Sapphire. When all were set, the sound from the whole system was very balanced, and that showed Absolute Dream cables were balanced, no boosting in any frequency range to please particular listeners.

I first listened to "Heart First" of the American jazz singer, Halie Loren. She was well-received in Japan before being noticed in the US, and that proved she's really talented. Halie not only sang wonderfully, she also wrote some of the songs in the CD, showing her talents. With Absolute Dream cables, Halie's voice was more focused, with higher density. What I heard was a sweet, gentle and appealing voice, but never too sweet and heavy. Listening to the Double bass, every pluck had a distinctive line, and went deep down; every note of the piano was clear and sharp, the positioning on the whole was superb.

Crystal Cable had always been known to have good performance in the high frequency range, Absolute Dream was no exception. Its sumptuous, noble trebles were never tiring, especially when listening to guitars. In track 10 of the album "Starkers in Tokyo" by Whitesnake, when the vocal came, I could immediately felt the spaciousness of the venue. The accompanying guitar was transparent, there was nothing missed in the vibrations of the strings, and the resonance of the sound box was very attractive and like real. David Coverdale's voice was very involved, full of charm and passion; in addition, his low and melancholy singing touched every heart. With such performance, Absolute Dream was worth every cent.



SEVERE TEST ON BASS

Some of my friends doubted Absolute Dream on its bass performance. As I have mentioned before, Absolute Dream was made with the best of materials, and it had very good balance over the whole audio frequency range, that included the low frequencies. I played an organ CD by J.S. Bach to give Absolute Dream a real hard test. When the music started, I felt the power cord attached to the 909 amplifier had an uninterrupted power, even when playing continuous heavy bass, 909 was still full of energy, the result was magnificent. When I turned up the volume, the bass rushed to my pants like waves, exhilarating! After listening to this CD, I could assure anybody that the bass performance of Absolute Dream was comparable to, if not better than, any Hi End cables. I also tried the power cord on my CD player and preamplifier; it showed the same high performance. That proved Absolute Dream power cord was alright with any component of the system.

Lastly, Helene Grimaud's "Resonances" was not a so called audiophile disc, it had not much artificial processing in the recording. In order to play it well, the system must be well balanced. From this CD, I found replaying piano was also the strength of Absolute Dream, perhaps that was due to the sumptuous, noble and crystal-like trebles, so that the piano sounded specially transparent and charming. It could show the properties of Helene's playing which was relaxed, unconstrained. It would never bring a sense of tension to the audience. Of course, besides the treble, bass was very important for a piano. In track 5, Liszt's "Sonata in B minor", just listen to the first few chords, if Absolute Dream couldn't master the quality of the bass, there was no need to continue. But Absolute Dream had no flaw in this 30-minute masterpiece, the music flowed smoothly, and it seemed to end in the blink of an eye.

CONCLUSION

I could find only one shortcoming from Absolute Dream in my system: it's far from affordable for most people including me; but this was an advantage for me. Absolute Dream's enchanting sound was unforgettable, but when I was reminded of its price, I could only be temporally amnesic. Finally, I would like to advise all audiophile friends, unless you have a very strong willpower, don't ever try to plug in any of these cables; once plugged in, they would be extremely difficult to unplug! 音