

EQUIPMENT REVIEW

JPS Superconductor 3 interconnects and speaker cables

by Alan Sircom



I reviewed JPS Aluminata cable in Issue 68, saying reviews of the other cables in the series would follow 'soon'. In reviewer terms, 'soon' can mean anything from 'tomorrow' to 'around the time of the next ice age'. I left things hanging about Superconductor 3 interconnects, speaker leads and power cords. Now's the time to redress the balance.

The Superconductor 3 range comprises a wine red inflexible interconnect and thick loudspeaker cables in a black braid. Both come in wooden boxes; one the size of a dozen LPs, the other about the size of a BMX wheel. The speaker cable is surprisingly weighty. Both use JPS's distinctive copper/aluminium Alumiloy conductors (a whopping 16.8mm² conductor in the speaker cable), laid out in a quad formation with kapton dielectrics for the interconnect cables. These are shielded in a flexible topology than previous JPS designs, although 'flexible' isn't the first word that springs to mind here. Locking WBTs complete the package.

Like Aluminata before it, Superconductor 3 brings sophistication and refinement to the sound. It also seems to order the bass better than most, giving those bottom two octaves more clarity and definition in the well-used 'getting out the way of the music'. It also brings out the spaces round the notes better than many designs, a little like listening to BB King at his finest. In a world where everything is trying to shout everything else down, a little bit of musical economy comes as a welcome relief.

Unlike Aluminata however, this isn't a snap decision cable. It's the sort of thing that you live with for a while. Taking it out the system is the key thing, because that process seems to come with a profound sense of loss. In fairness, those who listen to Aluminata for some time, experience an even more profound sense of loss on its removal, too.

If you like what SC3 does – and I suspect the majority of people will – you'll love the Aluminata even more for the same things. But here's the strange thing; those who were not convinced by Aluminata first time round, after hearing Superconductor 3 quickly revised their position when they heard it a second time. Perhaps for the nay-sayers, Aluminata is too much of a good thing at first, and they need to be

eased into the JPS way of doing things.

There's no such thing as a cable panacea, but JPS gets closer than many, blending as it does the refinement of an Audio Note or a Cardas with the energy of a Crystal, Chord or Kimber. It's the cable for those who find some cables too 'zingy' and some too 'moody'. So, perhaps it isn't 'Marmite' after all... it's the 'Goldilocks' cable. And while the long-suffering Mrs S. isn't too happy with having the tail end of the listening room filled with python-like speaker cables (again), I'm loving what they do.

One final point – the power cords. Designed for specific tasks, the interesting thing is they work at those specific tasks (one – The Digital AC - for digital products like CD players and DACs, one – The Analog AC - for phono stages and pres and one – The Power AC – for integrations and power amps), and don't sound anywhere near as good when they swap roles. Now that really does warrant further investigation... 'soon'. +

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

JPS Labs SuperConductor 3 Interconnect Cable

Price: £795 for a 1m pair

JPS Labs SuperConductor 3 loudspeaker Cable

Price: £1,995 for a 6ft pair

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