Tellurium Q Ultra Silver II

The Ultra Silver II cables are part of Tellurium Q's Silver family of cables. This is one of their highest-fidelity lines



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TELLURIUM Q ULTRA SILVER II

by Simon Wilce
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The great thing about Tellurium Q is that Geoff Merrigan, MD, will tell you absolutely nothing about what he is doing either with or in his cables. He and his team just focus on listening, leveraging their experience, and optimising their products—full stop. What he and they are doing inside their shielding, as far as he is concerned, is the secret sauce. The proof, as Geoff would certainly say, is in the listening.



Design

There is little to report here on the design aspirations of these loudspeaker cables. The Ultra Silver II cables are part of Tellurium Q's Silver family of cables. This is their highest fidelity line, which is suggested to be the most revealing range of cables (Statement II stands aside from this concept as the reference product). The Silver family builds on the Black family, a more natural range of products for use in a balanced system like my old Naim Classic system (though it still has excellent resolution). Tellurium Q has this familial structure to offer the listener a choice of products based on your equipment and listening preferences. This is a key part of their design process that works well.



Ultra Silver II loudspeaker cable shielding close-up

Quality

These loudspeaker cables, like the Ultra Black II, are flat in appearance and wonderfully understated. There is a firm plastic feel to the outside and the cables are heavy, and I mean notably heavy.

The banana plug endings (spades are an option) are heavily shrink-wrapped with the logo and directional indications. The cables are boxed beautifully with a reassuring quality assurance signature card inside.

Specification

Price £612.96/m to order (loudspeaker cable)
Price £1123.24/m, to order (XLR)

Full details are on the Tellurium Q site. Scan the QR codes

TQ USII XLR Link

TQ USII Loudspeaker Link

> ...THE CABLES ARE HEAVY, AND I MEAN NOTABLY HEAVY.

Performance

Review Equipment

I'm using an Old Classic Naim system with an XPS power supply to a NAC-N 272 streaming preamplifier. This Old Classic Naim preamplifier has a few upgrades, and usually the power amplifier has an Ultra Black II cable to my old KEF R700s. The KEFs are still on point with plenty of detail, though they show their age, particularly with the upgraded Avondale NAP 250 power amplifier (see below). I'm also using my Reference System (below) with the Ultra Silver II XLR cables.

Physically

I have run the cable in for a good few days, exercising them before critical review with several runs of a ripped version of the excellent Tellurium Q Burn-in CD (don't tell Geoff I ripped it to my server; the fact is I use it constantly).

The shielding, or sheath, does feel a fraction looser than the Ultra Black II. In terms of pliability, they are sufficiently 'flexible' to take a curved 90-degree turn around my fireplace flagstones without being obtrusive; however, they are notably firmer than the Ultra Black II cables, holding their weight when held up.



Ultra Silver II loudspeaker cable and Ultra Black II underneath have different weights.

Avondale Amplification

I'm using an Avondale Naim NAP 250 in place of my Old Classic NAP 250. It is a bit like having an AMG Mercedes; the same car, just boosted up by AMG. In this case, Les Wolstenholme at Avondale is doing the upgrading. The outcome is a NAP 250 on steroids. It is livelier, punchier, more dynamic, and a Naim game changer. My review is coming, but this is at least as good as a New Naim Classic NAP 250, at not the same price.

After a large amount of cable swapping (and accidentally swapping left/right a couple of times), I find the Ultra Silver II loudspeaker cable clearly more revealing, particularly in the bass/sub-bass and vocal midrange; I'm just getting more; this is reassuring on two levels, firstly the KEFs are still good enough, and secondly, I can hear it. For example, with Lana Del Rey's *A&W* (Qobuz FLAC 24 bit, 48kHz) at around 5'30", I get a more significant draft of air in the room through the loudspeaker, a larger part of this is a function of the amplifier, but the cable feels like it is enabling the current flow to the driver. How do I 'feel' this? It is just evident. The dynamic choral jump in Mitski's *Bug Like an Angel* (Qobuz FLAC 24 bit, 96kHz) at 52" jumps out from the loudspeakers; there's a clarity in this song that is captivating, engaging and addictive (see what I did there?).

Regular readers will know intimately about Ryan Adams' *Oh My Sweet Carolina* (Qobuz FLAC 24 bit, 44.1kHz). The captivating duet sequence with Emmylou Harris is beautifully separated here and delivered with clarity and emotion, which is more forward in my view with this cable.

One issue with these cables is that if you take a poor recording, say Meat Loaf's *Bat Outta Hell* (meant to be Qobuz 24 bit!, 192kHz!), it can sound mind-numbingly awful since these cables are filtering out nothing. At this point, switch to Ben Howard's *Every Kingdom* and love yourself!



Ultra Silver II XLR from T+A preamplifier

> I'M JUST GETTING MORE.... HOW DO I 'FEEL' THIS? IT IS JUST EVIDENT.

Ultra Silver II XLR with HF&MS Reference System

I also have the Ultra Silver II XLR cables. Having committed myself to the Naim system, I had no need for the XLRs; however, knowing the power of Tellurium Q, they needed to be listened to.

This separate system is used for most critical reviewing, comprising an Auralic Aries streaming transport, a Melco-based library and a switch with ADOT optical isolation from the router. The preamplifier is usually a passive Moor Amps Pre (XLR) into the Moor Amps Angel 6 power amplifier driving Kudos Audio 505 loudspeakers. On this occasion, I have an on-loan T+A PSD 3100 HV preamplifier, which I am using mainly because the DAC in it is very special indeed (I think it is the same DAC preparation as the 'Outstanding' T+A DAC 200).

Oh, My Sweet Carolina is so captivating with a crushingly low noise floor in this Reference System, and the space in the aforementioned duet is as good as it can be, even ahead of the Ultra Black II. Fortunately, cable swapping is a more precise science with XLR cables, which is easier to achieve. Lana Del Rey's Auralic streamed *A&W* has a more controlled feel in this system with a much more transparent feel over the Naim Amplification (which is why it is Reference). Here, swapping between Black and Silver is just about as evident aurally as black and light grey (we'll say light grey to avoid those night-and-day statements). The bass response has more control with the isobaric delivery from the 505s, though I have few complaints with the Ultra Black II XLR delivery.

I could not resist taking the Ultra Silver II loudspeaker cable to the Reference System for an afternoon just to enjoy the premium sound. The experience reminded me why I do this website as a passion.

Thoughts

This is very interesting. I prefer the Ultra Black IIs in my Old Classic Naim system. However, the Ultra Silver II is clearly less restrictive and lets more through. It is profoundly cleaner and frees up the KEFs in a way they've not been before, save for a brief spell with the athletic Moor Amps Angel 6, with the same Ultra Black II cables. This conclusion could be a function of the Naim Electronics' signature I'm using while noting the familial lines discussed in the Design section. However, it is helpful to understand what a good system can do and where to target improvements if you have the budget. The Ultra Silver II in the right system can be a real improvement, such as my reference system featuring the Titans and the Moor Amps Angel 6.

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Overall

These Ultra Silver II cables will depend on your budget, listening preferences, and your system. If you want premium, unrestricted delivery of everything in the waveform, these cables could be the system upgrade you're after. They are an upgrade if you consider the comparative costs of updating, say, a DAC, a server, or a streamer.



Ultra Silver II banana plugs (spades are available)

Love

- Transparency
- Firm cable termination



Like

- Quality assured
- Clear direction

Wish

- Nothing is cheap when it is this good.