

REVIEW

WIRE ON WIRE 660 SPEAKER CABLES



Hifi Pig review of the latest cable from innovative UK company Wire On Wire. This time it is their 660 speaker cable that has, to say the least, an interesting, and configurable, geometry. Contains a video of the owner of Wire On Wire explaining the concept behind his cables.

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Regular Hifi Pig readers may recall that Hifi Pig reviewed the [Wire On Wire interconnects](#) a while ago and so we now move on to their Experience 660s loudspeaker cables.

CONSTRUCTION

As the loudspeaker cable's construction follows along a similar path to their interconnects, I have copied some paragraphs from the interconnect review:

At first look it looks like something a drunk spider has fabricated after a generous glug of some home brew with what appears at first sight to be a haphazard weave pattern, but look past that and you find a cable that obviously has great attention paid to its construction. Anyone can do a simple three strand plait weave blindfolded, but this cable is a lot more complex than that and according to the designer Chris Bell it took an inordinate amount of research and experiment into arriving at this final design. The resultant geometry is called "REDpur" and I understand that a patent has been applied for and pending (GB1602578.5).

Most of us will (hopefully) know that resistance, capacitance and inductance are all traits inherent in any speaker or interconnect cable and whilst resistance remains fairly constant dependent on wire metallurgy, tamper with capacitance parameters and inductance falls victim to that and vice versa. Some designers rely on those two parameters to shape the final sound but it is fixed once the cable is manufactured into the final product. Wire On Wire decided that there was an opportunity to manipulate these parameters in their favour and also allow the end user to do likewise by a simple yet ingenious method of adding or subtracting spacers to vary the geometry of the weave

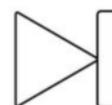
pattern. These spacers are not introduced randomly, they are allocated at predetermined intervals or "nodes" along the length of the cable. A well laid out handbook explains where within the cable length the spacers should be introduced (or subtracted) as required.

Wire On Wire have chosen silver plated copper conductors despite this configuration having a reputation for having a sharp edge treble performance, but that is mostly earned by cheap silver plated copper wires and many leading cable manufacturers also use this combination of silver plating and copper core to good effect, so that reputation is rather too generalist, applied with a very broad brush and perhaps not applicable to all silver plated copper wires. Although not actually measured, the conductors themselves appear to be of different diameters, some with a red outer insulating jacket to preserve polarity for termination, which can be either 4mm banana plugs or spade terminals. Insulation is by PTFE. The spacers are manufactured from black plastic and appear to be a custom moulding.

SOUND QUALITY

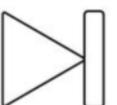
The review sample was received in a "naked" state with no spacers actually installed, with spacers attached by cable ties in the appropriate places to make my life a bit easier for the initial listening tests.

My first impression of them was very good, the sound being evenly balanced throughout the audible spectrum, nothing untoward manifesting itself in the sound, which before any running in period was commendable. Without any instructions to the contrary, I allowed 50 hours of running in time before I commenced the actual evaluation.



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My resident speaker cables are by Studio Connections and the Wire on Wire Experience 660s almost matched them in sound quality, much to my surprise. I then had to ask the question could I wring some more performance from the Experience 660 cables by tailoring the sound with the spacers in situ?

Bearing in mind that other people's results may vary considerably, with many factors to consider like system components and listening preferences to name just two. The best I can therefore achieve is to convey to you the results that I obtained.

Now for some music and into the CD drawer went my reference recording in the shape of Fink's "Wheels Beneath My Feet" live album and that has many cues that puts any hifi components through their paces for me. The first is the ambiances recorded at each venue of Fink's European tour to perform this music selection where each has its own unique reverberation and of course, each audience too has its own signature in the way they cheer and applaud the performance. I would expect to hear each as unique and the Wire On Wire cable performed this with ease, so you could easily tell the capacity of each theatre by that ambiance. Imaging width and depth was very good, with steady instrument placement in the sound-stage. Bass however was just the tiniest fraction behind my resident cable and almost mustered the definition and shape of bass notes the resident cable can portray down in the lowest registers. Mid-band was equally as clear and lucid - male and female voices too for that matter was certainly on a par between the two cables. I went through most of my CD collection over a period of two weeks and then I felt the time was right to introduce the full "spaced" up variant of the Experience 660 speaker cables.

The sound to me was a fair bit away from what I heard from the "naked" cable; what was a sweet and natural sound from the bare cable took on a tiny amount of edginess and that didn't surprise me at all because the Quadral speakers already ran that knife edge of treble detail between just perfect and leaning towards a slight brightness artifact. Very similar results in the mid-band too which I attribute entirely to the Quadral's ability to seek out even the smallest details and inflections. Bass definition and coherence was always right on the mark no matter what spacers were installed. However, Wire On Wire suggest inserting the spacers into nodes 5, 12 and 26, which sure enough produced a marked uplift in image definition and depth.

Thankfully, Wire On Wire thoughtfully provide a handbook that shows how to tune the cable by subtracting and adding their plastic spacers to the cable, the nodes being numbered and counted off from the source end, no matter which way round the cable is initially installed.

CONCLUSION

Wire On Wire's website has an anecdote about Chris Bell's cables which says their product HAS to sound good or the man will be locked in the shed until it does. He obviously has been let out on good behavior.

I recall that the Wire On Wire Experience 680 interconnect I also reviewed sounded at its best in my system without any spacers being added at all in the final analysis. To be honest I didn't altogether relish another review which meant I spent many a long hour putting spacers in and out with the Experience 660s speaker cable, only to find I preferred it best sounding with no spacers at all in the "naked" configuration, like the interconnect. Having such a revealing speaker

used during the evaluation that was already running at peak performance showed up how little change was needed to provoke the sound a bit over the top, which with any other "normal" run of the mill speaker wouldn't exhibit.

I will then sum up this review with the statement that it was a real pleasure to evaluate a cable that actually did what it said on the tin it would do, at least during the time I had them. That increase in image definition and depth was claimed and executed so that is a real milestone in a reviewer's experience of cables and makes worrying about "synergy" almost redundant.

AT A GLANCE

Build Quality: A real tour-de-force in hand-built cable geometry.

Sound Quality: It isn't a static entity like other cables, so it's within your power to achieve the sound you want. Hifi Pig's editor Stuart was very impressed with the WoW demo at the Cranage 2017 hifi show.

Value For Money: Good quality wire hand built with a complex weave pattern from scratch will never be cheap.

Pros: Great sound already and able to be tuned to suit, so what's not to like?

Cons: Cannot think of any. Get them on your audition list, I say.

Price: (2m length pair with 4mm banana plugs) £480.00.

Submitted by email for editing and publication 21st February 2018.

Watch the video of Chris Bell explaining the concept of his cables

