



INNER EAR REPORT

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GutWire Audio Cables Power CLEF AC Cable

Rating: * * * 1/2 / * * * *

Those of you who have followed our reviews will have seen our evaluation of Gutwire's first model, the G Clef, in TIER Vol. 11 #1. This relatively new company, headed by Herbert Wong and Alex Yeung, has developed a line of upscale cables of which the model under review is the latest available. The company will be introducing interconnects and speaker cables in the near future. While there are many newcomers to the industry, few have as interesting a tale as the folks from Gutwire. Their research and development methodology includes a group of audio enthusiasts who's common interest is to help produce products which make an audible difference and accomplish "higher" fidelity. Thus, in an effort to achieve quality, the company relies on both the common criteria of measurements and the critique of the aforementioned group of enthusiasts--the results of old-fashioned listening test.

Appearance:

The Power Clef cable is 1 1/4 inches in diameter with an outer jacket of woven red material. It's terminated with a hospital-grade Hubbell plug on one end and Furutech IEC plug or the Hubbell 20 amp IEC on the other. If you've seen the (smaller) G Clef AC cable, you'll note the family resemblance.

Technology:

This cable is uncommonly thick because it employs three times more material than the G Clef. Quadruple shielding assures the least interaction with all the other con-

necting cables used in an audio system. OFC wiring and gold-plated plugs promise to allow optimal conductivity and minimal wear. As Gutwire's designers are aware of the importance of AC-carrying components, connections are crimped rather than soldered. There is a grounding clip wire which allows the option to ground your components if this is needed. Gutwire encourages its customers to try the cable in both hook-up configurations to evaluate the system--which brings us to ...

The Sound:

We expected to hear a difference when we switched the supplied power cords of our amplifiers with the Power Clef--and we did, of course. However, we still had the earlier sample, the G Clef, in our studio and conducted further listening tests switching back and forth between it and this new Power Clef. Again, the differences were almost as astounding as when we first tested the G Clef. For our tests, we used an OCM 800, a Bryston 8B ST and a (single-ended vacuum tube) Topaz amplifier. The OCM and Bryston--both powerful solid state amplifiers--benefited the most; much more "body" and authority were evident in the all-round sound. The OCM sounded smoother in the midrange frequencies and offered significantly improved bottom end resolution--deep bass. The Bryston delivered seemingly more "bottom end" and less high-frequency severity--smoother at the very top frequencies. The Topaz amp proved to be least affected in its sonics character, but exhibited a subtle improvement in musical "sub-

stance". But we have saved the best for last. All amplifiers delivered an improved sound-stage with enhanced focus, boundaries and "air". These tests were comparison with the common AC cord that comes with all amps is an exercise of futility as the differences are so overwhelmingly conspicuous that even tone-deaf people will hear them. All tests were conducted with the ground connector on and off and only the Topaz registered a sonic advantage with the ground connected.

Synopsis & Commentary:

Well folks, this cable is an outstanding product and should be used with every powerful amplifier rated at 100 watts or more. However, vacuum tube amps at lower power will also display significant improvements. For a few of our listening tests we used a prototype amp made by Weytech Lab which only delivers four watts a channel; the above documented improvements were instantly audible. Gutwire's principles conducted tests of their own and found that the length of the

grounding-clip wire makes a sonic difference; they found that a 43 inch grounding wire offers the best weight and midrange sophistication. They state that longer runs are OK to use but that shorter lengths will impair those properties. It seems that this company has addressed all influencing materials and essential science that directly affects the end result. We think that Gutwire is a well-chosen name as it actually describes the benefits you should expect when you add "guts" to your system.

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