

interview

We sent out the same 20 questions to 50 manufacturers, the following are their responses. The intent of the survey is to address basic questions as to design along with any questions raging on various sites, while minimizing potential chest-thumping and friendly, or unfriendly, bashing of others....

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HiDiamond

Salvatore Filippelli of HiDiamond

by PFO

PFO Why do cables make a difference—interconnects, speaker cables, and power cords?

Salvatore Filippelli Cables are usually considered accessories, but we define them as pieces of apparatus. The reason is simple. To use an example, we try to possess the world's best amplifiers, CD players, and loudspeakers, but when we insert a particular set of cables into the system, we find that they sacrifice 73 percent of the information that arrives at the amplifier from the CD player. Imagine that a million little balls must pass between our pieces of apparatus with remarkable force. The cables act as small funnels, which means that only a small percentage of the little balls pass through the funnels, and that there is a great amount of funnel noise. The better the funnel, the larger the number of balls that can pass through it. The same thing can be said of cables—the better its construction, the better the sonic result.

PFO What about metals—copper versus silver versus gold versus what? How about blends?

SF We mainly use pure copper, but the copper we use differs remarkably from the usual. It comes "cooked" four times, at various temperatures. Each time it is carried to a constant temperature, the copper becomes "cleaned up," and is finally carried to a purity near 100 percent. The temperature of the last "baking" is very close to the melting point of copper, to eliminate the final impurities that are the most difficult to remove. The higher products in our catalog use a mixture of copper and graphite that cancels the noise generated in the cable. This translates to an extremely neutral and musical cable.

PFO What about dielectrics—Teflon™ versus what?

SF We use XLPE as dielectric. For audio uses, this dielectric/insulator has demonstrated 100 times better performance than Teflon™, giving a fantastic linearity to the musical message. The amplitude of the phase is remarkably lowered, and the sound is much better delineated.

PFO What about measurements? What do they tell us? What do they not tell us?

SF Measurements are important to us because good measurements indicate good results in the listening. For example, capacitance expresses the tendency of the dielectric material to store energy when a difference of potential exists between the conductors. It is always better to use low-capacitance cables to allow transmission over longer distances. In practice, the cable can act similarly to a condenser. It creates a low-pass filter that limits the range of useful frequencies. We have measured many of the cables available in the marketplace, and have found that many of them attenuate the high frequencies, giving a dark sound. In order to guarantee that phase differences and the decrease of the frequencies beyond 20 kHz remain within acceptable values, our cables have a passing band near 100 kHz. This is not a common quality.

PFO How important are connectors?

SF Connectors are important because they represent the final parts of a cable. We have seen connectors mark the difference between a good connector and a sufficient one. For this reason, in our better cables we use Bullet™ connectors with custom housings because they create a better transfer and better continuity of the musical message. However, even our more economic cables use the best connectors for the price.

PFO And geometry—ribbon, twisted, braided, spiralled?

SF Our geometries vary. In order to reduce the skin effect, we interlace the conductors, obtaining a partial cancellation effect of the field produced by the two conductors. (Being in phase opposition, the two live electromagnetic fields are cancelled.)

PFO Why shielding? Why not shielding?

SF We prefer to have our cables shielded. The quality of the external shielding is fundamental to the cancellation of the residual electromagnetic field. In the laboratory, we have reproduced the electromagnetic fields that take place in normal conditions, and our cables behave in an absolutely impeccable way. Effective shielding therefore has the merit of rendering our product particularly immune from the noises induced from the outside, and that can generate annoying repercussions in the music. In addition to this, we use massive doses of XLPE insulation and a special configuration within the PVC of a hexagonal cell made of cotton in order to reduce noise.

PFO What about run-in? Why is/isn't it important?

SF Burn-in is fundamental, especially for the cables that use graphite, which need many hours to align the "pins" inside of the cable. Moreover, it takes time for the crystals to polarize, to create less friction to the passage of the current. Graphite cables must be excited for many hours before they can carry out the greatest reduction of the noise generated by the cable. For our cables generally, it takes 40 hours to 100 hours of burn-in.

PFO What about cable lengths? Why are/aren't they important?

SF The length of the cable is a great worry for the audiophile. If you see our technical data, you will understand that we have no problem making cables of long measure that exhibit no loss of performance. Indeed, one of our intentions is that performance does not alter over long distances. I'd like to quote the email of one of our customers (translated from Italian):

Dear Sig. Filippelli, I would like to compliment you for the EXCELLENT cables that I acquired approximately three months ago. I use them between NuForce amplifiers and Thiel 2.3 loudspeakers, and even with six meters of length, the sound exhibits a balance that I have never felt with my system. This is the fifth cable I have tried in my system, and it sounds better than some very expensive competitors (including MIT Shotgun, that because of the phase distortion that it introduced from 100 Hertz down, I would not recommend to one of my enemies). You should understand that my compliments are freely offered, and are the result of my enthusiasm, for in my modest experience, you totally deserve them.

PFO Directionality?

SF The directionality of the cable is an important factor in nearly all cable constructions. Orienting crystals within the cable improves the current passage, obtains better electrical values and better speed of propagation, all of which translates to greater musical equilibrium.

PFO How did you get into all this?

SF We entered into this field after thirty years experience of our company in cable fabrication for other applications. We studied the market, above all the Italian market, inasmuch as in Italy there was no company that had studied the making of cables of above-average quality. We entered the market with the intention of producing a really advanced class of cables at every price. We are been doing this for seven years, and in the last four we have gained a reputation as the most important Italian cable company. We have been given the top award in Italy in the category of accessories three times, in 2003, 2005, and 2006. Moreover we have received many acknowledgments from other countries, including acknowledgment for European cables in 2006.

PFO What is your fundamental design philosophy/goal?

SF Our philosophy is to produce really advanced cables that are competitive in every price class. Our

objective to produce cables that we believe offer excellent sonic performance, and in which good Italian taste is strongly present, always with a careful eye to the relationship of price and quality. We think that our cables can compete with cables of any other brand, even ones at extremely elevated prices.

PFO Why these?

SF After just a few years of activity, we are already considered, by the Italian and foreign press, as the main Italian brand in consumer high-end cable. In this short time, we have nearly completely renovated our line, introducing new products. Every day we study the possibility of redefining our listening parameters in order to improve our production more and more, with the aim of being competitive and of maintaining the position of leadership that we have achieved. Our creed is one of providing products that give performance that is difficult to find any price level.

PFO How do you approach those philosophies/goals?

SF Our approach is one of development, and includes ideas that are suggested to us by our customers. We begin from ideas that are developed on paper, after which they are analyzed and elaborated by a pool of engineers who verify the possibilities. At this point, the designs are produced, and are tested by measurement and by listening—the more difficult but satisfying part. Only after these tests are passed do we decide to put a new product on the market. Our motivation, I repeat, is always to improve the quality relative to the price.

PFO How successful do you feel you have been in achieving the goals that you have set for yourself?

SF HiDiamond was born seven years ago. For the past four years, we have achieved the highest awards in Italy in the field of the audio and video cables. In this short time, we have worked hard to improve our brand and our image. We always say that it is difficult to succeed, simple to fall. We must always improve, for we never feel satisfied, and still want to grow.

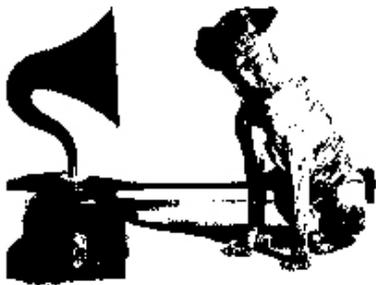
PFO How do you plan to push beyond what you have already accomplished? Where is all this heading?

SF We are moving ahead, verifying the possibility of offering innovative products, and offering the possibility of achieving higher and higher performance. This is an innovative and ambitious plan with which we believe (if we succeed) that we can design a new concept for cables.

PFO Are there other cable manufacturers that you admire?

SF I admire the people that try to achieve new goals, and to hold musical reproduction in great account without exaggerated prices. We give thanks to Monster Cable for founding this idea, and for understanding, for many years, that to advance the performance of an audio system, one must use cables that advance the standard.

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