

Black Rhodium

Samba VS-1 loudspeaker cable



BASED ON BLACK Rhodium's existing Samba loudspeaker cable, the Samba VS-1 has a few enhancements. The cable's core geometry remains the same – 19 strands of 13-gauge silver-plated copper conductors insulated in thick silicone rubber terminated with Graham Nalty's Legacy GN-1 rhodium-plated banana plugs. The VS-1 added to the name denotes the addition of 'vibration stabilisation'. This is achieved through a hefty, machined weight that is positioned half way along each gently twisted cable length.

The cable is reassuringly heavy and the quality of finishing and terminations is excellent. Black Rhodium claims the cables have relatively low impedance, which could be useful if you need to use longer runs. Positive and negative signal flows are also said to be connected in opposite directions for a lower noise floor.

Good connection

Purists will appreciate that the 'straight line' connector plugs are joined to the cable without solder and the combination of engineered crimping with an additional screw clamp should mean terminations last a lifetime. The use of rhodium plating is claimed by Black Rhodium to provide a superior connection between your components.

The design of the rhodium-plated banana plugs feel a little less snug than more traditional designs, but they make a reassuring connection and are pleasantly simple to swap in

and out, without the wrestle other designs can sometimes give. After running the cables in for an extended period, the immediate impression from playing Stevie Wonder's *Master Blaster* on CD is of a very open, clean and expansive image. The cable comes across as very neutral with a hint of extra treble extension, especially when compared with the entry-level Twist and Twirl ranges. Bass control is excellent and highly tuneful – potentially due to the claimed low impedance of this cable – enabling amplifiers to maintain a firm grip on bass drivers. But it's the 'see through' quality of the stereo image that feels most special here. Stevie's lush organ notes, rich vocals, funky bass riffs and explosive rim shots are all beautifully layered in a highly transparent and very wide sound stage. This cable uses a whole host of different technologies to reduce the impact of radio frequency interference as well as the distortion that can be caused by electromagnetic fields and physical vibrations. And this near forensic attention to detail appears to have paid off, with few places left for signal problems to reside between amplifier and speakers. Loosening the screw clamp that holds the vibration stabilising weight in place, I reposition the weight far closer to the amp outputs. I feel this is where it provides the maximum benefit in reducing the vibrational energy likely to be generated by the amplifier, but do experiment in your own system.

Playing a lossless rip of The Cult's *Naturally High*, the Samba easily

makes sense of the pile-driving bass riff, thunderous drums, searing electric buzz-sawing guitars and intense vocals, enabling previously unappreciated acoustic guitar and congas to come through cleanly.

As well as richly complex music, it works brilliantly with stripped out material. It almost seems to gently aid the 'contrast' of your music, enabling midband detail and vocals in particular to press slightly forward out of the mix, while deeper bass and the gaps between notes take a step backwards. Silences subjectively feel a little darker, but no detail is lost. If anything, this added level of contrast enables fine detail around the decay of notes to ebb away much more convincingly.

Heart of glass

The cable performs even stronger with valve amplification. The quality of the midband communication comes into its own and the extended treble detail and bass control lend support where most needed with valves. The Samba VS-1 is ideally suited to orchestral music and classical fans will appreciate its ability to tease out complex layers of rich instrumentation. But it is equally at home with more intimate music where the perceived low distortion enables subtle voices and acoustic instruments to communicate their full emotional content.

These feature-packed cables are a sensibly priced upgrade that will bring positive virtues to many musical styles and systems. Thoroughly recommended. **CW**

DETAILS

PRICE
£599 for 3m pair
TELEPHONE
01332 342233
WEBSITE
blackrhodium.co.uk

OUR VERDICT

