

More Air

in-akustik tops their legendary AIR cable. Instead of eight conductive wires, there are now a brave 16. The LS-4004 is elaborately handcrafted, massive and sadly doesn't come cheap.

We had assumed there was no more room for improvement, because we were already incredibly happy with the LS-2404. This is a dream cable for every loudspeaker owner. Now in-akustik goes one better once again by duplicating their Air Helix construction. The new LS-4004 reference cable now uses 16 "Cross Link Super Speed" waveguides. This alone makes work easier for the amplifier. Due to the double amount of copper, it faces a lower line resistance and a lower inductance.

Upon taking a deeper look into the cable, one will find that the individual strands of 24 ultra pure copper wires each were braided onto a PE core. The single copper wires in turn were sealed by in-akustik with an extremely thin lacquer coating. For the assembly the lacquer is precisely sanded off at the ends. Only then it can be crimped with the connector. At this point in-akustik relies on 1.5 tons of pressure – which is better than bringing some solder material into the audiophile play.



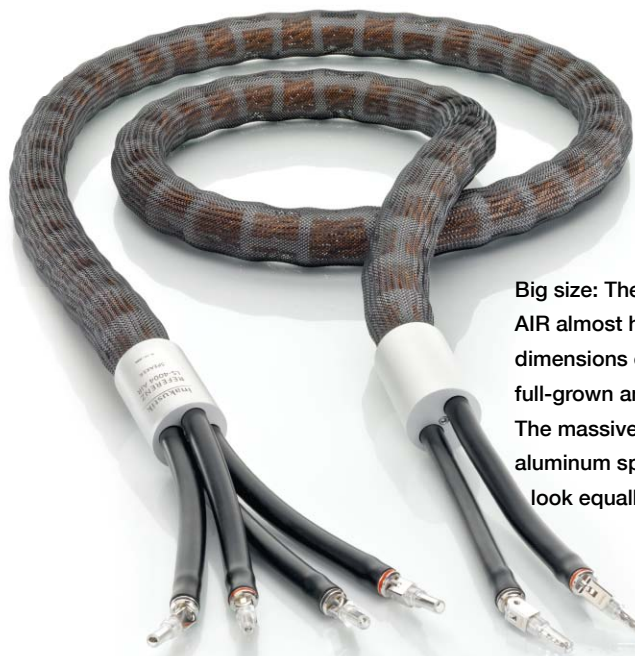
The classic: the LS-4004 AIR, here in the banana plug version with protective cover.



The alternative version: the LS-4004 AIR can also be custom-ordered with spades.



The core: a hinge allows to screw on different attachments.



Big size: The LS-4004 AIR almost has the dimensions of a full-grown anaconda. The massive aluminum splitters look equally bold.

Likewise the connectors represent a new design by in-akustik: instead of brass, we have now tellurium-copper the conductivity of which can be twice as high. The actual connectors consist of a basic terminal and a hinged moving front part which may be configured at will – as a spade or a banana plug.

It's a practical problem: the cable has a considerable weight, the engineers at in-akustik wanted to reduce the mechanical forces which act both on the connector and the amp sockets.

Those who hold the LS-4004 AIR in their hands for the first

time, will be amazed. This cable has been purely handcrafted which requires a huge effort. You don't build such a product unless you're convinced that the sound will step up its game once more.

Listening closely

We did, of course, a listening check. First with dynamically extremely demanding music: on his "Black Rider", Tom Waits virtually tried every instrument including the singing saw. This is accompanied by dancing and loud stomping. The recording calls for a huge num-



Movable: in-akustik purposefully designed the connector terminal versatile. The varying angles shall help reduce the mechanical forces at the amp sockets.

ber of audiophile virtues – the cable must be fast, deliver a splendid resolution and a whopping punch in the bass. And this is where the LS-4004 AIR scored. That was far better in all categories than a standard cable which we brought in for comparison. And even against its little brother, the LS-2404 AIR, the LS-4004 AIR could set the bar higher. Everything sounded more concrete, with enhanced pinpoint imaging and at the same time more sovereign.

We wanted to test this sovereignty with large orchestra music. For this purpose we put on a wonderful live recording by Herbert von Karajan. The maestro conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra performing Gustav Mahler's ninth symphony. The beginning is a deliberately vague approach of the first theme – simply marvelous how much calmness and precision the LS-4004 AIR brought into play. Then the spatial details: this was amazingly concrete, with only a few transients the LS-4004 AIR was able to recreate the Berlin Philharmonic Hall. Every inch of the orchestra seating arrangement was perfect, every piece of information could be allocated to a definite point in the orchestra circle.

We wanted more. This time an excellently recorded album by Bryan Ferry: "As Time Goes By". Ferry is singing songs from the 1920s and 1930s. This is extremely enticing. In particular the adaptations are utterly demanding. Which can bring a good chain to the limit of its imaging capacity. For example, the soft caressing of the drums with the brushes – overly present and the magic is gone, too soft and the meaningful context

gets lost. The LS-4004 AIR found exactly the right proportions. Above all it was playing rhythmically correct – bringing forth drive and beautiful dynamics. And then the voice rendering: Bryan Ferry appeared right in the center of the stereo panorama, with a great many fine details. Even the tiniest breathing pauses and phrasings were audible.

However, the cable comes at a price: in-akustik calls up 5,600 euros from the retail customer for two times three meters. This is a lot of money. But there's solace: after the purchase you will never want to replace this cable again, and so it's going to be an audiophile companion for years to come.

Andreas Günther ■

stereoplay Highlight

in-akustik LS-4004 AIR 5600 euros (manufacturer info)

This cable carries a lot of consideration and manual work. The LS-4004 AIR is one of the finest cables we've ever heard. It is gifted with a phenomenal analysis. Moreover it features a lush bass and a great panorama.

Measured values (1 kHz): R = 99 mΩ; L = 850 nH; C = 830 pF; G = 0,3 μS

Distribution: in-akustik GmbH
Phone: +49 (0)7634 5610 0
www.in-akustik.de



stereoplay verdict

Sound character

warm, bass-heavy neutral cool, precise

Value 10

Price/performance superb