



VIABLUETM AUDIO CABLE REVIEW.

● CARLO LO RASO * JULY 1, 2024 * AUDIO CABLES * REVIEWS

I've never been one to spend money on so-called high-end cables because, frankly, I've never found that I needed them.

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[\(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/1400-x-600-Header-Image-31.jpg\)](#)

So, what is it about these VIABLUETM audio cables that makes me like them so much? Have I completely gone off the deep end? Well, when it comes to higher-end audio cables, the rationale tends to become less about needs and more about wants.

[\(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Secrets-30th-Anniversary-Badge-emblem.jpg\)](#)



My belief is this: you don't need to spend crazy money on high-end cables. You just don't, period. There are plenty of good quality, well-made, and affordable audio cables out there that can get you by with just about any equipment that you might own. So, what happens then when you want cables that do more than just get you by? What if you want something with noticeably better build quality, nicer quality connectors, better looks, and all while keeping as transparent a connection as possible between each of your components? German brand VIABLU™ makes a wide variety of speaker, interconnects, power cables, and accessories that are an obvious step up in quality and aesthetics and they do not adversely affect the audio signal. Yes, they are not what you'd call inexpensive, but they are not astronomical in price either. Just very high-quality, very good-looking, and very German

Highlights

VIABLUETM Audio Cable Highlights

- S6 Air Series of speaker cables and interconnects use air pipes to separate the bundles of conductors and create an interference-free symmetrical wire geometry.
- S6 Air interconnects use 6 layers of shielding.
- X-60 Power cables are fully shielded and use silver-plated OFC wire.
- Excellent, robust build quality and subjective feel.
- Connector-contact quality is noticeably superior to anything else I've used.
- VIABLUETM publishes cable geometry and electrical specifications on its website.
- Cable sounds completely neutral and transparent.
- All cables are hand-assembled in Germany.
- 10 choices of braided sleeving.

Introduction



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_02-8.jpg)

I don't typically do cable reviews. Why, you ask? Well, because in my experience one only needs a good quality signal connection between any component, and well-made cables that meet those requirements are widely available at affordable prices. You don't NEED expensive cables for any audio component, period. This has been confirmed to me in my mind over several cable demos that I've been involved with over the years along with a handful of blind tests as well. I am of the "Do-No-Harm" school of thinking when it comes to cables. Their primary job is to transmit the electrical signal as completely and transparently as possible, that's it. Any cable that alters or flavors the sound in any way has been intentionally designed to do so (or is poorly designed) and is not something I personally am

Where I can appreciate the desire for more expensive cables is in their increased levels of build quality, aesthetic design choices, use of materials, etc. That's more of a WANT in my book, and that's totally fine too. Cables are a hot-button subject among audiophiles, and I have dear friends along with other reviewers here at Secrets who insist that they hear significant differences between a variety of different cables and are quite passionate on that score. I'm not here to argue the point. To me, at the end of the day, whatever allows you to get an increased level of enjoyment from your audio system is good. If part of that equation is a hyper-expensive loom of cables that are built like gilded nuclear-powered fire hoses, suspended on reams of tiny bridges that you insist give your audio system suitably angelic vocal qualities to entrance all who listen.... then more power to you. It would be a very



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(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_04-6.jpg)

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(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_05-5.jpg)

(Per individual cable. All prices in USD.)

NF-S6 AIR T8 RCA INTERCONNECTS SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:
2 x 6 signal conductors each consisting of 19 silver-plated OFC copper strands arrayed around a system of 1 central and 24 radial airpipes.

SHIELDING:
3 ALU-PET golden foil shields and 3 contra-rotating tinned OFC copper spiral shields.

CONNECTORS:
T8 24K Gold-Plated RCA connectors.

CAPACITANCE:
93 pF/m.

MSRP:
\$939.00/1-meter pair.

XLR INTERCONNECTS SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

2 x 6 signal conductors each consisting of 19 silver-plated OFC copper strands arrayed around a system of 1 central and 24 radial airpipes.

SHIELDING:

3 ALU-PET golden foil shields and 3 contra-rotating tinned OFC copper spiral shields.

CONNECTORS:

T6S 24K Gold-Plated XLR connectors.

CAPACITANCE:

93 pF/m.

MSRP:

\$1,113.00/1-meter pair.

SC-6 AIR SPEAKER CABLES SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

6 batches of 6 individual conductors combined with 10 airpipes (1 central, 3 radially, and 1 centered in each of the 6 conductor batches). 2 batches of Silvered OFC copper strands, 2 batches of Tinned OFC copper strands, and 2 batches of Pure OFC copper strands.

CAPACITANCE:

91 pF/m (single conductor to single conductor).

CONNECTORS:

T8 24K Gold-Plated Hollow Banana plug.

MSRP:

\$1,921.00/8.2-ft (2.5m) pair.

NF-75 T6S RCA DIGITAL CABLES SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

Braided silver-coated copper core. Polyethylene foam dielectric.

SHIELDING:

ALU-PET foil shield.

CONNECTORS:

T6S 24K Gold-Plated RCA connectors.

CAPACITANCE:

52 pF/m | screen: 75 pF/m

MSRP:

\$226.00/1-meter.

X-60 TS6 POWER CABLES SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

Three 12AWG OFC copper conductors, two plated with silver and one with tin (Ground).

SHIELDING:

100% shielding due to braided and aluminum foil shields.

CONNECTORS:

T6S NEMA style input and IEC 15 Amp output connectors.
(Various international connectors available.)

ACCESSORIES:

VIABLUE™ ferrite filter 18.

MSRP:

\$1,286.00/3-meter run.

KR-2 T6S USB A/B USB CABLES SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

Made with Silver-plated OFC copper conductors with solid polyethylene dielectric.

SHIELDING:

VIABLUE™ Triple-Shield.

CONNECTORS:

Custom 24K gold-plated USB connectors.

MSRP:

\$99.00/1-meter.

EP-7 T6S LAN CAT6A ETHERNET CABLES SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

8 conductors of silver-plated pure OFC copper strands.

SHIELDING:

One braided shield with four Aluminum foil shields.

CONNECTORS:

Custom 24K Gold-plated Ethernet connectors.

MSRP:

\$226.00/1-meter.

ROCKET XL CABLE LIFTERS SPECIFICATIONS

DESIGN:

Solid Aluminum body construction with scratch-resistant finish, and rubber footers.

SIZE:

Can accommodate two layers of cables separated by rubber suspension bands.

FINISH:

Silver or Black.

DIMENSIONS:

5" H x 3.1" W with a 1.6" wide opening for cables.

MSRP:

\$364.00/pair. \$1,310.00 for a set of 8.

WEBSITE:

<https://VIABLUE.de/en/>

DEALER LOCATOR:

<https://VIABLUE.de/en/dealers/>

SECRETS TAGS:

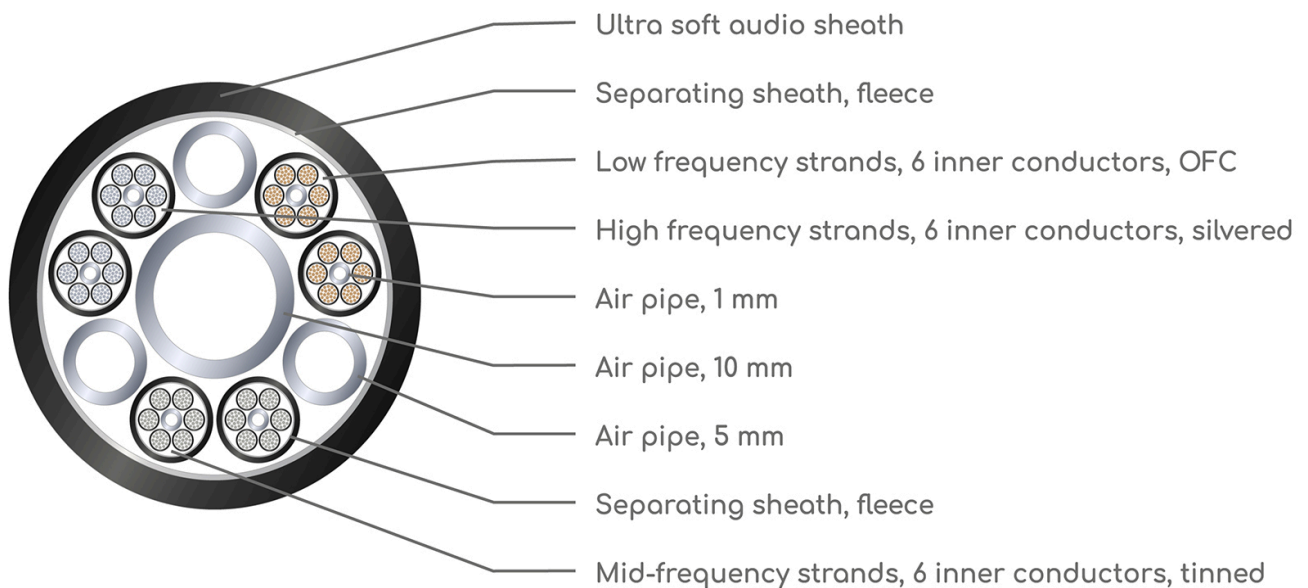
cables, high-end, VIABLUE, Germany, accessories, cobra, cable lifters, absorbers

Design



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_06-6.jpg)

Looking over the VIABLUETM cable product catalog, the cable options aren't so much defined into clearly separate lines as opposed to wire gauge and design differences. This makes for a multitude of choices and a large degree of customization to be available to the end-user. Speaker cables are categorized by the number of conductors employed and if the products use VIABLUETM Air Pipe topology. Power cables are differentiated mostly by conductor gauge. Analog cable varies by using either pure OFC copper or Silver-plated OFC copper conductors, and whether they employ Air Pipes or are configured in a twisted pair under an outer sheath. VIABLUETM's digital cable offerings are the most straightforward, essentially constituting a single tier. All digital cables (except for Toslink Optical) use Silver-plated OFC wire. VIABLUETM also plans to release an HDMI cable later this year.



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_07-5.jpg)

The majority of the cables that VIABLUE™ provided for this review were based on their S6 Air series architecture which uses bundled combinations of pure OFC copper wire, tinned OFC copper wire, and silver-plated OFC copper wire (exact combinations depend on the application i.e.: digital interconnect, analog interconnect, or speaker cable) arranged around an array of silicone air pipes, with the prescribed foil shielding if we are talking about interconnects.



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_08-5.jpg)

As you can imagine, the main bodies of these cables are fairly thick, due to the multiple bundles of wire and air pipes. Saying that these are “Python-thick” cables would not be unwarranted especially since the cables are covered with an attractive patterned fabric sheathing ironically called “cobra”. About 8 inches before the cable terminations, each end of the main cable body is “capped” with a finely machined aluminum cylinder (or splitter) which marks the end of the air pipe runs and beyond which the cable bundles are either combined or divided (depending on application) and finally terminated.



(wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_09-4.jpg)

All terminations were very high-quality custom-made RCA, XLR, USB, Ethernet, or Banana Plug jacks. VIABLU also produced (upon request) a fine braided turntable grounding wire terminated with miniature spades. Almost all the connectors were of the screw-down variety. The coaxial digital cable appeared to have a soldered termination.



(wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_10-4.jpg)

All VIABLUE™ cables are custom-assembled and terminated in Germany. And while they don't have an expressly documented warranty, VIABLUE states they live by example and will replace or repair any defective or damaged cable, no questions asked, for as long as they exist. For service requests such as rebuilding speaker cables from single to bi-wire for example, they will charge a fee to cover the material costs. VIABLUE is also open to doing a certain degree of custom cable work if you have a specific need or application that requires a solution not regularly stocked in their lineup.

VIABLUE also sent along a few sets of their Rocket XL cable lifters. These are essentially finely machined aluminum cylinders (roughly the size of a soda can) that can separate and suspend up to 3 runs of cable via layers of rubber suspension bands.

Setup



SECRETS of and
home Theater High Fidelity
30TH ANNIVERSARY



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_12-3.jpg)

Over the last several months, I have used the entire loom of VIABLUe™ cables on a variety of equipment and loudspeakers and in various headphone listening rigs at my disposal. The cables, being as thick as they are, require a bit of care and consideration of the kinds of components they are hooked up to so as not to inadvertently cause damage to a component jack. This is especially true of the X-60 TS6 power cables. If you have smaller or lighter-weight components, then VIABLUe's smaller gauge SC-4 or SC-2 wires should be more appropriate for your needs.

I used the Rocket XL cable lifters for keeping the runs of SC-6 speaker cables suspended off the floor and out of contact with any power cables.

Equipment included the following:

- Revel F228Be Loudspeakers
- Paradigm F120H Loudspeakers
- Aretai Contra 200f Loudspeakers
- MartinLogan Motion F200 Loudspeakers
- ATC SCM100ASLT Active Loudspeakers
- MoFi Sourcepoint 8 Loudspeakers
- Benchmark HPA4 Preamplifier
- Benchmark AHB2 Power Amplifier

- MICHI X5 S2 Integrated Amplifier
- Trinnov Amethyst Processor
- OPPO BDP-105 Universal Player
- Anthem STR Preamp
- Anthem STR Power Amplifier
- PASS LABS XP25 Phono Preamplifier
- Gold Note PH1000 Phono Preamplifier
- VPI Avenger Direct Turntable

In Use



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_13-3.jpg)

I should start by saying that, from the standpoint of look and feel, these are some of the nicest quality cables that I have had the pleasure of using. The fit and finish of every part is just superb. I find the look of the standard “cobra” braiding to be very attractive and every connection I made with these cables felt positive and secure. Repeated swapping of components showed no issues with connector reliability either. As an aesthetic observation, where some very high-end cables are designed to somewhat resemble jewelry, these VIABLUE™ cables are designed to imply a sense of fine instrumentation. Less flash, more purposeful if you will.



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_14-3.jpg)

VIABLUE sent enough cable that I was able to completely wire my system from source to speakers and power. Visually, it certainly made a positive transformation to my system. No longer a veritable rat's nest of skinny interconnects and speaker cables, my system looked far neater and, yes, I'll say it, much, much cooler. If we are being honest with ourselves, looks are an important component of why people explore purchasing cables of this caliber and beyond.

So, the next question is, how do these cables sound? Here's the thing, they don't sound like anything, absolutely nothing at all, which for someone like me, is exactly what I am after. Let me explain to you why this is a good thing in my mind. First, VIABLUE claims the SC-6 are designed to be neutral cables, essentially creating as transparent a connection as possible. They do no harm, which is exactly what I am after when looking for cables. As I said earlier, I don't subscribe to the idea of using cables as tone controls in a hi-fi system. Some people are into that as part of the adventure of putting their systems together, and that's perfectly fine. As a reviewer, it's an unnecessary variable and frankly a bit of a headache to have to account for.

At first, for a single component test, I did a subjective comparison where I would listen to a portion of music, then quickly (as possible) swap out the power and XLR cables between my Topping A90 Discrete headphone amp and Topping D90SE DAC and then relisten to the same portion at the same volume on a set of Dan Clark Audio Aeon 2 Noire headphones. I couldn't pick out any noticeable differences. I then rigged up a system where I had two digital outputs from my OPPO BDP-105D player going to two separate Topping DACs (a D90SE and a DX7PRO+). Then XLR outputs from each of the DACs to the 2 balanced inputs of my Benchmark HPA4 Preamp. One DAC had the VIABLUE™ XLR cables while the other had my standard high-quality XLR cables. The Benchmark allowed me to level-match the volume of each input and I could switch between both XLR inputs on the fly via remote while the music was playing. And just like the other times I've mentioned, I could not reliably tell a difference in sound quality between my usual fine-quality cables and the VIABLUE™ cables. Both inputs sounded perfectly clean and transparent, with no change in noise floor or shading to the music of any sort.

When switching to using the full loom of VIABLUE™ cables with my Benchmark Media Systems stack and Revel F228Be loudspeakers, I wanted to hear if the sound of my textbook neutral reference system changed in any perceptible way. I can't say by any objective measure that the sound varied at all. The system sounded as clean, dynamic, and beautiful as I've always felt that gear combination did. Anecdotally, however, my level of satisfaction when listening to that system increased significantly. In many ways, I felt like I was finally getting the most out of my system. That there was nothing on a component level that was holding it back from its full potential.

In using the VIABLUE™ cables over a prolonged period and with a variety of components I also felt like I was able to get a better measure of the subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle differences, when switching out components than I am otherwise used to. Does that mean they are more transparent than the previous high-quality cables I used? When used as a complete system, "possibly" is the best answer I can give. I'm not going to break into a Shakespearean sonnet and tell you I heard some sort of drastic imaginary improvement when I didn't. I AM going to tell you that these VIABLUE™ cables do nothing to impede or undermine the performance of your components. And yes Matilda, because on some level it matters, VIABLUE™ cables will make your system look positively badass when fully wired with them. I loved the way my system looked and felt when fully kitted out with these cobra-patterned cables. It certainly looked more impressive than normal, and I noted the compliments that I got from friends and family. All of them approved of the substantive visual improvement.



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_15-2.jpg)

Some of the biggest aesthetic compliments from visitors came courtesy of the Rocket XL cable risers. An accessory that, as far as I could tell, makes no noticeable sonic difference but using a few of them did wonders for my cable management mojo, and based on people's reactions, it's as if they added some needed "sex appeal" to my listening rig that I didn't know was missing! On a slightly more serious note, among cable riser products, the Rocket XLs are probably the most intelligently designed units I've seen allowing up to 3 layers of cable to be routed through them. From a cable management perspective, they are certainly more useful than your standard little wood or plexiglass cable bridges.

Does this mean buying high-end cables plays a little bit on an audiophile's vanity? Oh, you bet it does! And for the price that can be commanded from some cable manufacturers, it darn well should! Looking at it in that context I think VIABLUÉ's mix of quality, performance, and looks are priced very competitively in that landscape. High? Certainly. Outrageous? Not at all.



(/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Figure_16-3.jpg)

SECRETSSPONSOR

Conclusions

Conclusions



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If you desire to upgrade your “cable game,” for whatever reason, VIABLUÉ’s various cable options are certainly worth your time to explore. You won’t be displeased with the sound, and the quality and aesthetic upgrade is significant. They are a superb upgrade choice.

LIKES

- Attractive, high-quality materials are used and construction is first-rate.
- Transparent performance. Does no harm to the sound of my system. I like that!
- Essentially full-service support for the life of your cables.
- A fully kitted-out system with these cables looks positively killer.

WOULD LIKE TO SEE

- Addition of Speakon terminations as an option for speaker cables.

Manufacturer’s response: “Speakon and Powercon connectors can be ordered upon request. However, the SC-6 and X-60 do not fit in these connectors (the connector’s diameters are too small). We happily offer them with our premium series cables though, eg. SC-4 speaker or X-40/X-25 power.”

So where does this leave us? Well, I did not set out to review these cables with the intention of proving or disproving something. I took this review on to evaluate these cables in the confines of my system and assess their overall value as an upgrade over the cables I currently use. In my use case, no they did not make a night-and-day sonic difference, which to my mind is a positive. I don’t use junk cables to begin with and I currently like the overall

tonal balance of my system as it stands. These cables do no harm, and that is an important factor for me to consider their use. Where the cables exceeded my expectations was in their build quality, their aesthetics, and the sheer satisfaction of using them in my system. I won't lie, I loved the way my system looked wired up with a full loom of these cables. All the connectors were robust and looked like they would last a lifetime of continued use. Every connection, whether it was to a speaker, or a component felt positive, secure, and inspired confidence.

If I were in the market for a step-up in cables, VIABLUE's product offerings would tick all the realistic and practical boxes for me that would make them worth considering. The fact that they are put together in Germany and that VIABLUE offers an essentially no-questions-asked support policy for the life of their cables is a welcome bonus. And, as I would advise anyone, only consider a cable upgrade like this when you have refined the rest of your system to a point where you are happy with what you have. If you are unhappy with the sound of your system, don't expect a cable upgrade to fix it (unless you are currently using damaged wire and coat hangers to connect your system). All things being equal and if your budget allows, choosing a loudspeaker or room treatment upgrade over cables could net you more significant and noticeable improvements in sound. Upgrading cables, for all practical purposes, should be considered one of the "final touches" you make to dialing in and personalizing your system.

At the end of the day, do I NEED these cables to thoroughly enjoy my system? No. But do I WANT these cables to enjoy as an integral part of my system? Yes. Yes, I most certainly do. That sense of pride of ownership, and the urge to personalize and customize your system with higher quality accessories (whether they make a detectable difference or not, YMMV) can be just as strong a motivator as anything else. And you know what? That's entirely okay!



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