



Atlas Asimi Luxe Grun

The very finest ingredients, including solid silver, are stirred into this flagship cable before serving in a custom leather jacket. A 'gilty' pleasure? Review & Lab: **Paul Miller**

Silver may play second fiddle to gold at the jewellers, but when it comes to thermal and electrical conductivity this metal is king. Its use in high-end audio cables is legion, not least for the clear correlation between the conductor's cross-sectional area, cable length and damage to your bank account! A 1m stereo set of Asimi, terminated in spades, Z-plugs or cold-welded expanding 4mm connectors costs £6600, or £17,800 for 3m. And the 7m set required for our testing and auditioning? I didn't ask...

Atlas's latest iteration of its flagship Asimi speaker cable not only uses solid 6N-purity silver (there's no silver-plated copper here), but the strands are OCC-drawn using a heated die to create one long crystal with no interstitial grain boundaries – at least at the point of manufacture. It's based on the original Asimi [*HFN* Mar '11] with six silver strands per conductor arranged in three pairs, but for 2018 Atlas has sought to improve the dielectric performance of the cable while also reducing resistance.

POLISHING THE SILVER

The former is achieved by winding each strand in air-filled cotton (air is still a better dielectric than the costliest polymer) before wrapping them in a microporous PTFE tape. All six insulated strands are then twisted together at the ideal tension to quell microphony without expelling the air. Measured here, parallel capacitance emerges at a moderate 101pF/m with a low loop inductance of 0.44µH/m.

Series resistance has been reduced to a very low 4.4mohm/m (equivalent to a mere 0.0048dB/m loss) by the simple expedient of specifying thicker strands – 4x1.3mm² and 2x1.1mm² per leg of the cable, increasing the overall cross-sectional area from 3.5mm² to 5.5mm². This strand combination also facilitates the bi-wire version of Asimi Luxe.

The conductor legs are screened with an alloy/mylar foil and tin-plated OFC braid, terminated at the amplifier-end of the cable with a flying 'Grun' connector [see picture, above]. Grounding what would otherwise be a floating screen serves to



ABOVE: This flagship cable features solid OCC silver conductors, a hand-stitched leather jacket and a drain, or 'Grun', connection at the amplifier-end. It's hefty but not impractical

reduce radiation *from* the cable as much as resisting RF/EMI pick-up. Finally, the 'Luxe' element of the cable is defined by its gloriously decadent Nappa leather jacket – available in various colours and stitching.

GILT-EDGED EUPHONY

Weaving the hefty Asimi Luxe speaker cable into the *HFN* reference system was not an instant, revelatory experience. Instead, auditioned with our B&W 800 D3s [*HFN* Oct '16] and Constellation Taurus amps [*HFN* Dec '17], the improvement in detail resolution, subtlety and sheen was as all-encompassing as its impact was stealthy.

Dispelling any notion of the brightness associated with early silver cables, the Asimi Luxe seemingly squeezes more from the speakers. It certainly delineated a more convincing soundstage with Mike Oldfield's *Return To Ommadawn* [Virgin EMI CDV 3166; 96kHz/24-bit], where a greater depth of image was heard. The opening seemed just a little more ethereal and distant too, while the touch of fingers on guitar strings was delivered with both

improved delicacy and a little extra bite, the notes starting crisply and decaying in a thoroughly natural fashion.

It's a matter of bringing the listener a smidge closer to the performance, to better appreciate the work of musicians, producers and engineers. But the Asimi Luxe does not 'editorialise' and does few favours for rough, brash or compressed mixes which are typically revealed in all their horror. So while the Asimi Luxe Grun is no panacea, it certainly has the capacity to make the best sound even more insightful. ☺

HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

While many exotic cables will illuminate the musical soundstage, Atlas's Asimi Luxe is far subtler. There's no veil-lifting, jaw-dropping Damascus moment but you will find its ease-of-listening, its resolution of subtle details and dynamic shading creep up on the corners of your consciousness. And you will feel its absence if removed... But as the pricing suggests, this is a cable demanding of superlative systems, assembled and tweaked as far as you can take them.

Sound Quality: 89%

