



ATLAS ELEMENT INTEGRA TURNTABLE CABLE £105

The vinyl renaissance hasn't gone unnoticed amongst cable manufacturers. Hence a number are now bringing out products to improve performance - especially for those who are buying relatively budget decks where the supplied leads are (rather inevitably) of the cheap and cheerful variety.

There's a good argument to be made for improving cables between a deck and phono stage or suitably

equipped amplifier/pre-amp as the low-level signal can be subject to many deleterious effects.

Hence this new cable from Scottish-based Atlas features non-magnetic RCA plugs, spade-terminated earth tags and a solder-free, cold-weld connection.

The signal conductor itself is made from oxygen-free copper which is shielded to help reduce RFI interference. It's nicely-made, looks sturdy and the plugs fit securely.

The question has to be, though, can it really improve the quality of a

deck costing in the region of £200-£300.

Actually, yes. Plugging these into a Rega Planar 1 turntable (£250) in place of a pair of stock leads brought a noticeable improvement. Most noticeable was the reduction in background noise and an expansion of the soundstage.

With Bruce Springsteen's 'Born To Run' the late Clarence Clemons' saxophone solo has real bite to it - especially with the sustained note right at the very end.

Gentler music also benefited from an appreciably quieter soundstage, giving an enhanced sense of detail and presence; Sinead O'Connor's voice on 'Peggy Gordon' was hauntingly realistic.

If you have a budget turntable - or even one above that price but with standard interconnects - the Atlas Element Integras are well worth trying to wring that extra bit of performance from it. **JM**

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SOUNDBITES



ATLAS HYPER INTEGRA TONEARM CABLE £198

As with the Element Integra above, Atlas's Hyper Integra tone arm cable is designed to preserve the low level signal from phono cartridges.

It features a five-pin, gold plated tonearm plug with FEP insulation and can be supplied as either a side-entry right angle type or as straight entry. There is also a separate earth lead running from this, fitted with a spade plug.

The two coaxial screened cables

feature high-purity copper conductors with polyethylene dielectric to preserve signal flow and are fitted with Atlas's self-cleaning

Integra RCA plugs. The company says these clean the contacts every time they are removed and reinserted - so it may be worth doing this every few weeks or so.

The cables are coated in a black braid which makes them feel solid and robust, but is flexible so fitting between tonearm and phono stage is easy even in the tightest of spaces.

Fitted between a tonearm with an MC cartridge and an Icon Audio valve phono stage I was struck by

just how tight and controlled a sound this cable produces.

With Kraftwerk's 'Minimum-Maximum' the notes stopped and started with lovely clarity, allowing the electronic beats to weave together. There was also added depth to the sound, bringing greater atmosphere to these live recordings.

Yet while there's great detail this cable doesn't impeded the seductive flow of vinyl recordings - even making the rather sterile 1980s production of Heaven 17's 'Penthouse And Pavement' sound warmer and more vibrant.

It's a quality which works superbly on New Order's 'Age Of Consent' where the bass was full yet controlled, while the synthesiser sounded superbly rich and melodic. An air of sophistication and musicality reminded me why vinyl sounds so good.

In short this is an excellent cable that doesn't break the bank but offers real benefits. **JM**

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