The Absolute Sound
High-End Audio Buyer's Guide 2017

Audience Au24 SE Phono
$1390/1m pr.
This new phono cable can be ordered in three different versions, with each version optimized for your cartridge's impedance. A fourth model is made for moving-magnet cartridges. The SE version sports new ultra-low mass RCA connectors with tellurium copper metallurgy. The improvement is dramatic; the Au24 SE is capable of vanishingly low noise and enticing tonal clarity. Any sense of haze is banished by the Au24 SE cable. A vivid sense of air in the treble rounds out the virtues of this outstanding performer. Note that owners of the standard Au24 can upgrade to SE status for $220 per pair. (TAS Issue Number 230)

Audience Ohno
Interconnect $199/1m (+$82 per meter); speaker $209/1m (+20 per meter)
Once you get past the initial shock of Ohno's teeny profile, you'll be as surprised as NG was at its imperturbable midrange tonal weight, which seems so contradictory to its skinny contours. Ohno cabling is quiet, quick, and extended with well-focused and dimensional imaging. Sure, there are plenty of heavyweight designs out there but none are going to kick sand in the Ohno's face. A cable that will also integrate easily in any small room or desktop setup, and maybe, just maybe the best performance per dollar cable that NG's heard in some time. (TAS Issue Number 264)

Audience Au24 SE
Interconnect $1290/1m pr.; $1895/1m pr. balanced
Audience cables are easy to use and even easier to listen to. These extremely flexible cables offer a supple, refined, and weighty sound. The most notable virtue of the speaker cables is that they follow the audio equivalent of the Hippocratic oath, which is to say that they don't do anything wrong. These are not cables that have even a trace of etch. Nor are the saccharine or rolled-off. Rather, they seem to conduct the signal with no fuss or muss. They are accurate, lithe, and taut without any hint of tizziness, which is to say they don't sacrifice body at the expense of speed. At their modest price point (by audiophile standards) the Audience cables are difficult to surpass. (TAS Issue Number 249)

Audience Au24 SE powerChord
LP, $1030; MP, $1175; Full power, $2250 (5')
The new SE version of Audience's already superb Au24 AC cords render an across-the-board sonic improvement. Based on the original design of multi-strand conductors and high-purity mono-crystal copper, the SE brings to the table new connectors with higher-quality metallurgy and lower-mass terminations. Moreover, Audience now offers the SE in three versions, low-powered integrated amplifiers, and high-power for power amplifiers. The lower-powered versions not only sound better on low-current consumption sources, they are less expensive. The Au24 SE in any configuration delivers a low noise floor, neutrality, and an almost preternatural sense of recorded space and ambience. Beyond that is a stronger micro aspect that hones in on images with incisive focus and seemingly effortless flow and immediacy. Last but not least, these cords are one of the most flexible available, very handy for angled runs. (TAS Issue Numbers 219, 245)

Audience Au24 SE USB
$945 (single-conductor version, $895)
Don't listen to the Au24 SE USB in your system unless you're prepared to shell out the long green. The Au24 SE is expensive, but worth it. The first thing you'll notice is that the Au24 SE has two jacketed sets of conductors rather than one. One set carries the signal, and the other, power. Frankly, there's nothing to fault in the Au24 SE. Many USB cables- as with everything else in audio- force you to make tradeoffs: this cable has better resolution, while another may have greater smoothness and ease. The Audience cable seemingly does it all; it is convincingly superior in every sonic criterion. The Au24 SE is priced at the very top end of the scale, but if you want a no-compromise USB cable, look no further. (TAS Issue Number 254)

Audience The ONE
$995
The One, as you might infer from its name, is a single full-range driver shoehorned into a small box. The driver itself is the same unit, the A3S, that Audience uses in its flagship $72,000 16 + 16 speaker. (Audience is unique in this regard; no other speaker manufacturer employs the same driver in all its speakers from the smallest to the largest.) According to Audience, the A3S has exceptionally flat response, claimed to be within +/-3dB from 40Hz to 22kHz. Be that as it may, properly set up The One is the best desktop speaker reviewer Steven Stone has heard. If you are looking for an exceptional small-footprint monitor, The One is a Must-audition. (TAS Issue Number 236)

Audience 1+1 V2+
$2345
Don’t let the 1+1 V2+’s nearly identical appearance to the 1+1 fool you; this newly upgraded version is a big leap over its already superlative predecessor. The V2+ employs a significantly redesigned version of Audience’s full-range driver, top-level Au24 SX internal wiring, retuned passive radiators, and custom tellurium solderless binding posts. The result is more resolution and detail (particularly in the treble), superior transparency, wider dynamic expression, and greater midrange purity. The 1+1 V2+’s midrange clarity, just one of the virtues of a crossover-less single-driver speaker, is on par with that of many speakers costing twenty times the V2+’s price. The state of the art for desktop listening, and a terrific choice as a main speaker in smaller rooms. (TAS Issue Number 273)

Audience aR2p/aR12/aR12-TS/aR6-TSS
$695/$4995/$8995/$6000
The aR2p, Audience’s compact, dual-outlet power conditioner and isolation device is based on the massive 12-outlet versions of which Audience is rightly proud. Used with a CD player, its enhancement of soundstaging, dimensionality, and depth can be profound. With demanding high-current devices such as amplifiers, transients seemed a little soft. An audition is recommended. Further up the Audience food chain are the 12-outlet heavy-hitters. The aR12 was found to be an extremely effective conditioner, capable of delivering significant improvements in bass definition and depth, overall resolution, and soundstage depth. Its build-quality is nothing short of exemplary. At the top of the hill is the new TSS line with Teflon capacitors. (TAS Issue Numbers 162,179,186,235)

Audience adeptResponse aR12-TSSOX
$12,845 (with Au24 SE powerChord)
To Greg Weaver's ear, Audience's new aR12-TSSOX power conditioner represents a substantial improvement over its predecessors, so much so that it would be fair to say that it borders on an order of magnitude advance. This is a world-class device, deserving your full attention. Give one a listen– perhaps the 6- or 12-socket variety –but be prepared to buy it. If you are anything like GW, there is no chance it will come out of your system once it is in place! (TAS Issue Number 266)