

Mains man

A budget mains cable grabs Martin Pipe's attention.

Hard to believe, but the well-received MCRU No. 7 IEC mains cable has been with us for a few years now. Fitted with silver-plated Furutek connectors at either end – a FI-UK 13-amp mains plug, and a FI-11 IEC C13 type at the other – it performs well, as you might expect from a mains cable that sells for £360 in its cheapest (0.7m) form.

But what's this? A more affordable 'entry level' model - £65, in 0.7m guise - has just been introduced.

Confusingly, it also happens to be sold as a "MCRU No. 7 IEC mains power lead". MCRU needs to sort this out!

This less expensive No. 7, supplied to us in 1.2m (£85) form, is the product featured here. It is equipped with a MS-328 "HD Power copper" UK mains plug and - at its other end - a 'cryo-treated' Furutek FI-15 IEC C13 connector. It may be described as 'copper', but the pins of the review sample's chunky MS mains plug are plated with an undisclosed silvery metal. As MCRU put it "silver is the best conductor of electricity known to man...copper comes second". It's fitted with a MCRU "gold-plated audiophile" 13A fuse, and has an external clamp to accommodate the large-diameter cables associated with hi-fi applications.

As regards the FI-15 CU line socket, this robust item is a lot more 'military' in appearance than that fitted to the more expensive No. 7 model. It incorporates what MCRU calls a "floating field damper system". Linking the two together is mains cable with silver-plated copper conductors "encased in a silicone elastomer". Its outer jacket is surrounded with "acoustic

braiding...to reduce resonances". Internal inspection reveals a high standard of construction, and that ferrites – which can reduce RFI – have been fitted to all three conductors at either end of the cable.

In material terms, then, MCRU gives you a lot of cable for your cash - its invitation to "cut out the middleman, and deal direct with the cable maker" may well have some merit! As well as 1.2m, the manufacturer can also supply 0.7m (£65), 1.7m (£105), 2.2m (£125), 2.7m (£145), 3.2m (£165), 3.7m (£185), 4.2m (£205) and 4.9m (£225) versions. MCRU claim that in all cases the "new price-to-performance ratio will be difficult to beat...the new No.7 mains power lead offers startling performance for modest cost".

SOUND QUALITY

And if my experiences with a Cambridge CXN v2 streamer feeding a Chord Hugo TT DAC, Arcam A49 integrated amplifier and Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII

floorstanders are anything to go by, MCRU need not fear an unexpected visit from Trading Standards officials. Most obviously, the noise floor seemed to have dropped. This was particularly noticeable with hi-res music - with an inky-black silence between tracks, and low-level subtleties more apparent.

In order to achieve a meaningful comparison, direct connection to a mains outlet was made. I found that the No. 7 yielded the greatest improvement - relative to a bog-standard computer-type IEC mains cable - when used with the amp (the DAC has an internal battery supply, charged by a wall-wart, so I couldn't try that). I also noted benefits in terms of dynamics, and more fulsome basslines.

CONCLUSION

The 'affordable' No. 7 IEC is a credit to MCRU - it offers quite astonishing value for money. You no longer have an excuse not to replace the cheap IEC cables that were bundled with your equipment...and reap the rewards!



**MCRU NO. 7
 MAINS POWER
 LEAD £85 (1.2M
 VERSION)**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst
 the best.**

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

An affordable upgrade that will help make the most of your hi-fi system.

FOR

- quieter
- more dynamics
- better resolution of detail

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

MCRU
 +44 (0) 1484 538438
 www.mcruc.co.uk