

**A Review Of Four Speaker Cables From \$32 Per Pair To \$3300 Per Pair  
11/22/2007**

<b>Cable</b>	<b>Home Depot E51585</b>	<b>Monster Cable Z3 Reference</b>	<b>PS Audio xStream Resolution Reference</b>	<b>Audioquest Volcano with 72 Volt DBS</b>
<b>Price/Length</b>	\$32 per 8-1/2 foot pair	\$300 per 10 foot pair	\$800 per 9.85 foot (3 meter) pair	\$3300 per 8 foot pair
<b>Price Per Foot Per Speaker</b>	\$1.88 per foot per speaker	\$15 per foot per speaker	\$40.61 per foot per speaker	\$206 per foot per speaker
<b>Wire Gauge</b>	6 AWG	10 AWG	11 AWG	9 AWG
<b>Metal</b>	Tough Pitch Copper	Oxygen Free Copper	Ono Continuous Casting Copper	Ono Continuous Casting Copper
<b>Resolving Power</b>	Low. Fine details are obscured, particularly in high frequencies.	Moderate	High	Very High
<b>Soundstage Characteristics</b>	Two-dimensional. No depth. Front to back dimension limited to the front plane of the speakers. Good lateral spread with imaging beyond the outside edges of the speakers.	Three-dimensional. Good depth and width with images placed ahead of and behind the speaker plane and beyond the outside edges of the speakers.	Three-dimensional. Excellent depth and width with images placed ahead of and behind the speaker plane and beyond the outside edges of the speakers. Increased resolution at the far lateral and rear edges of the soundstage.	Three-dimensional. Excellent depth and width with images placed ahead of and behind the speaker plane and well beyond the outside edges of the speakers. Increased resolution at the far lateral and rear edges of the soundstage.
<b>Imaging Characteristics</b>	Images within soundstage are paper thin and have little to no apparent "weight".	Images within soundstage have moderate "weight". There is a sense of "weight" to images and of the space between images.	Images have near lifelike "weight" More of a sense of sounds coming from real instruments and real people.	Images have lifelike "weight" Even more of a sense of sounds coming from real instruments and real people than xStream cable.
<b>Sound Characteristics</b>	Rolled off treble and bass. Forward midrange. You can hear the bass but you can't feel it.	Moderate detail throughout the frequency range. Impressive bass detail and impact.	High detail throughout the frequency range. Bass very detailed and hard hitting. Sound is "liquid, flowing, and effortless.	Very high detail throughout the frequency range. Bass very detailed and hard hitting. The sound is very "liquid", flowing, dynamic and "real". Very low level sounds such as background noises in the studio and the mechanical noises of instruments are more apparent.

**Comments:**

This exercise vividly demonstrated that the higher you go up the speaker cable chain, the more clarity, detail and three-dimensional realism you get, but you pay a heavy, heavy price for it. The law of diminishing returns is in full effect. In the case of the comparison of the Audioquest Volcano to the PS Audio xStream Resolution Reference, the Volcano cable costs over 4 times the price of the xStreams, but I would quantify the resolution improvement as only 2 times. Fortunately, I did not have to pay the 4X price, nor would I have.

**Associated Equipment:**

Teres Audio 255 Turntable  
Graham 2.2 Deluxe Tonearm  
Ortofon Jubilee Cartridge  
Signal Cable Silver Resolution Tonearm Cable

Cary Audio CD 306 SACD Player  
PS Audio xStream Transcendent Interconnects  
Pass Labs X1 Preamp  
Parasound JC 1 Power Amps