

Audio Note AN-SPa & AN-SPe

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To some players, especially to those who superstition that speaker cable should be thick and hard, the Audio Note AN-SPx silver speaker cables still difficult to draw their desire to "Play", although its thin & soft body are highly admired by our magazine. I use AN-SPx for more than 2 years. It has been combined with more than 20 HI-FI sets with different reproduction effects. Inadequacy has appeared, it means that disharmonious audio effects were found not less than 3 times in total. It implies that the AN-SPx is a kind speaker cable with extremely high adaptability.

In the past 2 years, I borrowed innumerable pairs of speaker cables back home for auditioning and compare, no matter the selling price is expensive or cheaper than the AN-SPx. However, I am sure that there is ever one can fight the AN-SPx down entirely. Probably the AN-SPz that has not been borrowed for a try (since the list price is too high - 1 pair with 2.5 m long listed even hundred thousand something!) can fight it down easily.

I like AN-SPx absolutely not because of a special affection but heartfelt appreciate its neutral, accurate, high analyticity and extraordinary in tone quality. It never exaggerates. It gives HI-FI set a feeling of coloration. You might feel dark tea not tasty. However, that's its valuable point!

Although I haven't try all super speaker cables in the world yet. Nevertheless, according to my audio experience (over 20 years), the pure silver speaker cable of Audio Note is an excellent representative certainly, which is purchasable, sounds most accurate and least polluted. If user want to enjoy the pure white audio reproduction effects provided by Audio Note, the accuracy of equipment must be high and not extreme in personality.

The following news is great news to audiophiles absolutely, especially for those who have been adored to Audio Note cables.

In mid-April, Mr. Yu of Elephant Holdings Limited, the Distributor of AUDIO NOTE, gather all major writers of our magazine at Elephant's audition room in Wan Chai and announce ceremoniously that AUDIO NOTE has launch 4 types of speaker cables. They are AN-B, AN-L, AN-SPa and AN-SPe.

The new model number for 4 types of new cables are AN-Ba replaces AN-B, AN-La replaces AN-L, AN-SPa replaces AN-SP and AN-SPe which fill up the price distance between AN-SP and AN-SPx.

Besides the selling price of AN-Ba and AN-La has a little bit increased, the selling price of AN-SPa, and the AN-SPe which the one fill up the price distance between AN-SP and AN-SPx has no price increase but reduced. The structure and production procedure of AN-SPe almost same as AN-SPx but priced 50% cheaper than original list price of AN-SPx.

After listening for a while, I think the AN-SPa and AN-SPe do succeed the fine tradition of AUDIO NOTE's AN-SP and AN-SPx - low profile but with high analyticity. Moreover, its control power in low-frequency and grand scene seems to surpass the AN-SPx! That's why I raised a request to take the AN-SPa and AN-SPe back to my home for comparison. See whether the AN-SPe is able to defeat the AN-SPx with its similar structure. I believe you and me are hurry to know the result.

The information point out, the reason why the selling price of the brand new manufactured AN-SPa and AN-SPe can be reduced is because its production has been shift to a well-developed cable factory in Germany instead of a small-scale production but with high cost in Japan. Efficiency rise with cost cut down. Please do not misunderstand that the purity and grading of the pure silver conductor used in AN-SPa and AN-SPe are difference from the similar products once manufactured in Japan. The Distributor said they are entirely consistence. Both of them are made of pure silver in Italy. Quality is guaranteed.

As revealed, the total numbers of pure silver strands used at each pole inside the AN-SPa and AN-SPe is identical to AN-SP (15 strands) that production has been discontinued and the AN-SPx (20 strands) with production base still remains in Japan respectively. The individual multi-isolating layers - Litz's structure are adopted in each strand. Superficially it seems that they are copied and re-launch

with new model numbers. In fact, the fact is not like this. The pure silver conductor used in the brand new manufactured AN-SPa and AN-SPe is a kind of new structure with thickness differentiated and never appear in AUDIO NOTE pure silver cables before. It is said that this structure can offset the humorous vibration produced during signal transmission effectively. Therefore lower unpleasant noise platform can be obtained. Sound can be heard more exquisitely, with better control power and more fruitful in sound.

Replace the AN-SPx by AN-SPe with AN-SPz Jumper to connect Model 10 of Jeff-Rowland and Nautilus 802 of B & W, and to play the Lakatos CD of DGG, that I played most frequently this half year. AN-SPe shows its difference from AN-SPx obviously and direction of timbre immediately. For a parable, AN-SPe to appear comparably young and full of vigor while AN-SPx to appear experienced and prudent after it sang for more than 2 years. It performs just best at every link, never exaggerate. However, the AN-SPe is not in best condition at this moment, it sounds only 20 hours at most seems has a strength to surpass the AN-SPx in low-frequency control power! It proved that the Distributor didn't bull shit when narrate the word of the manufacturer side that the brand new manufactured AN-SPe posses of better control power in low-frequency. Disconnect the AN-SPe and replace it by AN-SPa. Strangely, the conductive structure consistent with AN-SPe with just 5 strands fewer's AN-SPa, the transparency come to have obvious different from AN-SPe unexpectedly. Perhaps it is caused by fewer strands used and thus energy lowered. Regarding to the timbre, the AN-SPa more close to the natural harmony of AN-SPx while AN-SPe is bit slack. Use AN-SPa and AN-SPe as Bi-Wire connection. Run the former one as high tone and run the latter one as bass for 3 days nonstop. Then take away the AN-SPe and test the AN-SPa alone.

The purity of sound quality of AN-SPa never inferior to AN-SPe and its advanced version AN-SPx. Noise is so low even been heard. To replay string music and vocal music are its forte. Under the monitor of my B & W Nautilus 802, when AN-SPa is used to replay some explosive movement or rock music with big movement, the music scene narrower than the AN-SPx that I have been used. Moreover, the ratio of height and depth not quiet outstanding as well. It shows that the feeling of energy not better than AN-SPx. Nevertheless, the balance of full-frequency, continuity and exquisite provided by the AN-SPa still shows the style of AUDIO NOTE that always be appreciated.

The tone of AN-SPa close to AN-SPx whereas different from AN-SPe against the characteristic that it has no change after get in condition. If just talking about the tone, it easily make me imagine that the overall performance 2 grade higher than AN-SPx which 3 time more expensive in list price when replay various kinds of personally well-known music. The purity of AN-SPa is pretty high. The is the characteristic of speaker cable of AUDIO NOTE. No matter replay violin or vocal, AN-SPa never brings audience a tone of feeling noisy and dry. The feeling of full-frequency thickness is richer than the AN-SPe but similar as AN-SPx. This really makes me feel suspecting. The structures of conductor are identical, just the numbers of strands used is different. Why does the result like this? If there must be a reason for it, perhaps it is related to its pure silver banana plugs! The AN-SPe and AN-SPx use pure silver spade. The tone quality of this brand new designed silver banana plugs sound better than the silver spade used for the past model. I think, the user of AN-SP, AN-SPx and AN-SPz should better check whether your current spades are silver version. If not, why not contact Elephant Holdings Limited to have the brand new designed silver banana plugs replaced under charge-basis. I guarantee the result will surprise you.

Having said that, the feeling of thickness of AN-SPa's full frequency quite even close to AN-SPx. But, the energetic still weaker than AN-SPx where it shows clear difference when compare with AN-SPe. I believe, if the loudspeaker I used are not the great power consumption B & W Nautilus 802 but some kinds of easy bootable loudspeaker, the difference between AN-SPa and AN-SPe in this way will not be so clear.

Disconnect the AN-SPa and replace by AN-SPe. Doubtless, the brand new designed AN-SPe fight down the AN-SPx that list price 1 time more expensive than it at the control power of low frequency and energetic. This is an iron-like fact! The low frequency of AN-SPe is more sturdy and hard, and better impact. However, the feeling of quantity and aftershock still belong to AN-SPx's dominance. Compare the overall performance one to one, the AN-SPe still cannot surpass the level of AN-SPx. I hope that if the AN-SPe can vanquish the AN-SPx, then sell it and purchase AN-SPe, the dream of money inflow to my pocket has been disillusioned.

SPx runs middle and treble, SPe runs the effect of bass the best

The medium high frequency section of AN-SPe in this stage is not able to reach the level of AN-SPx. As for whether it can get closer to or surpass it after 2-years usage. I think assumable predication is not necessary. Just like a phrase said by a Monk of Shao lin temple called Fong-Ching, while he vanquish the bishop of "Sun & Moon Religion", of a Chinese kung-fu fiction - "Win is Win, how can it be related to whether in best condition or not."

The full frequency of AN-SPe is 1/2 grade higher than AN-SPx. I think this is related to its audio personality direction. The sound stage appears more clear and silent after played by it. Not even a dust stained. Its outstanding performance in this way is the best among its rank. After repeatedly tested, the 3D dimensioned acoustic stage provided by AN-SPe and AN-SPx is almost the same. Their standards are the same.

I like the sturdy and hard low frequency provided by AN-SPe and admire the finest of full frequency thickness of AN-SPx. That's why I connect the AN-SPe to the bass and connect the AN-SPx to the medium treble. Please guess what will be the result? After the test, I can't accept the exchange their position or the sound after take away one of them. The sound quality improvement provided by AN-SPe plus AN-SPx connect with Nautilus 802, it brings my HI-FI set a completely new a reproduction effects. In this moment, whatever the extension force at 2 poles or density of acoustic stage up to its preciseness, they are never happened before. Absolutely defeated 1 single pair of AN-SPx.

In conclusion, performed average and obviously beyond former AN-SP's AN-SPa is irresistible ideal choice for anyone who want to experience the attraction of Audio Note pure silver speaker cables. My old friend, Ming, learn that AUDIO NOTE has new cable for launch. He requests to borrow for a try actively. It was pity that the Mark Levinson No. 332 power amplifier he used cannot be connected to AN-SPa with banana plug soldered. Climbing up one more podium he tried the AN-SPe for 3 days and he called and said that he sold the AN-SP. Compare AB, Selling price close to AN-SP's AN-SPe defeated the AN-SP entirely. This is a result within my expectation. Because I knew one grade inferior's AN-SPa has won AN-SP. Be compared by one grade advanced AN-SPe, how can the AN-SP be able to meet the challenge?

For the AN-SPe that list price few thousand expensive. I believe there is no doubt to say that it is the most worthwhile to buy and with full performance among various types of AUDIO NOTE pure speaker cables.