

ALBEDO – THE CABLE CRAFTSMEN

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First things first, this review will certainly not be the longest you will see from us, nor will it be a 'typical' review from us in the sense that we always lay the sections out very distinctly and always find something to have a good old moan about. During my time (rather extended) with this particular product/brand, it has proved rather difficult to come to terms with the fact that I may have to part with them. It's time more people knew about the superb silver and silver-mono-crystal cables on offer from Albedo.

But, who are Albedo?!

Well these guys have been making Hi-Fi cabling since 1996 (my birth year coincidentally), and always from high purity silver, no copper in sight here! A couple of the chaps actually have backgrounds in high quality jewellery so they have plenty of experience with precious metals. The most interesting thing, and arguably the most important factor apart from sound, is that at Albedo there is no dressing up of OEM wire that any-old company can buy, nothing of the sort! The silver itself comes in from KGHM but from there it is all in house processing and manufacture. Just so there is no confusion, this includes the smelting of the silver and also using in house CNC machining equipment for processes like profiling. They even use an ultrasonic process for demagnetization and cleaning the metal.



The thing that gets me is that they even do the rolling in house. Now obviously they have extensively tested and perfected their manufacturing from temperatures to timings to resting the material and it is all kept quite hush, but they say the speed the silver is rolled is an incredibly important part in the process. It doesn't happen by accident, they have worked for years to develop the best possible techniques to ensure they have the best possible sound. In theory at least...

Just to talk you through the range quickly, the first model is called 'Beginning' which is their base model cable reserved for just RCA connection, we then have the Blue Family which retails for £350 for a 1.5m pair of speaker cable. The next range is the Flat-One (interconnect) / Air I Family (speaker cable) which will set you back £420(1m) and £540 (1.5m pair) respectively. None of these have been in my possession so I can't comment on the performance. The same is to be said of the Geo family of cables, although I have held these in Munich and they look and feel absolutely wonderful, an extremely premium cable aesthetically, these are another step up in cost at £870 for a 2m pair of speaker cables.

The next tier of cable is the Monolith family; this was my first Albedo experience so I can talk a bit more about this one! I absolutely loved the cable sonically straight away, but importantly I must mention that I actually had the previous version which was the non-'monocrystal' rendition. The cable is visually two

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separate ribbons for positive and negative terminals. The silver sheathing hides the antistatic insulation and looks lovely in doing so, as do the branded 'clamps' that sit over the cables and join the two separate sheaths together. Even the non-monocrystal Monolith was truly excellent; it was superbly controlled throughout the frequency spectrum especially noticeable in the lower regions. Bass was tight and well defined with plenty of depth and slam, no bloat or exaggerated bloom, just naturally textured albeit leaner than the Solid family. The Monolith is up there with the most transparent cables I have ever tried; it is not kind to poor recordings or electronics so that is something to bear in mind. They do exactly what a cable should do, get a signal from one place to another without really imparting its own signature. It's a truly great cable at an extremely good price and is understandably their best-selling in the range.

I am told that the monocrystalline upgrade builds on the same cable characteristics but just takes it up a notch. Obviously the development and implementation of the monocrystal cable will have cost a lot of time and money but amazingly, Albedo have decided to keep the price exactly the same at £1100 for a 2m pair. I have so much respect for that decision, and this cable!

The star in my experience has been the Solid range at £1770 for a 2m pair; I have had the monocrystal Solid for a while now and I have to say, it's very special. The cable is split into two as with the Monolith but they are the traditional cylindrical



shape rather than ribbons. Within each cable is a multitude of monocrystalline silver solid core wires of varying gauges. They look stunning for a start, with the black and reflective silver sheathing and the metal branded plugs that lead to the spades, they certainly catch the eye! My only criticism of this cable is the flexibility. You do have to manually handle them into position as they aren't floppy or slack, you have to practically bend them into the exact position you want but it is relatively easy. Once you have them in place you will never notice it, but I had to mention it. I strongly recommend ordering a length that doesn't have a lot of excess between amplifiers and speakers for the best results.

Ignore the weathered box....

Moving on, taking us to the main reason you would buy the cable, what is the sonic performance like? Well the initial wow factor comes from the soundstage presentation. It is without doubt one of the stand out world class features of this cable. The width and height are really impressive but that isn't too unusual with high end cables (although you wouldn't normally consider cables under £1800 to be high end!). The thing that defies expectation is the depth of presentation and image; it draws you into a musical cocoon that never seems exaggerated; it is all so natural and encompassing, you really do need to hear it. I have not heard the Pearlacoustic Sibelius single drivers sound so huge in my room before, it's awesome.

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The depth isn't just in terms of space though, even in the bass the Solid performs stunningly when you focus on the layering and textural qualities too. There is no sacrifice of clarity either; the precision in everything from decay to attacking edges is subtly very impressive. It's a great all-rounder that really lets the music take the spotlight.

And there's more! They are tremendously musical and involving in the way they convey whatever you are listening to. Tonally they are extremely natural with plenty of warmth which when combined with the wonderful timbre and coherency makes a seriously attractive proposition at the price.

Something else that's important to mention is that the Solid family isn't as critical or revealing as the monolith which was harder to synergise because of this. The Solid is still very transparent obviously, but it isn't as characteristically ruthless. Whatever I was spinning, I would find another reason to love it with the Solid cables. Both have their pros and cons!

In reality, even the Solids are really good value, £1770 for a truly brilliant speaker cable like this is pretty awesome actually, I can confidently say that at under 2k I wouldn't buy my cables from another company although I would certainly be looking very closely at both the Monolith standard and Monolith Reference as well as the Solid cables around this price! Even their digital cables that I've tried



at £270 have been of real quality. The company philosophy and transparency goes a long way with me as well, it is refreshing and necessary to an area of the industry constantly plagued with sceptics and doubters.

The Albedo ladder doesn't stop at the Solids as there are two models above them that I would absolutely love to hear just so I could see what these guys are capable of at the very top of their range. The Monolith Reference and the Metamorphosis are those two cables. Who knows, maybe one day it will happen!

Funnily enough I actually let a friend borrow the older Solid speaker cables for a few hours purely because he was a cable 'non-believer'. They were brought back to me with a very different attitude to which they were taken. The guy was absolutely stunned but I could tell he wasn't particularly happy about admitting it! He couldn't really describe why or what was so good but kept talking about the huge space that the music was coming from and the amazing clarity (and I hadn't told him anything!). Pretty cool really!

Who knows, he may even be their next customer!

As you have probably noticed, I really think what has been achieved here is great. They are showing that you don't need to spend even 2k to get a really top

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sounding cable. Let's not forget that it's all 'in house' as well, they really are the complete package.

Albedo deserve more than a consideration in everyone's cabling decisions, the guys are great and more importantly their Monolith, Solid and Digital cables are too!

Albedo are available in the UK through G Point Audio!