Black Rhodium
INTRO Loudspeaker Cable with Ferrites

AS PART OF the entry-level range of cables from Black Rhodium, this is an upgrade to the company's previous INTRO speaker cable that uses the interference-reduction qualities of a large ferrite core to reduce audible distortion caused by external radio frequency interference. Black Rhodium has used an alternative base cable compared with the original to minimise the increase in price. The cable is available in a choice of red, blue, black and white and in pairs of 2, 3 or 5m lengths. It is terminated in high-quality, gold-plated Z plugs chosen by the company to offer good connection properties at a relatively low cost.

The cable is flexible and not too thick, making it nice and easy to inconspicuously route it around the corners of my room. After connecting the cable between my valve monoblocks and transmission line speakers, I start the auditioning process by playing an LP of *Too Darn Hot* sung by Clare Teal with the Syd Lawrence Orchestra. The power of the opening saxophones takes my breath away. The piece then progresses into the main vocal section, which demonstrates how the overall pace and timing of the music is spot on. Teal's vocals are perfectly positioned in front of the orchestra and her singing sparkles with excitement.

Energy rush
Swapping the vinyl with one of Vivaldi's *Op.7* played by I Musici, the performance is impressively sprightly and energetic, yet easy on the ears. The soundstage is wide and deep, and the instrument placement in particular is very well defined.

To check out how well the Black Rhodium speaker cable handles detail, I choose an LP of JS Bach's glorious *Partita No.2* played on the harpsichord by Trevor Pinnock. I am unable to detect any muddiness in the harmonics of the individual notes during the louder crescendos and the instrument has a really well-defined presence in my listening room. The INTRO is a good-value speaker cable capable of delivering great music to your speakers. *NR*

▶ **DETAILS**
PRICE
£80 for a 2m pair
WEBSITE
black-rhodium.co.uk

OUR VERDICT
★★★★★

Vertere
RG-1 Reference Groove ISO Shelf with SilenceR Feet

▶ **DETAILS**
PRICE
£1,195 for the ISO Shelf; £995 for the 3 SilenceR feet
WEBSITE
vertereacoustics.com

OUR VERDICT
★★★★★

AS A DEVICE that relies on physical vibrations to reproduce music, a turntable can be very susceptible to unwanted noise that can pollute the sound. These can emanate from external sources and be generated by the deck itself. The RG-1 Reference Groove ISO Shelf from Vertere is designed to address both of these issues by providing isolation from external sources and dissipating unwanted vibrations away from the deck. The shelf is primarily designed to support Vertere's own turntables, but should also be suitable for use with any others with three feet.

It comes supplied as standard with six 'ISO-Balls' to provide support, but can alternatively be fitted with three SilenceR feet as an upgrade – as seen here. The Shelf is really well made and available in other finishes including metallic black, pearlescent white and champagne. The SilenceR feet are new equipment support pods that combine a hard felt, resistive coupling foot, a direct coupling ball and an isolating layer of Sorbothane. I fit the Shelf underneath a Vertere MG-1 record deck and conduct the usual 'before and after' listening tests.

Sonic benefits
Playing Prokofiev's *Romeo And Juliet*, performed by the London Symphony Orchestra, I am struck by a fuller presentation with clearer, crisper and punchier drums. In addition, the sudden changes of mood throughout the minuet in *Act 1 Scene 2* seem to have more feeling when using the Shelf. The music sounds more intimate in the quieter sections with greater dynamics during the louder parts. There is also an improvement in stereo focus.

Playing the audiophile LP *Time* from Scottish band Caezar, the first track, *The Prayer*, demonstrates how the vocals really stand out from the instruments using the Shelf. Without it, the vocals almost disappear into the powerful instrumental music. This support is beautifully made and delivers surprisingly good sonic benefits. *NR*