

Power To The People

Naim has introduced a new power lead for its products - but it works well with other components, says Jon Myles.



Naim is rightly renowned for the attention to detail it puts into all its products. This even extends to the mains cables it packs with its electronic components.

Their high-end 500 series and Statement products get the in-house designed Power-Line – that sells for £530 separately – while the rest of the range gets leads manufactured to the Salisbury-based company's careful specifications.

Times are changing, though – and there's a new kid on the block in the shape of the Power-Line Lite. It will come with all of the new Uniti range, integrated separates and Classic series.

But existing Naim owners need not worry as it is also available as a standalone product priced at £95.

As ever with Naim, the product has been in development for quite a while and subjected to careful listening tests before release.

Take a Power-Line Lite out of its box and it looks fairly standard. But examine it closer and you'll start to see the differences from Naim's previous power leads. Most obvious is that the mains plug features a thermoset resin case which feels exceptionally robust and houses

floating pins which are claimed to give a superior electrical contact.

Push the pins and, yes, they do wiggle. It's rather disconcerting at first but don't worry, that's what they are supposed to do.

There's also another floating cable retainer finished in high-gloss. Taken together all of this is meant to provide better power delivery and eliminate micro-dynamic vibrations entering components.

The cable itself is the same one Naim has used for the past 15 years – selected, they say, after exhaustive listening tests.

SOUND QUALITY

Starting off I removed the Naim stock leads from an NDX streamer and Supernait 2 and plugged in Power-Line Lites to both.

Was there a night and day change? No. Was there a difference? Yes. After a few hours listening it became clear that the low-end had firmed up and I could hear my Neat Iota Alpha loudspeakers sounding a little more expansive at the top end.

On Beats International's 'Dub

Be Good To Me' (24/96) Lindy Layton's voice was sweeter while the sampled bass line had extra tightness. It was a subtle difference but nonetheless an obvious improvement.

Taking out the Supernait and replacing it with a Creek Audio Evolution 100A proved interesting. The Power-Line Lite may have been designed for Naim equipment but the Creek also benefitted by being plugged into it.

Again it was subtle but noticeable. Tom Waits' vocals on 'Blue Valentine' growled deeper while the piano's left-hand keys had more body and depth.

With Haim's 'Something To Tell You' the acoustic guitars seemed to shimmer better than with a standard power lead, bringing improved definition and greater punch to the sound.

CONCLUSION

If you are already an owner of Naim components below the 500 and Statement range then I'd say the new Power-Line Lite should be a mandatory listen for an upgrade. Owners of other components may also want to take a listen as for £95 it provides good value for money.

HI-FI WORLD

NAIM POWER-LINE LITE £95



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

Recommended upgrade for users of Naim gear. Also makes a good case for itself when used in a non-Naim system.

FOR

- opens up soundstage
- improved bass
- treble clarity

AGAINST

- differences are subtle

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