

Analysis Plus Power Oval A/C Cords

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nuthin' BUT the truth...?

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"Hi Clement. I know you're fond of our cables but just wait till you get a chance to hear our newest power cords. You're really going to be amazed." Don't you just wanna run in the opposite direction of any manufacturer/PR person that you know who doubles as his products biggest and most loyal admirer? I know I do. Except, that is, when it's coming from Analysis Plus President Mark Markel, also known as "the MAN behind the curtain."

Since his Silver Oval designs had first gotten my pants all in a bunch when I initially tried them and chose them as my reference (see [archives](#)), I had long been anticipating his power cords. Unfortunately, until now they had not manufactured A/C cables. Many consider the A-P cables to be state of the art in many all-important audiophile departments such as inner detail, truth of timbre, smoothness and top-end (upper frequencies) resolution. Additionally, A-P Power Oval loudspeaker cables and interconnects possessed a robust but natural bass with great extension and detail as well. I guess with these virtues clearly apparent, I was more than welcoming the opportunity to hear just what, if any, sonic improvements the Power Oval A/C cords would bring.

Chief Hardware maven and column contributor Stu McCreary had called me awhile back sounding quite impressed (like his pants were all bunched up too) with the addition of the Power Oval power cords. Stu exclaimed that once he had placed them on the Bel Canto EVo monoblocks, the very same amplifiers used here, "Everything changed quite drastically... for the better."

OK, all of us who own A-P cables know Mark's philosophy don't we? He is not the type to listen to cables as much as he is into examining them. His theory is simple and logical: the signal on one end of cable should look exactly the same way when it comes out on the other side! Mark is not your regular Joe Audiophile who, once he's heard all the great sounding products, or worse—only those he could afford—thinks he can master the art of designing his very own. I could qualify Mark an audiophile as much as a real life scientist. In his studies of Metallurgy, Mark prefers to measure a cables "claimed" performance. To do this, Mark utilizes powerful research components such as electron microscopes and spectrum analyzers, which allows him to literally see—through a standardized test of measurements—what's going on (see more company background by visiting their Website).

If Mark's A-P Power Oval A/C cord is anything as good as his other designs, then he has an instant success in my book. Not solely because A-P's pure Silver interconnects or speaker cables proved to be exemplary performers, but because these power cords—once again an A-P standard practice—are priced very comfortably, in addition to completing the ALL Analysis system. In my book this is the best way to truly measure a product's line.

With two pair of Power Oval power cords in hand, I replaced both the Wasatch Reference Power Cords at my Tact 2.2 preamplifier, and the Ortho Spectrum Analogue Reconstructor AR2000. Finishing the review of the Art Audio Jota Amplifier and the Dulcinea loudspeaker from Rosinante, I found listening to the Jota a very pleasant experience since it came equipped with its own volume attenuator. This offered me a great opportunity to hear these design virtues without any preconceived notions based on my usual tastes, biases and preferences to my preferred arsenal of electronics.

Mark states, in designing the Power Ovals, that "***What we have done at Analysis Plus is use computer simulation to optimize the design of a power distribution system. What we discovered is our patented hollow oval design provides a low L cable without having to use stiff and bulky cables. Our cables have a super low noise voltage to reduce the background noise to a minimum. This is extremely important during quite passages if you want to hear subtle details. This is very important for classical music fans and for other lovers of live music.***"

Physically, you can tell that Mark not only wanted to make a great and affordable product, given all the aforementioned philosophies, but by using the finest parts available today, he is attempting to make the Power Ovals the best on the market, regardless of price. Using the ubiquitous WattGate connectors -- as many more expensive manufacturers do -- the look and feel of the Power Oval's are, shall I say, simple. So simple by comparison to the competition that you just don't think they can do what the big boys do. There's no stiff, unwieldy, boa constrictor sized cord—that looks as if it just swallowed a pig—attached to your very delicate CD transport, preamp or amp!

There's certainly something quite magical about listening to the Power Oval design. Using Analysis Plus cables exclusively, loudspeaker cables, interconnects and power cords, is an assault on the senses. I don't state this lightly! This is especially noticeable when used with single ended tube designs, most notably the Jota amplifier or the notorious Zanden amplifier out of Japan. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with A-P when used on solid state either, as Stu and I had previously written about in our cable reviews. Historically, there's the age-old question of what makes more music, tubes or solid state. My answer is still *I don't know!* With the way the Bel Canto EVo monoblocks morph into the best of both worlds it's so hard to tell the difference. But one thing is certain: there's no longer the need to place sweet sounding cables, power cords or tweaks to "master at home" the most out of your system. If you want to leave it as the music's intended, through the ears of the engineer, then I welcome you to audition the Power Ovals through whatever floats your boat.

Case in point, lets take the performance of jazz organist extraordinaire Jimmy Smith and his latest CD entitled, *dot com blues* [Blue Thumb 3145439782], as the near

perfect illustration. Track three's "Strut" is a blues number originally penned by blues great Taj Mahal. Well, surprise, surprise, the Taj is on this track as a special guest vocalist and he does not disappoint. Playing lead guitar alongside Smith's wonderful organ work, and sounding ever so young, this turns out to be one helluva fun track where the Taj belts out his famous line..."you should have never said you loved me when you laid across my folding bed." Well, if there's one word that would define this Power Oval cable, that word is "neutrality." There's a sense that what you're hearing through your ancillary gear is not being traded off in the least with something else sweeter, darker, richer, whatever. The sound of my Sony SCD-1 used as a transport in conjunction with a P1A/P3A digital front-end and the AR2000 proved too much of a good thing with the garden-variety cabling I used in conjunction with the A-P interconnects. The way this setup hurled instruments into your lap would classify it as forward by almost any audiophile. Don't get me wrong, I loved it, particularly when the Home Theater was readied but in two-channel mode, even with the incredible noise shaping AR2000, I didn't get too many votes of confidence as to its overall musicality. This changed quickly however when the Power Ovals came into the picture.

I enjoyed this system's ability to thrust itself beyond the stage set by the boundaries of the loudspeaker placement. What was more amazing was when I swapped out all the different A/C power cords and went with an all Analysis Plus system. The entire stage relaxed and instantly become more intricate in its retrieval of inner detail and delicacy during heavy passages. There was no longer the feeling that the instruments wanted to jump out at you and give you a big kiss on loud passages. Depending upon your taste, this was both good and bad because though I enjoy this immensely, via the Wasatch line, while my guests did not (there is such a thing as becoming the victim of your own biases ya' know. I wanted dynamics...and I got it!). The sonic differences yielded by simply employing a total of five Power Oval A/C cords changed my system as Stu mentioned on the phone...drastically!

At \$299 per five-foot run, I don't think you can go wrong with the Power Oval design. Swapping amplifiers and loudspeakers may make for a bigger improvement, but will also make a bigger dent in your wallet. Before going out and purchasing this highly touted amp or that excellent loudspeaker, you owe it to yourself to hear what your system might sound like first with a mere change in cabling. The best way to achieve that is by checking out the latest Power Oval designs from Analysis Plus Inc. You just may thank me!