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Skywire 1400 Interconnects

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I fervently try not to be an “interconnect of the month” type of reviewer. After all, the good ones are very expensive, and they are nothing more than wire. As a result, I tend to find an interconnect and then stick to it. That’s the way it should be. For many months my cost no object favorite has been the RWA interconnect from Andy Bartha. Well made with superb sonics they aren’t all that expensive at around \$400, but for a wire it’s still a lot of money. In the bargain department I like the Signal Cable interconnects (and speaker cables). For the basics, the Signal Cable outperforms much of the high priced exotica. Nothing to be ashamed of there.

As a result of my view of such things, interconnects sent to me for audition are properly broken-in, auditioned and then usually put in a drawer. If the manufacturer provides for return shipment, they go back home with nary a word from me. I figure that you know what I like and when something better comes in, I’ll tell you about it. Something better has come in.

Don Palmer e-mailed me a few months ago to tell about a new interconnect that he had designed on behalf of a new company – Skywire. Yes, Don’s old company was called Highwire, or something like that, so the family resemblance was there. But this is not Don’s company. Skywire is owned and operated by Jimmy Chan, a young man that is yet to feel the physical complications of being on the “plus” side of fifty. I like the combination of youth with its vigor and, let’s call it experience, that a learned man such as Don Palmer brings to the equation.



The new Skywire 1400 interconnects (\$585) are the finest interconnects so far used in the Big Rig. Which, in my opinion, makes them very, very good. Surpassing the performance of the RWA interconnects was not an easy task. And in besting my signal bearing fave for the last few years, it was not only the Skywire’s superb retrieval of detail and extension that gave it the advantage, but it was its tonal balance and front to back focus – both, dead on.

Before the Skywire, never would have I thought to call the RWA warmish, but in one-on-one comparisons between these two great interconnects, the RWA came off as the warmer of the two, a little bloomy if you will; which is not necessarily a bad thing. I can enjoy that. But in this instance it was the removal of the aforesaid warmth by the Skywire that ended up revealing more musical realism. Had the difference between the two interconnects been merely a leanness on the part of the Skywire, the RWA might still be king. In going between the two, however, it became clear that what the Skywire initially appeared to lack in warmth and body when compared to the RWA was really the Skywire’s superior tonal balance and what, in retrospect, was a sense of transparency from top to bottom that the RWA could not match.

When an interconnect is a transparent, as dynamic and as extended as the Skywire 1400, the

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added smidgen of warmth in the RWA came off as an unnecessary artifact. Still, this interconnect gave up nothing in the bottom octave. Considering that the RWA is one of the finest interconnects that one can purchase at any price, this comment on the Skywire is intended as high praise in every respect. And it's only their second best interconnect...

The RWA is very much in the same league as the Skywire, leaving very little to be desired and even less to critique. By anyone's criteria, these are great cables. If anything separates these interconnects other than their sonics in the lower midrange, it would be the slightly greater focus of the Skywire in the mids and uppermids. The hitherto unobtainable focus displayed by the Skywire strikes me as being the result of Don's extreme attention to detail, namely; attention to wire resonances (ringing) and RF attenuation. Don calls it his "Standing Wave Suppression Technology." And it works. Listening to the Skywire is almost like listening to an active circuit that is quieter than another active circuit. So often, one doesn't realize that he is listening to noise or blurring until it is removed. You heard the noise, but it didn't register with your brain as being there until it disappeared. Removing something from the sound is oftentimes more dramatic than adding something to it. Both interconnects did a good job in that regard, it's just that the Skywire takes this performance standard a little further – to a quieter place, to a place that I wasn't aware the Skywire could go, until it went there.

Making a quieter interconnect that doesn't over damp the sound or compress dynamic response, results in a cable that leaves all kind of room for increased musical expression. Transients come at you quicker and the fundamental seems, ah, ummm, more *fundamental!* Decays last longer and the silence between the sounds seems less cluttered – more silent. With the noise floor lowered, textures and harmonic flavorings are brought to the fore and naturally illuminated. One hears into the music just a little bit deeper... The unamplified sounds of acoustic guitar, violin and the human voice take on a tactile realism that draws you to the music. A worthy purchase with a 30 day money back guarantee.

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