

IN-AKUSTIK REFERENZ NF-2404/ REFERENZ LS-2404 AIR

By Cai Brockmann. Photos: Ingo Schulz, in-akustik



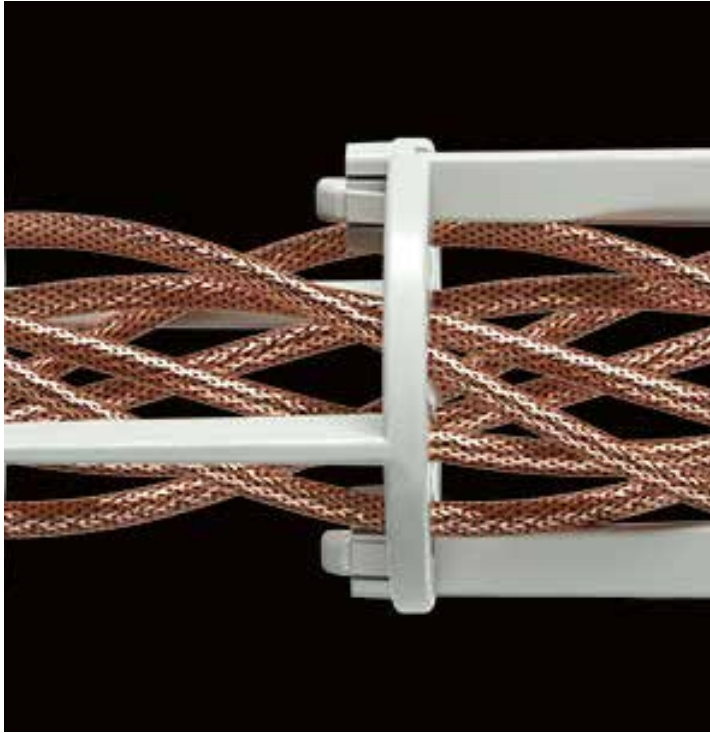
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_____Cables sometimes seem to have almost mystical properties. And the more expensive they are, the more magical the results—at least in the mind’s eye of those who have just paid out an enormous amount of money for an exclusive product. Once and for all, they’ll say, these accessories have finally given them the sound they’ve been longing to have for their particular configuration. Sometimes, you even get the impression that cables can handle audio repair work by “improving” the sound a system produces. That’s absolute nonsense of course.

Thanks to their many years’ experience in cable manufacturing—and presumably also due to their Swabian heritage—the experts at In-Akustik have always had a pleasantly level-headed attitude about such things. Their philosophy is clear, even at the very top of the high-end segment: “The best cable is not the one that gets the most out of a system, it’s the one that loses the least.” Every contact between components harbors the danger of loss or interference, which is also true in the cable itself. The engineers from the Black Forest counter this threat ▶

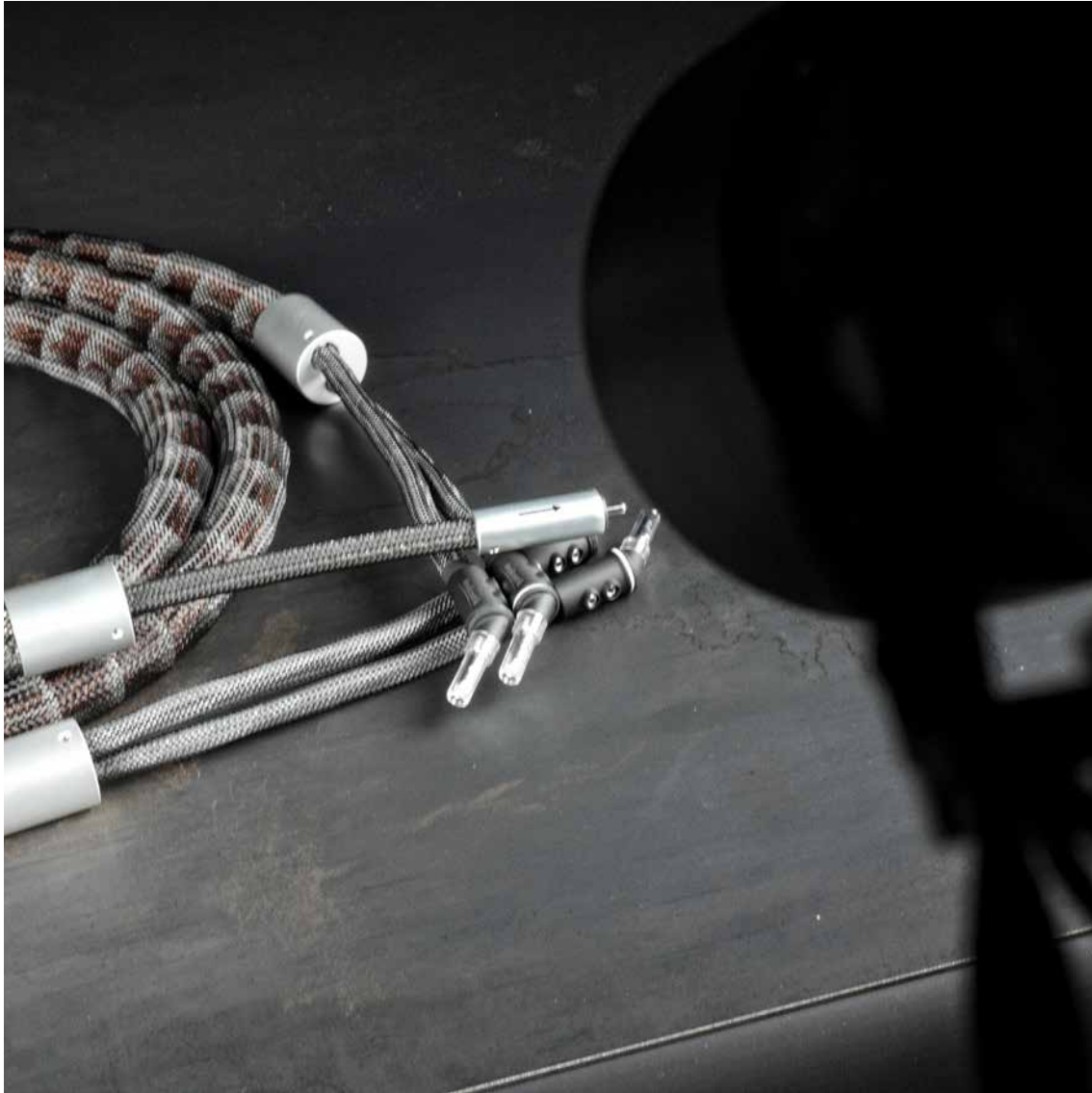


with excellent materials, a sophisticated design and meticulous workmanship. Head designer Holger Wachsmann puts it this way: “We rely on physics, not hocus-pocus.”

And quod erat demonstrandum is the guiding principle in this branch of science. In its recently extended top-of-the-range Referenz Selection series, In-Akustik has set new standards in mechanical engineering and braiding techniques. Because air remains the best insulator, the engineers have come up with a clever but amazingly simple construction made up of flexible supporting frame elements. In the interior of the impressive-looking cable, these supporting frames hold the two symmetrically arranged conductors in a helix shape with much surrounding air, keeping the shielding at an exact

distance. Hence the name “air helix design.” True to the In-Akustik philosophy, the supporting elements as well as the cable itself are manufactured in Germany. During assembly, the elements are clipped together by hand, equipped with the defined braided conductors, covered with a jacket, and fitted with the appropriate rhodium plated connectors. Because this intricate process is too complex for a machine, the air helix Referenz cables are assembled by specially trained staff at an In-Akustik facility near Freiburg.

The NF and the LS cables, both of which I had the pleasure of testing, are really light despite their impressive girth, and also extremely flexible in terms of their bending radius. This practicality in daily use is a pleasant change from a lot of other “super ▶



cables” that suffer from design-related stiffness and/or exert a massive drag due to their own weight. Both In-Akustik Referenz 2404 cables are a joy to use, and I had no problems connecting them up to high-end components. The cable ends are heavily tapered for production reasons, making it easier to access tighter sockets.

From a sound perspective, both Referenz products boast excellent transparency and texture. But anyone looking for that elusive special sound experience or even seeking to compensate for deficits in other equipment has definitely come to the wrong place. The cables give you what they receive at their own

connection sockets, but in a crystal-clear, “airy” and breathtakingly open quality that’s hard to top. And in light of the sometimes astronomical price tags for other top-class cables, the Referenz Selection series from In-Akustik can even be regarded as easy on the pocket book. ■

In-Akustik Referenz Selection | 2404 Air cable series |
Sample prices: Referenz NF-2404 (one-meter set, cinch plugs) €1,200, LS cable Referenz LS-2404 Air (2 x 3 meters) from €2,730

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