

In-akustik Referenz LS-1603

German build quality turns to cables as the extensive In-akustik range becomes available in the UK. Here's its flagship. Review & Lab: **Paul Miller**



Arguably Germany's best-kept cable secret, the In-akustik brand is also remarkably extensive, offering everything from loudspeaker to Ethernet and analogue interconnects to HDMI, across four different ranges. Being an offshoot of the Braun Group, In-akustik is not short of resources. Even the copper in its conductors is smelted and refined in Germany, the highest quality OFC batches being selected for its flagship 'Referenz' range of audio cables.

Top of the tree is its LS-1603 speaker cable, now available in the UK pre-terminated with In-akustik's own rhodium-coated KS-103 spade connections. A 3m set is priced at £1474, which buys a lot of very sophisticated and largely hand-made cable. In-akustik's 'high-speed waveguide' geometry begins with 16 multicore conductors, grouped as signal and return pairs, that are wound around a hollow polyethylene (PE) tube. Each conductor comprises multiple, lacquer-coated copper strands wound around a solid PE core, insulated by foamed



ABOVE: In-akustik's flagship Referenz speaker cable is directional – the 'ends' marked by solid alloy terminations

PE and jacketed in a solid PE. Measured in my lab, LS-1603 offered an incredibly low 6.3mohm/m series resistance and 0.13µH/m loop inductance but the Litz-like construction pushes parallel capacitance up to 303pF/m. Not all amplifiers will be equally happy driving lengths beyond this 3m set...

sound that's too heavy or congested. There's no hint of splashiness here, so if you see the LS-1603 described as 'bright sounding' or 'emphasising detail' then it's just as likely the extra zing is coming from a lesser amplifier driving long runs. With a capable amp and speakers, it'll sound wonderfully polished. ⬇



LEFT: Each hand-made cable comes with a signed quality assurance certificate. Construction is exemplary

POLISHED PERFORMER

The mono Devialet 500 amplifiers used in my system handled this reactance with impunity, the inserted lengths of LS-1603 cable encouraging a very smooth and civilised sound. Me'Shell Ndegéocello's 'Peace Beyond Passion' sounded clean and detailed, tending towards the sparse rather than cluttered when the going got really busy. So the bass is firm and crisp just as the treble is faintly restrained rather than wholly open and zesty. But rather this than a

HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

While certainly in the 'high-end' bracket, In-akustik's Referenz LS-1603 is not as prohibitively priced as some on the market. The cable is clearly assembled with meticulous attention to detail and beautifully finished, and will surely last a lifetime. Some amplifiers may demur at driving lengths over the default 3m as it does present an above average capacitance, but as a tool for fine-tuning exquisite hi-fi systems, it's likely to be just the ticket.

Sound Quality: 80%

