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Kimber Kable 12TC Cable Speaker Cable

Having started their course back in 1979, Kimber Kable by Ray Kimber can be enjoying today all the success that many Companies of the same field would only dream of. Right from the beginning, Kimber has not feared experimenting with various cable topologies and dielectrics, in order to rule out noise and to fully utilize the properties of each dielectric, as the latter is considered to play a primary role to a cable's overall performance.

Kimber Kable doesn't only command a noticeable product range, mostly based on Ray's verified techniques, but also has a respectable inventory of awards and positive feedback.



The new member of the Kimber family belongs to the cost-effective TC range; its name is 12TC and it is similar to the 8TC, a well-renowned if not famous budget-value, high-performance contender. The 12TC has been in our hands for a while now, therefore the time is right to share our impression of the attributes that make it stand out, even in its own league, namely the TC range. Read on...

In Depth

The 12TC consists of 24 stranded, Litz-braided, conductors (12 hot and 12 negative). Each conductor is a group of ultra high-purity copper strands, of different AWG each, according to Kimber's Varistrand® anti-vibration technique. Each group of strands is then contained in a high-pressure, low-temperature extruded Teflon® sleeve, forming a conductor.



The cable's tech specs, as posted by the manufacturer on their website, completely vindicate Kimber's choices of materials and braiding techniques, showing, more than anything, their deep knowledge in terms of implementing each technique to achieve specific measurable results. We therefore observe an exceedingly low resistance figure, due to pure metals and relatively low overall AWG, followed by a noticeably low inductance and a decent capacitive load, due to the chosen dielectrics and braiding topology.

Listening Highs

We are definitely dealing with the most revealing speaker cable of the whole VS and TC ranges. Even the tiniest detail becomes fully discrete, to an extent that allows me to compare this cable to others costing two or three times as much. Its addition does not only preclude all possibility of treble "generalizations" - as in glare- but also carries out the difficult task of contributing to a glare-free/fuzz-free presentation of the highs, while at the same time it manages to prevent the accurate tonal balance of our setups from taking the wrong path, which is cold, harsh and inorganic. Marketing always cries for frequency response, and here's a way to get it without all those side-effects.

Mids

My first observation would be in reference to openness. Having the Nordost Red Dawn at hand, a contender who is well reputed into clearing up foggy horizons whilst adding no extra weight whatsoever, the 12TC managed to ideally (given the price) place itself somewhere between the former and the midrange-favoring Acoustic Zen Satori. The Nordosts, on the other hand, were keen on providing a more delicately-weaved and analytical presentation, at the cost of the strings losing a bit of their "wooden" timbre to obtain maximum transient speed. On the other hand, the "timbral-fidelity" approach, primarily found on the Satori, but also on the 12TC, accounted for a more fulfilling listening experience, on our current setups, that is. When it came to vividness and holography in particular, the 12TC scored the highest. Another substantial element of their performance was the obvious broadening of the dynamic range, compared to the other contenders, especially when driven by solid-state amplification. That, in conjunction with their tidy mid-lows, made it easier for me to read into a deep, wide and detailed sonic scene.

The 12TC brings the soundstage-front closer to the listener, favoring immediacy. Dynamic contrasts, from large-scale to the tiniest, can thus be moving, while giving a palpable rendition of a performer's prominence, especially of those closer to the microphone. However, Kimber's priority remains to avoid glare and color-flooding that would make you loose interest fast.

Lows

Here's where Kimber is truly seeking opponents. The stunning clarity of lower frequencies made us wonder how a mere stranded copper/Teflon® speaker cable can make such a difference. Overall changes in bass definition brought to mind the Briston BDA-1 D/A converter, a gem recently that joined our fleet. By increasing detail, adding spatial definition and improving time-cohesion in damping, the 12TC managed to send the 8TC (very well-acclaimed in all these domains) to the second place. In all, lower frequencies' air and ease of presentation are coming out so much better through the 12TC, it has to be heard to be believed.

Soundstage

The 8VS and 8TC being rather gifted in soundstage accuracy and holography, you can now add dimensionality that comes closer to the real thing, unlocking a potential that might well have been thought of as non-existent in certain setups.

Run-in process

Our sample demanded at least 200 hours of running-in, as it most probably was factory-fresh. There are many cables that take forever to reveal their true inner balance, while others unleash their potential almost right out of the box. The former category includes the Cardas Golden Reference the Acoustic

Zen Satori & Silver Ref. Mk2, currently featured in our setups, while the Harmonic Technology Pro 11 belongs in the latter. As for Kimber's 12TC, a prolonged run-in period is mandatory, in order to obtain consistent results in an evaluation process. Time will fetch you a broadened and better-focused scene, as well as a more refined projection of their bold and room-filling presentation.



Conclusion

Kimber 12TC justifiably makes it to my personal "best value" chart, which is now comprised of four members. Suiting most systems fine, it offers a whole lot for the asking price, even surpassing much pricier rivals on certain aspects.

The other three chart-residents of the €400 to €1.000 price range are the plethora - in every aspect - Acoustic Zen Satori, the Auditorium23 (auditorium23.de) - mainly for providing "magical bonding" between triodes and sensitive drivers- and the Harmonic Technology Pro 11 Plus. If you really want to squeeze the most out of your setup, without spending a fortune, the 12TC is definitely worth a listen. Hell, even if you despise the whole wire-o-logy and consider cables to be nouveau-riche ego jewelry, just spend some quality time, like a music-enriched weekend, with these in your setup and draw your own conclusions...

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We liked

- Suits many setup combinations
- Presents tons of information
- Particularly resolving and "scent-free" for the price
- Lack of flooding or homogenization
- Extended dynamic headroom

We didn't like

- If you expect a cable to inject romanticism and euphony, to cover or subtract imminent aggressiveness or even to fill some gaps in tonal balance, please look elsewhere
- Price: ~650€

Website: www.kimber.com

Listening Setup

Digital Sources:

Briston BDA-1, Musical Fidelity A5 (transport), Esoteric SA-50, MHDT Havana DAC

Analog Sources:

Project turntables / Benz ACE-M cart.

Preamplifiers:

Conrad Johnson CT5, Conrad Johnson Classic Pre, Placette

Power amplifiers:

Conrad Johnson MV & LP series, Blue Circle, Primaluna, Wyred4Sound ST-1000, LFD zero LE

Speakers:

Focal, Proac Response & Studio series

Other Cables:

Cardas Golden Ref., Cardas Golden Presence, Acoustic Zen Silver Ref. Mk2 (ic), Kimber Hero, Kimber 8TC, Acoustic Zen Satori, Auditorium 23sp

Listening Programme

- John Abercrombie - The 3rd Quartet (ECM New Series) CD
- Brahms' Piano Concerto No 2 Pollini, Berliner Philharmoniker, Abbado (DG)
- Rodrigo y Gabriela covers
- Gary Peacock/Ralf Towner "Oracle"
- Diana Krall "Love Scenes" (Impulse)
- Placebo "Battle For The Sun"





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