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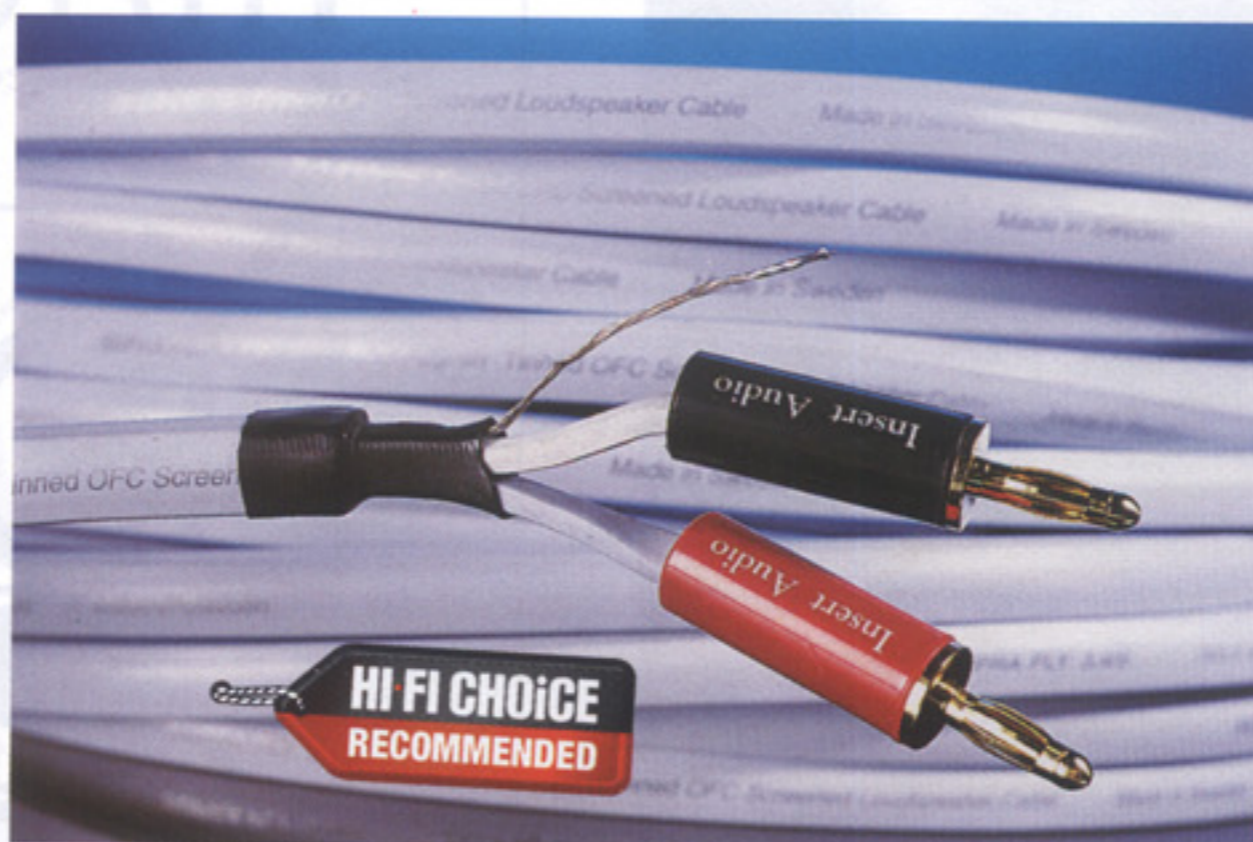
SUPRA PLY 3.4/S

Supra Ply has been around for a little while, but this is a new version, the /S designation referring to the addition of a braided screen over the basic Ply 3.4 construction. Supra's catalogue refers to the requirement for low inductance in a speaker cable and points out the practical disadvantages of constructions such as Litz (multiple conductors braided together) and tape.

Hence this compromise solution consisting of two rectangular cross-section conductors, each made up of stranded, tin-plated copper and insulated in high quality PVC, which are then laid up so as to give a roughly square overall cross-section, with higher capacitance and lower inductance than conventional figure-8 cable.

The addition of the screen is intended to reduce pick-up of electromagnetic interference, the idea being to connect the screen to the amplifier chassis. However, I have doubts about whether the thin tail that Supra provides is the ideal way to do this, especially when it will usually have to be extended to reach any suitable earthing point.

In addition, connecting the screen substantially increases the cable's



"It's nearly impossible to be sure what sonic effect – if any – is due to screening and what to the capacitance."

capacitance and so it's nearly impossible to be sure what sonic effect – if any – is due to screening and what to the capacitance.

SOUND QUALITY

Having already tested basic Ply 3.4 (HFC 183) I spent most of the time with the screen connected. It does make a difference, but a small one,

and I find my comments largely mirror those for the original cable.

Principally, the screen gives a small increase in perceived detail, but it doesn't alter the basic character of the cable, which is rich in the bass and generally neutral. There's just a little roughness on high treble sounds, but it has a pleasing ability to hold everything neatly together

right up to climaxes. Voices are reasonably clear and easy to follow, and imaging is good. As with many cables, bass detail suffers somewhat in complex music, but the effect is quite slight.

CONCLUSION

The screen may be something of a red herring, but the sound of this cable is good in all areas and it deserves Recommendation. **RB**

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £7.95/m

■ A touch of treble roughness and a very slight lack of bass detail in busy music are the only real flaws in this otherwise fine cable.

LIFETIME GUARANTEE

✉ Glaive Ltd, Unit 7, Wren Industrial Estate, Coldred Road, Maidstone, ME15 9YT

☎ (01622) 664070

SPECIFICATIONS

■ Topology	Close-spaced figure-8
■ Conductor	Tin-plated copper
■ Dielectric	'Ion-free PVC'

TCI Python

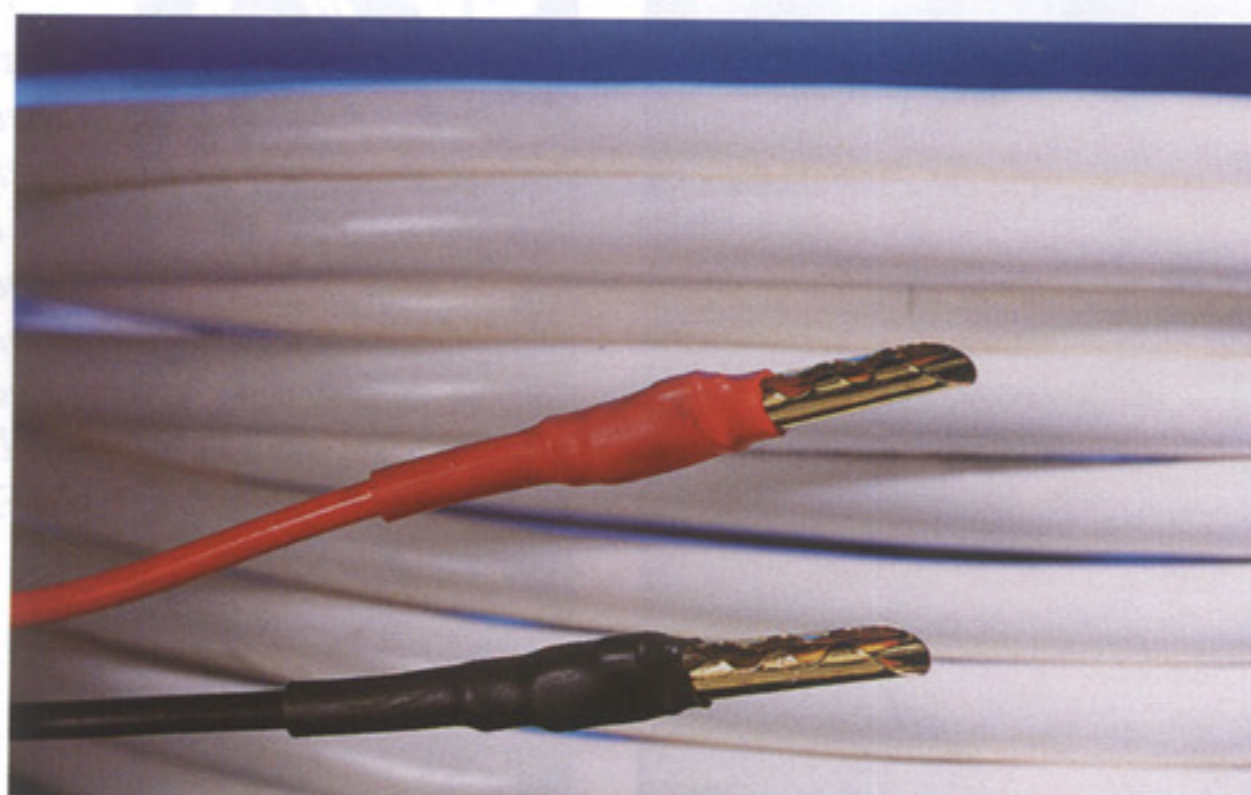
Like the Viper interconnect (HFC 200) from the same company, Python is a pretty basic construction for which no outrageous claims are made. It employs good quality materials – silver-plated copper conductors in PTFE dielectric – and twists the conductors together under an overall jacket of what appears to be PVC. Fairly typical stuff, with ditto electrical characteristics which won't upset amplifiers.

The review sample came with unusually long 'tails' brought out of the jacket for easy connection: as a tip for tweekers, I'd suggest twisting these together as far towards the plugs as circumstances permit, since the additional inductance caused by spacing them widely apart over even a few inches can exceed the inductance of a metre of cable. With a moderate overall diameter, this cable is rather stiff and hard to hide.

SOUND QUALITY

If it doesn't quite repeat the success of Viper, Python still makes a decent enough showing. It has no serious weaknesses, although in terms of detail it is not the best at its price.

Tonally it is balanced and well



"It is balanced and well extended, especially into the bass, which plumbs almost to the full depth available."

extended, especially into the bass, which plumbs almost to the full depth available and is marred only occasionally by a slight hollowness which however doesn't significantly spoil the overall effect. Voices sometimes sound a little dry, and in choral music it was rather hard to separate the individual lines. By some quirk, voices also seemed to emanate

from a point further forward in the image than with most other cables.

High percussion sounds lose a little of their delicacy, but on the whole the treble is quite open and extended, and it hangs together pretty well in busy passages, making for unrestricted climaxes and a good dramatic sweep. Strongly rhythmic music is fairly energetic, but

perhaps due to that bass hollowness already noted isn't quite as driving as it can be at best.

CONCLUSION

Another cable which does its stuff well enough but is, in the Victorian phrase, no better than it ought to be. With overall standards as high as they are, it's possible to do better for less. **RB**

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £7.99/m

■ No single major sin, but detail is not outstanding and rhythm isn't always completely solid.

THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ True Colour Industries, Unit A103, Portview Trade Centre, 310 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1RX

☎ (07710) 196949

SPECIFICATIONS

■ Topology	Twisted pair
■ Conductor	Silver-plated copper
■ Dielectric	PTFE