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Reviewed by
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Siltech Stockholm Component Video Cable



FEATURES SNAPSHOT!

Description

Model: Stockholm

Price: \$447 USD per meter (\$129 per run; three cables needed for component-video configuration)

Warranty: Lifetime

Features

- Ultra-high-purity copper conductors
- Impregnated with silver and gold for Power Coaxial configuration
- 24K-gold-plated connectors
- Low capacitance and inductance
- Densely shielded

The Dutch cable manufacturer Siltech was established in 1983. Since then the company has experienced steady growth in the European market and beyond, and now has distribution in 40 countries around the world. The subject of this review, the Stockholm, is part of Siltech's MXT Professional line. At \$447 for a meter length comprised of three individual cable runs, the Stockholm, while quite expensive compared to most other component-video cables on the market, is actually Siltech's *least-expensive* component-video cable.

Construction

"MXT" is Siltech's nomenclature for "mixture." The wire in the Stockholm is constructed using a mixture of silver, gold, and copper, in a configuration Siltech calls Power Coaxial. According to Siltech, silver is not the optimal electrical conductor due to the gaps in its crystal structure. By adding gold to the gaps, the crystal boundaries are filled in, resulting in a simpler signal path and thus improved conductivity. With better conductivity, Siltech claims, distortion is reduced and the signal-to-noise ratio increased.

The Stockholm cables are not joined but are three separate conduits -- one for each of the signals that make up the component-video signal. Each cable is covered in a thick jacket of dark blue plastic. The terminations are high-quality, 24K-gold-plated RCA jacks. Unscrewing the jack was difficult, but I eventually prevailed. What I saw was a solder joint with a *lot* of solder. The joint looked a little unrefined, but I had no worry of the jack becoming detached as it was attached solidly to the cable.

The Stockholm isn't especially thick, but it looks massive in comparison to the Nordost Silver Screen. This can be a pro or a con, depending on where the cable is used. (I wouldn't recommend trying to hide the Stockholm under a carpet.) My review sample was 20' (6m) long; I put it between my Sony DVD player and my InFocus X1 front projector. The projected image was about 64" diagonal.

Performance

My reference for evaluating subtle details in black and gray scenes is the DVD of *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*. Chapter 15 contains a stormy scene that's very gray; the Siltech Stockholm produced all of this scene's subtle detail. I could recognize the people in the scene without straining my eyes, which can't be said of the RadioShack cable I normally use. The onscreen action was easy to follow, and I found myself mesmerized by the clarity of the image.

The DVD of *Panic Room* has a lot of contrast in certain scenes, displaying plenty of highlight and shadow detail. Much of the latter can get lost with my inexpensive DLP projector. A good example is chapter 26, in which a bright light produces deep shadows. Using the Stockholm, I was surprised at the amount of shadow detail I could see, such as the wood grain in the flooring.

You couldn't ask for more color detail than you'll find in the DVD of *Finding Nemo*. With the Stockholm in place, the colors just popped off the screen. In chapter 2, I especially liked the contrast of the deep red embryonic Nemo against Marlin's purplish fin. In chapter 8, I could easily see the rough detail in the shark's fin, as well as Dora's various shades of blue. At the end of chapter 8, I also noticed how realistic the moonlit scene looked. The reproduction of these colors was no doubt helped by the Stockholm's excellent electrical properties.

Throughout *Finding Nemo*, I was impressed by the sharpness of the picture I was getting with the Stockholm. When I first put the cable in place, I thought there was some blurriness to the picture, but I adjusted the focus of the projector and all was well. Looking at the dentist's office scene (chapter 9), it was remarkable how sharp everything looked. The outlines of the fish were sharply delineated against the fish-tank background. Many times throughout my auditioning, I was amazed at the detail I was seeing with the Siltech Stockholm, compared with my RadioShack.

Comparison

I had Nordost's excellent Silver Screen (\$299 per meter) component-video cable on hand to compare with the Siltech Stockholm. Each was a huge step up from the standard RadioShack cable I'd been using before, but considering their higher prices, this is to be expected. While watching the DVD of *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*, I saw the same excellent color rendition and lack of ringing with the Siltech as I did with the Nordost. In fact, I found it difficult to distinguish between the two. At times I thought the colors were more saturated with the Siltech, particularly in the opening dance sequence.

When looking closely at skin tones, such as the faces in chapter 4 of *Austin Powers*, I observed that the Nordost produced smoother tones than the Siltech. Both cables produced accurate edge sharpness, evident when looking at the close-up of Dr. Evil's face in chapter 6, though I noted slightly more sharpness with the Siltech.

The biggest drawback I found with the Siltech Stockholm was its mechanical connection with my

equipment -- the stiffness of the cable's plastic jacket put a strain on my DVD player's connecting jacks. Although it didn't damage the connection during my auditioning, I worry that it might over time.

Conclusion

Siltech's Stockholm component-video cable performed extremely well in my home theater. Its strengths include excellent black-level rendition, eye-popping color fidelity, and sharpness. This is no doubt due to the cable's fine construction; evidently, its uncommon mixture of silver and gold results in great electrical properties. The only drawback is that the Stockholm's fine construction results in a stiff cable that might strain your connectors. But with careful placement, the Siltech Stockholm component-video cable should be a wonderful addition to your home theater.

Review System

Speakers - Mirage OM-9 (mains), OM-C2 (center), OM-R2 (surrounds), OM-200 (subwoofer)

Receivers - Outlaw Model 1050, Sony STR-DA5ES

Sources - JVC XV-721 DVD player, Sony DVP-NS650V SACD player

Cables - Sonic Horizons, TARA Labs, Nordost

Monitor - JVC 32" direct-view TV, InFocus X1 front projector

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