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KAPTOVATOR



jps

as reviewed by Dave Clark

The JPS Kaptovator AC cord is one of those products that makes you go “Wow!,” not just because it makes a positive difference, but because the price one has to pay for it is rather steep. Like most things, the best audio components are rarely affordable. At a heart-stopping \$1499 for two meters, the Kaptovator is one of the most expensive AC cables I have heard.

What \$1499 gets you is a special alloy blend, ultra-fine-purity eight-gauge conductors, and Kapton dielectric. Kapton is a high-tech, golden-colored dielectric used mainly in space and military applications. Using air as a reference (which is what all insulators are measured against), JPS set out to find the optimum dielectric to safely insulate the cord. They found Kapton to be a great insulator but also a very expensive one, hence the high price. JPS found that because of its effectiveness as a dielectric, its thickness could be many times less than a typical cord, eliminating what they felt were the detrimental effects of the insulation a normal AC cord must have to be safely rated. JPS uses an optimized concentric lay, coupled with a very tightly twisted design, to make for a very compact and flexible wire that acts as a solid conductor. JPS refers to this as their OFM or Optimized Field Matrix design.

A Kaptovator user had informed me that a break-in time of three months of constant use was needed to fully appreciate what this cord could do. JPS suggests that the break-in time is a few weeks. I had them in my system for three months as the AC source for my Clayton M100 amplifiers, but I am not able to offer an opinion as to the optimal break-in period, since I couldn't remember what differences that much time had wrought, but I can say what they sounded like compared to my standard cords, the Claytons. These are simply built, using ten-gauge silver-plated copper wires in a Teflon dielectric. No twisting or shielding, just three wires running inside a mesh covering. I had found them to offer great speed and clarity, resulting in an excellent sound when compared to competing cords (Sahuaro, Audience, Blue Circle, and Nordost, to name a few). At the price, they were the best overall.

Replacing the Claytons with the Kaptovators immediately resulted in a smoother sound that was way more refined. Music took on a higher level of transparency, with no grit, grain, or hyped-up detail. In direct comparison, the Claytons sounded grainier and more brash. This is not to say that they are bad cables. I would never have noticed this had I not inserted the JPS. With the Kaptovators, everything was improved, from bass extension and dynamics to midrange purity and presence to the clarity and naturalness of the treble. Music became richer and fuller and grain and grit were reduced to inaudibility. I could hear deeper into the music, with way less fatigue and at higher volumes. These cables plead with you to turn up the volume. I liked what I was hearing.

Bass driven tracks had a speed and drive that pulsed with texture. I could readily hear all the subtle nuances of bass instruments. Vocals took on a presence that was oh so palpable. On more than one occasion, I opened my eyes with a start, thinking someone was standing in the room either singing or speaking to me. Usually it is Carol telling me dinner is ready or someone is on the phone, but now it was a singer on a well-recorded disc. I found music now had a greater sense of pace and rhythm. The added richness arguably lacked a degree of transparency and openness, though I feel this may be an issue of the cables revealing problems elsewhere, as opposed to making my amps sound that way.

If your system has evolved to a high level of sophistication, these may be the next step. Highly recommended if you have the money. Are they overpriced? I have to say that after spending over four months with them, I am going to find it rather difficult to send them back. The Kaptovators are definitely worth the price of admission.

**Dave Clark**

**JPS Kaptovator AC cord**

Retail: \$1499 two meters

**JPS Labs**

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