



The Clarus Crimson MK II Cables are available in a variety of configurations from balanced and unbalanced interconnects, subwoofer cables, USB, S/PDIF, power cords, and single- or bi-wire speaker cables.



These cables can be customized for length and termination options and carry a Limited Lifetime Warranty. Each cable is professionally engineered for its specific application.

I have been a bit of an audio cable skeptic over the years. I do use upgrade cables but have generally pushed aside manufacturers' broader claims as snake oil. In my defense, many cable designs are nothing more than marketing hype. But Clarus Crimson MKII cables are based on real science and engineering. These cables took my audiophile system to a whole new level of performance and I can't turn back.

Highlights

Clarus Crimson MK II Cables

- Brilliant audible performance
- Excellent build quality
- Thoughtful designs
- Custom build options
- Soft metal connectors may be problematic for some users

Introduction

Clarus Cables is a relatively new brand, having come on the scene in 2013. The driving force behind Clarus is a gentleman by the name of Jay Victor who is the chief engineer for Clarus. He has an impressive resume and his cable designs are based on real science. Mr. Victor is also a seasoned and passionate audiophile who is a tireless promoter of the brand. Most of Clarus' technologies are patented or patent-pending.

Clarus Cables are available in two different lines, the original Aqua and the new, even more, high-end Crimson MK II's which are the subject of this review. Clarus interconnects and speaker cables feature multiple conductors each designed to optimize the signal transfer of different frequency ranges. Solid core is good for one thing, stranded another, and so on. More details can be found in the company's White Paper on the designs – [Clarus White Paper](#)

Clarus also offers power conditioners and a compact USB DAC dongle. Each of their offerings has received excellent professional reviews and I am looking forward to sharing my experience with these excellent Crimson cables.

BRAND NAME AND PROTECT TYPE ~ REVIEW SPECIFICATIONS

CONDUCTORS:

PCOCC ("Pure copper Ohno continuous cast wire")

WIRE GAUGES:

Not Specified

CONNECTOR MATERIALS:

Tellurium Copper (RCA center pin and XLR male pins)

Beryllium Copper (RCA sleeve, Female XLR, Spade Lugs,

BFA Banana Plugs)

INSULATION:

Polyethylene

JACKETS:

Braided Metallic and Non-Metallic Fibers

Available Cable Formats:

INTERCONNECTS:

Single-Ended RCA

Balanced XLR

Subwoofer

DIGITAL:

S/PDIF

AES/EBU

USB

SPEAKER CABLES:

Single

Bi-wire

POWER CABLE:

IEC (Choose 15A or 20A)

CRIMSON MK II PRICES:

1m Single-Ended RCA \$1,140/pr

1m Balanced Audio XLR \$1,925/pr

1m Subwoofer \$710

1m AES/EBU \$790

1m USB \$340

1m S/PDIF \$505

6ft Speaker Cable with Spade Lugs \$4,000/pr

6ft Speaker Cable with BFA \$4,000/pr

6ft Bi-Wire Cable with Spade Lugs \$5,000/pr

Crimson 6ft Bi-Wire Cable with BFA \$5,000/pr

Jumper Cables \$750/pr

6ft Source Power Cable \$860

6ft High Current 15A Power Cable \$1,720

6ft High Current 20A Power Cable \$1,870

WEBSITE:

[Clarus Audiophile Collection](#)

COMPANY DIRECTORY:

[Clarus](#)

SECRETS TAGS:

Clarus, Crimson, Speaker cable, Interconnect, Power cord, PCOCC, Spade lug, Banana plug, XLR, USB, RCA, audio cables review, review 2021

Design

Clarus Crimson cables cover the gamut of audio and power cable solutions for the audiophile. They offer power cords, speaker cables (single- and bi-wire), S/PDIF digital interconnects, AES/EBU digital interconnects, and balanced and unbalanced analog interconnects. They will custom assemble the length and termination that the customer requests. The available termination options cover the most common needs of a typical high-end system.

These products are thoughtfully designed using the best materials available and they should provide a lifetime of enjoyment for the end-user. I also like that the braided jackets are all matching with a red and black aesthetic.

The conductors are all formed from PCOCC ("Pure copper Ohno continuous cast wire"). This high-purity copper material is hot rolled as opposed to being cold formed. This patented extrusion process results in a larger molecular grain structure than you see from other extrusion techniques. This is a quite expensive material that is widely recognized to have properties very favorable for use as audio conductors.

Clarus uses this wire in varying cross-sectional shapes and gauges for each specific use. They provide some additional details beyond this most basic description. Check out their White Paper on the subject here – [Clarus White Paper](#)

Internal insulation is Polyethylene and the outer jackets are a woven fiber material. As mentioned, the jackets were an almost perfect match among the cables which is not easy to accomplish as some of the cables are apparently assembled in different factories. This is reflective of very high Quality Control and Quality Assurance practices.



The cable terminals are of two different materials depending on the application. All interconnect pins are made of Tellurium Copper. The grounding sleeves, female XLR sleeves, and the speaker wire terminals are all formed from Beryllium Copper. This metal proved to be soft and I wound up breaking one of the BFA Banana Plugs. I will discuss this mishap a little later in this review.



If you opt for the spade lugs (which I did not), then you get a proprietary lug that Clarus calls their “Spring Tension” spade lugs. These apparently function a little like a lock washer and help maintain a solid connection over a longer period of time before needing to be re-tightened (if at all).

Clarus also claims that they do a lot of subjective listening trials when they are developing their cable designs.

All the cables I got in for this review were very well made and quite significant in their heft, the mark of a true high-end cable.

Setup

The system I would be using for this review comprised a Torous power transformer, a Raspberry Pi streamer, a Topping D90 DAC, a Pass Labs INT-25 25 WPC Class A integrated amplifier, and a pair of VIVID Kaya 90 speakers. I wanted to use Clarus cables from the DAC to the amp and from the amp to the speakers. I also wanted to try a Clarus power cord from the Torus to the amplifier.

So I requested a pair of RCA interconnects (the Pass amp is not a balanced design) and a pair of speaker cables with BFA plugs (single-wire as the VIVIDS have but a single input). I also requested a power cord for the amp.

Clarus was kind enough to burn these in before sending them to me. I am not sure if retail customers get burned-in cables or not. As I will explain below, I had a chance to actually hear one speaker cable break in and I was surprised that this breaking in process was readily audible to me.

My plan all along was to start with the power cable and move downstream to evaluate each cable on its own merits. (If I had replaced all of them at once, who would have known what effect each had?) I figured that the speaker cables probably make the greatest impact while the power cord is probably the least impactful. This was the basis of my review plan.





By the time I got around to installing the speaker cables, I learned a lesson the hard way. You see these are heavy gauge speaker cables that are quite stiff. The banana plug material is soft. After installing them, I was mucking around behind the rack to change out my CD transport and I bumped the left speaker cable with my foot. The banana plug had partially slipped out due to the strain from the stiff cable and, well, I essentially broke off the connector. *Ugh.*

Clarus didn't waste any time sending me a replacement speaker cable. This one was not burned-in so I had the unique opportunity to hear the right speaker with a burned-in cable and the left speaker with a virgin cable that morphed over time and I am excited to share my impressions below.

In Use

I have always been cable-agnostic for the most part. I do like to use upgrade cables but nothing too extravagant. I have a mixture of AudioQuest, Bluejeans, and some old Monster Cables along with a few handmade boutique cables from a shop in California where I lived for a number of years.

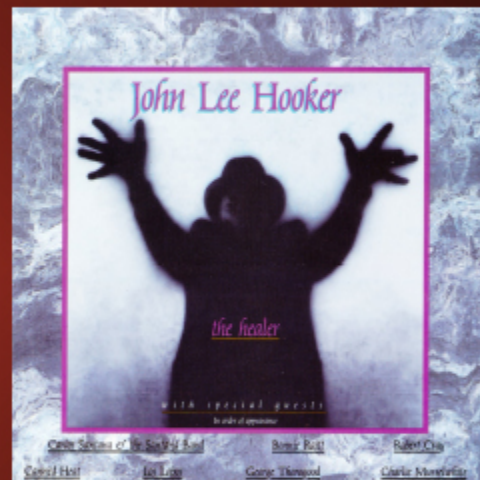
My opinion of the importance of cables started to change a few years back when I was part of a blind listening session focusing on various different USB cables. This was not a scientific study; It was just a group of audiophiles messing around and having some fun. My takeaway was that I could hear differences in these cables even if the differences were oh so subtle. But it is in those subtle differences where the magic happens. What I mean is you can't always put your finger on what the differences are but the better ones were, well, better.



Starting with the power cord update, I found that upgrading to the Clarus power cord over the stock Pass Labs cord apparently served up increases in the dynamic headroom I was hearing. The Clarus cable breathed new life into the music.

I added the unbalanced interconnects after about 25 hours of evaluating the power cable. The interconnects gave the audio a “fleshier” presentation over the AudioQuest Cinnamon cables they replaced. This was heard as a strengthening of the response in the power region (mid-bass to low treble). The highs were sweeter sounding too but the biggest impact in my experience was the fleshier, more substantial output in the power region.

The next change was to the speaker cables. Remember I broke one of them so it was about a week before I could get them installed and start my evaluation. The right cable was factory burned-in while the left cable was not burned-in. Over the next few weeks, the left channel progressed from more forward sounding to a more laid-back perspective, eventually reaching equilibrium with the right cable. The generalized impact of the upgraded speaker cables was a massive improvement in the bass response as well as vastly improved staging. The speaker cables did in fact make the biggest improvement to what I heard.



The whole suite of cables brought my system to the highest level of fidelity I have yet experienced in my home. I'm as guilty as the next guy to drone on about a bunch of different adjectives to describe my audio system. You know what I mean, we discuss our impressions through a bunch of abstract modifiers and that is cool. But my system at this point in time transcends all the adjectives I have in my arsenal.

My system now (with the Clarus cables) has morphed into something completely different. I can't even find the words to describe what I am hearing. It is so pure, engaging, and locked-in that I feel like I am mainlining the music. The music is I and I am the music. The system is like a pure singularity, a merging of man and music. It is so good that I fear even turning it on if I don't have several hours to spare listening because once I go down the rabbit hole I have a very hard time shutting it off.

Conclusions



Inserting the Clarus Crimson MK II cables into my audio system improved the performance in clear and meaningful ways. It is the latest step in my journey towards the most realistic reproduction possible. My system's performance is now beyond anything I could have contemplated at least until I heard it for myself. Thank you, Clarus!

LIKES

- Each cable brought its own set of improvements to the table
- Thoughtful design
- The highest quality materials are beyond reproach
- Quality construction
- Voiced by seasoned audiophiles
- Will kick your system up a notch or two

WOULD LIKE TO SEE

- Nothing

In my case, the Clarus Crimson cables' performance really elevated my system in ways that are beyond my capacity to explain with words. My college-aged kids have been home during COVID and my son and I have been doing a lot of listening together over this time. I mention this because we talk about this very thing – how can we describe this system and really do it justice? He agrees that the only way for anybody to appreciate it would be to experience it for yourself. Unfortunately, we can't have all our interested readers over for a listening session but I really wish you could come over. I think you would be speechless too.

The secret sauce that has elevated my system the most lately is in fact the Clarus Crimson cables. These cables will take a high-quality system and move it into the stratosphere. I know this is true because I pulled the Clarus cables out of the system yesterday. My listening session last night with my old cables was sad and boring. The system lost most of the intangible verve and boogie I had been enjoying. It even sounded a little grainy in comparison. I would not have recognized this shortcoming had I not been able to experience the Clarus difference for the last few months.

I know these cables are not inexpensive but they are worth every penny when you have a quality system. It is well worth the additional investment to go the extra mile toward audio bliss.



JIM CLEMENTS

Jim Clements has been an audio nut since childhood where you could find him underfoot at his local high end store on most weekends. (This particular shop was within walking distance of Jim's home, much to the chagrin of the owner and his staff.) Jim's audio journey started early because he loved great music of all kinds. And he still does. Like most audiophiles, Jim was not particularly inspired by a vast majority of the audio systems he encountered. So his quest grew through his efforts to recreate a live listening experience in the home. This has proven to be a never ending quest. One major offshoot of all this is that Jim has become something of a cinema enthusiast as well. So now he's working on the video and surround sound conundrums too. Since perfect recreation of sound and video is a goal to be pursued but never attained, Jim derives his pleasure from the journey itself. He wants to help our readers on their own personal quests by reviewing products thoroughly and objectively. On a personal note, Jim is a Professional Engineer, licensed in California and Texas. He currently has his own engineering practice in San Antonio, Texas. Jim is also part owner of a small chain of craft beer growler stations in South Texas.