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# QED Golden Ann. XT

The UK's longest-serving cable company celebrates 50 years with a special edition version from its X-Tube range, and it's a 'Golden' upgrade. Review & Lab: **Paul Miller**

**W**as it really 25 years ago that QED celebrated its Silver Anniversary with a special edition XT speaker cable?

Or a full half century since the brand burst into our audiophile consciousness with, three years later, what must surely be the most famous cable of all time – QED 79-strand? Monster Cable would surely argue the toss, but for hi-fi fans building their first system on a budget, the classic figure-of-eight 79-strand (still only £1.99/m) has long been the go-to choice.

The Golden Anniversary XT cable is a little costlier – but far from costly – at £27/m before termination, amounting to £241 for a 3m stereo set fitted with QED's Airloc 4mm plugs. In this celebratory version of QED's X-Tube (XT) cable we see all the brand's theories (presented in its 1995 'Genesis Report') refined still further. It offers a useful 2.5mm<sup>2</sup>/14-gauge cross-section but attempts to mitigate the Skin Effect by forming a conductive *tube*, comprising ten bunches of 19x0.13mm<sup>2</sup> copper strands, wrapped around a hollow polymer rod (red and black in the picture, below).

## PREMIUM COPPER

Nine of these bunches use OF-copper (OFC) while one bunch in each of the signal and return conductors uses the superior, and far costlier, 'Ultra Pure' version of Ohno Continuous Cast (OCC) copper. Each of these conducting tubes is wrapped in a gold mylar tape – giving the cable its



**LEFT:** The thin, gold-coloured mylar screen that surrounds the copper cores of both signal and return conductors is visible through the LDPE and PVC dielectrics. QED's 4mm 'Airloc Forte' banana plugs are cold-welded into place

theatre applications. The latter remains a very well-balanced cable – smooth, powerful, free of obvious artifact and, in its day, tremendous value for long runs. In practice there's more than a hint of the XT-400 in this latest

Anniversary XT, a 'sonic scaffold' upon which the newcomer builds a sweeter but better defined treble, a breathier midband and tighter, if fractionally less extended, deep bass.

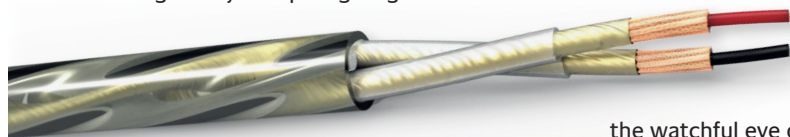
However, when it comes to delivering the raw immediacy of an as-live recording, without acerbic edges, the Anniversary XT wins hands down. Gidon Nunes Vaz's quartet sounded at once up-front and captivating but also so very easy-going [*Ebb Tide*, Sound Liaison SL1050A; DXD] as every detail of the four performers' playing was extracted from the informative mix. The loudspeakers, meanwhile, sounded just as they should – the Amati G5 still inherently relaxing and yet exquisitely detailed. ⬇

colour – and tightly bound in a clear LDPE dielectric. These are then twisted around each other, and supporting LDPE filler rods, within a thick PVC jacket.

The cable's measured parameters are very close to the figures published by QED itself – a 0.55µH/m series loop inductance, low 44pF/m parallel capacitance and 16mohm/m loop resistance, equivalent to a power loss of just 0.017dB/m into 8ohm. QED quotes 0.58µH/m and 14.8mohm/m, respectively. These reactive components are very similar to those I recorded for QED's XT-400 20 years ago, although the latter's higher gauge resulted in a lower 7mohm/m loop resistance and mere 0.0076dB/m power loss.

## BIRTHDAY CHEER

This latest QED cable arrived while we had Sonus faber's Amati G5 speakers in the room [see p38] alongside our 'resident' B&W 801 D4s [*HFN* Nov '21], both under the watchful eye of Constellation Audio's Inspiration monoblocks [*HFN* Oct '19]. Also still hard-wired into the room were tens of metres of the aforementioned XT-400, 'custom-installed' for multichannel/home



**ABOVE:** Inside the Golden Anniversary XT showing the ten bunches of OFC and UP-OCC strands wrapped around a hollow insulating tube (red and black) in each conductor core

## HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

I barely need to say that, compared to high-end cables costing 10x more, QED's Golden Anniversary XT represents stunning value. It's equally refreshing to discover a cable whose technical specification precisely matches that found in our independent testing. All of which contributes to the reassurance of a brand, and cable, offering no-nonsense sound and build quality at a great price. In the sparsely populated world of hi-fi bargains, this one is Golden!

Sound Quality: 90%

