QED
Reference Ethernet cable

THE QUALITY OF an audio signal is influenced by many factors, and although the issues associated with digital cables are different from analogue, the impact on the audio signal is just as important. An Ethernet cable designed for computers is most probably not up to the job in terms of bandwidth and crosstalk. Most are constructed to the CAT 5e standard and are only specified for a bandwidth up to 150MHz. The new Reference from QED is an over specified Class I Category 8.1 cable with a bandwidth of 2,000MHz, which supports speeds up to 40Gb/s. This should easily accommodate today's PCM streams of 32/384 kHz or up to DSD512.

The Reference features four 24AWG 99.999 percent OFC copper twisted pairs with different twist rates to cut down crosstalk and improve noise immunity, which minimises jitter. Each twisted pair is individually shielded within a tight aluminium mylar wrap. The 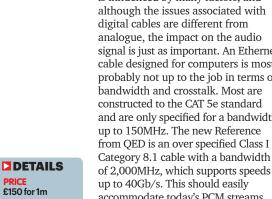internal wires are sheathed in a bespoke ferrite-impregnated inner jacket and the cable is finished in pearl white PVC. This is in turn terminated with Telegärtner Profinet CAT 8 connectors, which are low insertion-loss, gold-plated, industrial-grade Ethernet plugs with 360° shielded die-cast zinc bodies and high-torque cable glands.

Reference section

Using the Reference Ethernet cable to connect my Cambridge Audio Azur 851N streamer to my network, I play a 24-bit/192kHz FLAC file of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's performance of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.3*. The orchestra is full and open, and the piano – which is correctly positioned in front of the orchestra – sounds very realistic in my listening room. The power and dynamic range of this recording is really well conveyed by the Reference Ethernet cable and is exactly what I would hope for from this performance. In short, this is a beautifully made Ethernet cable that works extremely well and will certainly not become obsolete in the foreseeable future. *NR*

▶ DETAILS

PRICE
£150 for 1m
TELEPHONE
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WEBSITE
qed.co.uk

OUR VERDICT
★★★★★