



AIR PHOENIX



AIR DRAGON V



AIR TESLA

## Equipment Report

# VooDoo Cable Air Phoenix, Air Dragon V, and Air Tesla AC Power Cords

No Voodoo Here

Matt Clott

**R**eviewing power cords is similar in many ways to reviewing crew socks. We need them, and we don't think about them. One pair does as good a job of stopping the shoes from rubbing against our feet as another, and that's about it. Then again, you may prefer tube or heeled. You may need them for jogging or for skiing. Cotton or wool? You may prefer ankle-high, or calf-, or possibly even knee-length. Many insist socks are socks, while others won't settle for anything other than forest-green, calf-high crew socks made from the hair of Tibetan llamas shorn on the sixth cycle of a red moon.

Where am I going with this? Ah, power cords. .... Yes, the unimportant connection. Power is power, and power cords are the concentrated extract of high-end snake oil. Those who agree, please stop reading now and spend your time productively shopping online for white-cotton, crew tube socks.

Ok. Are they gone? Then let us talk about some damn good power cables, people!

May I cut to the chase? With possibly the coolest names in power cords today, the VooDoo Cable Air Phoenix, Air Dragon V, and Air Tesla jumped into my system like a bull into a

China shop. They were there and made damn sure I knew they were there. Yet, they bombastically announced their presence in the most unusual of ways—by astonishingly turning my systems performance up to 11, while hiding behind the bushes giggling at my dumbfounded expression. Boy, were they there! But they also weren't there at all. Stage wider, bass deeper, timbre more natural, harmonics more complex, dynamics more wow, engagement more “Oh, my.” They did what my previous power cables did, ramping it up to ludicrous. Hyperbole? Absolutely. But well-earned hyperbole.

Fabricated like a fine British tailor would custom make a suit for his royal client, they come in hard-shell cases and are presented to their new owner as if you were being handed the keys to your new Bentley. VooDoo power cords are not the product

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of mass-production factories and cable mills. They are what Bruce Richardson, owner and designer, perceives as a bespoke solution for those ready to experience all that their system has the capacity to convey.

What did Bruce send me, you ask? A bit of this, a dash of that. Five power cables and a USB cable (to which I will not devote an enormous amount of time other than to say that it outperformed what I had, and what I had was very good. But this is a power cord review, and I have already put too much inside these parentheses). Five power cords to



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satisfy my system's needs. Five cords to rule them all. An Air Phoenix, made of what appeared to be Unicorn hair, took on the responsibility of powering my DAC, two Air Tesla power cords with massive rectangular modules in their centers provided electrons to my dual-mono stereo amplifier. And two Air Dragon V cables provided the juice for my music server and preamp.

Bruce explained that "like the acoustic resonance of a finely made stringed instrument, the materials used and the construction of an electrical conductor are the ingredient

that attenuate and enhance the resonance of the electrons passing through that conductor. The designs of the Air Dragon V, Air Tesla and Air Phoenix are quite distinct from each other yet are based upon similar design principles. Each power cord is a composite of conductors made of select high-purity silver, copper, and proprietary alloys that are cryogenically treated in our deep-immersion cryo process. We employ various levels of line-capacitance- and velocity-matched dielectric strength in the induction field to create the signature resonance for each power cord. But the results of each design are not achieved by bench measurements. Trial-and-error listening and testing with various audio components are equally if not more important to the development of our power cords."

So how about some tech specs? Cryogenically treated, Air Phoenix, designed for analog or digital sources, uses pure-silver, single-crystal, continuous-cast, Ohno eight-gauge conductors and rhodium-plated-over-tellurium copper connectors, individually insulated with velocity-matched Teflon dielectrics and heavily braided silver-plated copper shielding, covered with woven static-resistant Nomex mesh. Also cryogenically treated, Air Tesla, designed for high-current power amps and conditioners, uses six-gauge alloy conductors that are individually insulated with velocity-matched Teflon dielectrics, and a rigid buss-bar "reservoir" that "holds current in the form of line capacitance." It is covered with woven static-resistant Nylon mesh and has rhodium-plated-over-tellurium copper connectors. Once again cryogenically treated, Air Dragon V, designed to extract the most from any component, uses six-gauge silver and single-crystal copper conductors covered with individually insulated, velocity-matched Teflon dielectrics covered by woven static-resistant Teflon mesh. Connectors are, once again, made from rhodium-plated-over-tellurium copper.

The VooDoo power cords were stiffer than the Shunyata Z-Tron Sigma NR V1 loom they replaced, but not by a lot. I was easily able to connect them securely to my equipment and the wall. My system has a dedicated circuit panel fed directly from the street, a dedicated grounding rod, and 10-gauge braided-copper wiring from the panel to my wall outlets (Furutech GTX-D-NCF Rhodium, cryo-treated outlets with carbon-fiber plates). I utilize Environmental Protection's EP-2750 ground filters on each dedicated circuit (one breaker for each outlet) and a



## Specs & Pricing

**Air Phoenix:** \$4700  
**Air Dragon V:** \$3250  
**Air Tesla:** \$2900 (all prices 6' length)

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**The improved sense of resonance and timbre in the bottom end clearly comes from that lowered noise floor in conjunction with what I detected to be an improvement in phase coherence**

single EP-2050 surge-protection/waveform-correction unit on the panel. My power is clean and clear, and when I progressed to a certain level of power cord, I found that adding conditioning had diminishing returns. So, I run all my equipment directly into my Furutech outlets. That said, I'd still love to try out a Stromtank battery system, if given the opportunity.

Bruce was kind enough to send me pre-broken-in power cords, and I was able to start listening after a 2-3 day settling period. I began my sessions intensely in the mood for Natalie Merchant's "Peppery Man," challenging the new power cables with a taste of those wonderful deep Fairfield Four vocals and Ms. Merchant's sultry singing, combined with a twangy guitar, Shawshank harmonica, and baritone sax and tuba oompah. There was immediately more breath in the vocals and more textural complexity to the brass. An overall nat-

uralness seemed to be there that was not there before. A quick flip of the finger, and "The Blind Man and The Elephant" replaced Mr. Peppery Man. If you have never heard this track, hit your streamer of choice up and take a listen. It's a great song and a cute anecdote. It starts out with this great, low-note baritone sax and then treats the listener to just the right combination of clarinet, steel guitar, percussion, and storytelling. The clarinet gets quite Klezmer-like with a touch of Bavarian and blues. The result is a song of the highest degree—and a newly experienced expression of the greatest style. These power cords washed away a proton-thick layer of "you can't have that" and freed my

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system to project a performance with the “I am there”-knob turned up 15-20%.

Let us try Mussorgsky’s *Dance of the Persian Slaves*. The resolution and separation of instruments were instantly apparent. As I listened longer, I began to equate the improvements, in part, to a lowered noise floor and improved conveyance of speed and articulation. In addition, my electronics seemed to get a boost in channel separation. Take your hands and hold them together in front of you, arms fully extended. Now spread them apart quickly as wide as you can while saying out loud, “Fwuahhhh.” That’s what happened to my soundstage.

“Down in the Hole” by John Campell is a great track

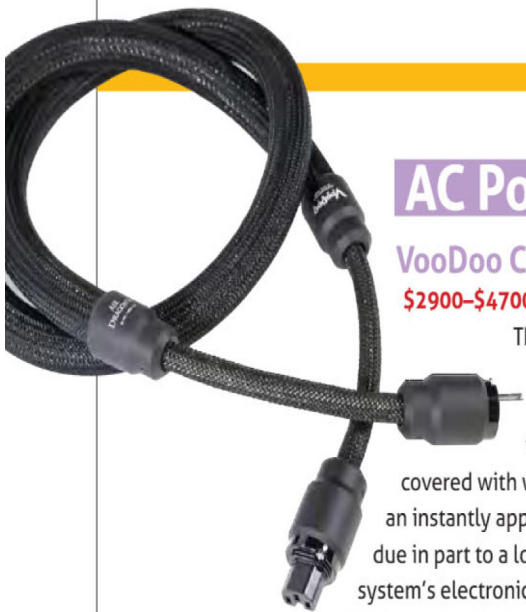
with a combination of rhythmic bass guitar, haunting reverb, and John’s deep, phlegmy voice. That expansive stage was almost intoxicating. The improved sense of resonance and timbre in the bottom end clearly comes from that lowered noise floor in conjunction with what I detected to be an improvement in phase coherence—which I can neither understand nor explain but swear was there to be heard. At no time did I detect the music was playing louder, but it unquestionably had more dynamics and authority. The air between instruments seemed more present, and the overall aura of the stage was just more present.

I consider it true serendipity that I was asked to review

this loom, as I was quite happy with what I had and considered that portion of my system done and done. Clearly, it was not. This experience leaves me wondering what the astronomically expensive power cables can offer. I don’t think I want to know.

In the end, I was so impressed with the build-quality and performance of the VooDoo power cords, and the changes they produced in my system, that I told Bruce to send me an invoice rather than return shipping labels. I am not willing to give up what these bring to the table. To say that the VooDoo power cables resulted in a profound improvement in almost every aspect of my system is flat fact—incontrovertible and astounding—even though what they replaced had bettered anything I had heard in my room to that point. The VooDoo cables are more expensive and utilize more expensive materials than the Shunyata NR Sigma I had been using, which were the older V1 versions. I think the Omega series of power cords would be a fairer comparison. I work with and enjoy what I am offered to review, and I pay for what I keep. (I put my money where my reviewing mouth is.) All I can say is, give the VooDoos a try. In my opinion they are a no-brainer step forward on our path to the absolute sound. Is “no-brainer recommended” higher than “highly recommended”? I think it is.

Now I need to figure out why I have an intense desire to go sock shopping. **tas**



### AC Power Product of the Year

#### VooDoo Cable Air Phoenix, Air Dragon V, and Air Tesla AC Power Cords

**\$2900–\$4700 each**

These top-end power cords are made from a mix of exotic materials and construction techniques, including pure-silver, single-crystal, continuous-cast, Ohno eight-gauge conductors and rhodium-plated-over-tellurium copper connectors, individually insulated with velocity-matched Teflon dielectrics and heavily braided silver-plated copper shielding, covered with woven static-resistant Nomex mesh. MC found that the VooDoo power cords produced an instantly apparent increase in resolution and the separation of instruments. These improvements are due in part to a lowered noise floor and improved conveyance of speed and articulation. In addition, the system’s electronics seemed to get a boost in channel separation. The improved sense of resonance and timbre in the bottom end clearly comes from that lowered noise floor, in conjunction with an improvement in phase coherence. That the VooDoo power cables resulted in a profound uptick in almost every aspect of MC’s system is flat fact—incontrovertible and astounding. (Reviewed this issue)