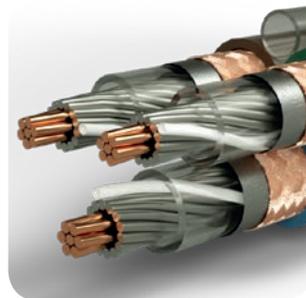


# IsoTek®



## PRODUCT REVIEWS

Building the foundations for great sound



# Awards



**2018 Fidelity Hi Fi**  
Smart Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2018 Fidelity Hi Fi**  
Premium Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis



**2018 Hi Fi Insights**  
Platinum Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2017 Audio Accessory Magazine**  
Grand Prix  
Gold Grand Prix Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Titan



**2017 Audio Video**  
Experts Choice Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Sigmas



**2017 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-star winner  
IsoTek EVO Corvus



**2017 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Corvus



**2017 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis



**2017 L&B**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Corvus



**2017 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Corvus



**2017 i-fidelity.net**  
Editor's Choice  
IsoTek EVO3 Genesis One



**2017 i-fidelity.net**  
Outstanding  
IsoTek EVO3 Genesis One



**2016 Hi-Fi Voice**  
Best Accessories Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2016 PLUS X Award**  
MOST INNOVATIVE BRAND



**2016 PLUS X Award**  
Best Product, Innovation,  
High Quality, Design,  
Ease of Use & Functionality  
IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis



**2016 PLUS X Award**  
Best Product, Innovation,  
High Quality,  
Design & Functionality  
IsoTek EVO3 Venus



**2016 PLUS X Award**  
Best Product, Innovation,  
High Quality,  
Design & Functionality  
IsoTek EVO3 Syncro



**2016 PLUS X Award**  
Best Product, Innovation,  
High Quality & Functionality  
IsoTek EVO3 Sirius



**2016 i-fidelity.net**  
Very Good  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2016 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2016 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2016 i-fidelity.net**  
Editor's Choice Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Sigmas



**2016 i-fidelity.net**  
Outstanding  
IsoTek EVO3 Sigmas



**2016 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2016 Hi-Fi Plus**  
Highly Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis



**2016 Audio Accessory Magazine**  
Gold Grand Prix Award  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2015 Hi-Fi Magazine HK**  
Product of the Year  
IsoTek EVO3 Syncro



**2015 Sempre Audio**  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2015 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Sequel



**2015 PLUS X Award**  
Best Product, Innovation,  
High Quality, Design & Functionality  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2015 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Sigmas



**2015 i-fidelity.net**  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius  
Testurteil: sehr gut



**2015 Fidelity magazine**  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2014 Hi-Fi Magazine HK**  
Product of the Year  
IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis



**2014 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Polaris



**2014 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi+**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Elite



**2013 HiFiCRITIC**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Elite



**2011 Hi-Fi Voice**  
1st Place Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2013 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Polaris



**2013 Hi-Fi Voice**  
Product of the Year  
IsoTek EVO3 Genesis



**2012 Hi-Fi News**  
Highly Commended  
IsoTek EVO3 Genesis



**2012 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek Ultimate Set-up Disc



**2012 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Solus



**2012 Hi-Fi Voice**  
1st Place Winner – IsoTek  
Accessories Brand of  
the Year



**2017 Hi-Fi Voice**  
Product of the Year  
IsoTek EVO3 Genesis One



**2017 Hi-Fi+**  
Highly Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Ascension



**2016 Hi-Fi+**  
Highly Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2016 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Corvus



**2016 PLUS X Award**  
Best Product, Innovation,  
High Quality & Functionality  
IsoTek EVO3 Sequel



**2016 i-fidelity.net**  
Top Price Choice  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium



**2016 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Venus



**2016 Hi-Fi World**  
5 Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Initium

# Introduction

Launched in England in 2001, IsoTek is the world's leading brand of specialised power management products for hi-fi and home cinema use. Its product range includes high-performance mains cables and connectors, plus a range of performance-enhancing power conditioners focused on the specific requirements of individual systems. IsoTek products are distributed in over 45 countries, and have earned numerous accolades from specialist audio and AV publications worldwide.

A number of third-party manufacturers use IsoTek products for development and/or demonstration purposes, including Arcam, Denon, Genesis, Marantz, Monitor Audio, Nordost, Onkyo, Pioneer, PMC, Roksan and TEAC Esoteric. All IsoTek products are designed for purpose, manufactured in Europe and built to last.



IsoTek is the world's leading brand of specialised power management products for hi-fi and home cinema systems. The company's founder and managing director is Keith Martin (pictured), a man whose vision has led to dozens of awards from respected audio critics worldwide.

[www.isoteksystems.com](http://www.isoteksystems.com)



**2015 Lite Magazine**  
IsoTek EVO3 Syncro



**2015 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Sequel



**2015 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Sequel



**2015 Rocky Mountain International Hi-Fi Press Awards**  
Winner Power Conditioner Category  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2015 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Sigmas



**2014 Lite Magazine**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Mini Mira



**2014 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Optimum



**2014 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Sigmas



**2014 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Optimum



**2014 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Titan



**2013 Hi-Fi Pig**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Polaris



**2013 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Genesis



**2013 Hi-Fi Choice**  
5-Star Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Premier



**2013 Hi-Fi Voice**  
Product of the Year –  
3rd Place  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2013 Tone Audio**  
Product of the Year  
IsoTek EVO3 Super Titan



**2011 Hi-Fi Plus**  
Highly Commended  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2011 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2011 Hi-Fi World**  
5-Globe Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Super Titan



**2011 Hi-Fi Choice**  
Recommended  
IsoTek EVO3 Solus



**2011 Hi-Fi Voice**  
1st Place Winner  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



**2011 Hi-Fi+**  
Best of Best  
IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius

# IsoTek Systems Ultimate Set-Up Disc

If you are a regular reader you may well have a version of this disc in your possession. A cut-down version was covered mounted on the November 2011 issue of *Hi-Fi Choice*, so if you missed it this piece might have you kicking yourself because it's choc full of useful material for getting a system precisely set-up. What the full retail version adds are three stereo imaging test pieces and a pair of frequency range test tracks which are very worthwhile features.

Essentially we're talking about speaker set-up here; there are channel and phase tests to ensure that the source, amp and speakers are correctly connected, but the rest of the 'tune-up' tracks are all about achieving true 3D stereo imaging. Of course, you don't get stereo imaging if channel and phase are wrong, so those two are an important part, albeit one that is covered on plenty of previous examples. To be honest this is not the sort of disc I usually try out, but a respected colleague in the industry said that it was very useful for setting up speakers in difficult rooms, so I gave it a spin...

### In use

This disc has a number of useful tracks to assist with achieving strong stereo imaging, all of which are preceded by a spoken description of the result you should expect. The first critical one is track four, which is for loudspeaker position and adjustment. It features a voice and castanet to check relative loudness and tonal balance for each channel, and also places the same sounds at a position halfway between the centre line and

the individual channels to assist in achieving correctly symmetrical imaging.

The soundstage test is probably the most useful one for finding the correct position of loudspeakers with, as it's fairly clear whether or not the sound is coming from the various indicated positions, such as outside each speaker or a quarter of the way across the soundstage. In my system I found that one channel needed to be moved slightly outwards to get the right result.

The voice and castanet continues for the rest of the test tracks; first up being a 360-degree sweep where the castanet is walked around the room, albeit without any footsteps. This is a novel effect, if a tricky one to adjust the system for best results with.

### An unusual and useful disc, made all the more helpful by the info available on the website...

The stereo image depth tests, numbers one through three, are made in a reverberant acoustic and combine the aforementioned sounds moving together and relative to one another. It's rather like the demonstration records made in the heyday of stereo, but without steam trains or journeys into sound – you can't have everything! At least the chap doing the talking has lovely diction.

The final two test tracks are of tones that slowly increase in frequency for one and decrease for the other; this reveals if there are any significant tonal aberrations in either the room, the loudspeakers or your hearing. It's a bit like the speaker response sweeps that are used in some quarters to measure loudspeakers, except you don't get a readout, and instead have to spot the variations with your ears. These would be useful for finding bass humps that a bit of loudspeaker movement could offset, however sometimes bass requires something more drastic to restrain it.

The final six tracks are samples from different artists in the Opus3 catalogue, these include Eric Bibb, Eva Taylor and the Omnibus Wind Ensemble, whose rendition of Frank Zappa's majestic *Dog Breath Variations* always gets my vote. Opus3 recordings are consistently excellent – I've written about several of the albums that are sampled here in the past and always in glowing terms.

This is an unusual and useful disc, made all the more helpful to the newcomer by the information sheet that is available to download from the IsoTek website. This tells you what to do if the results do not tally with those that the voice tells you should be audible, which is always the tricky bit and makes this a set-up disc proper and not merely a demonstration of what the system can achieve. **JK**



# soundbites

## ISOTEK ULTIMATE SYSTEM SET-UP DISC

This disc from power supply specialist IsoTek has a few rather unusual features. There is an assumption made by the manufacturer that you already realise that your speakers should be mounted with the tweeters at ear height, in your normal listening position, with the listener sitting at the point of a triangle with the speakers at the other two points. Beyond that, no audio knowledge is required. The instructions are simple, and the test tracks are well thought out and make their point obviously. The spoken voice is accompanied by a castanet which carries a surprising amount of sonic information – it allowed me to identify a slight timbral imbalance on my upstairs system and proved easy to focus on. This proved useful during the 'Soundstage' and 'Stereo Image Depth' tests.

The most unusual of the tracks involved the sound seeming to complete a 360 degree sweep around the room, including appearing to go behind the listener - I am happy to report that both of my systems passed satisfactorily. Further on are a series of ascending and descending frequency tones spread across ten points between 20Hz and 20kHz. I was most pleased to discover that the Quad/ Kelly set up upstairs produced the 20Hz quite clearly and solidly (I also felt it through the seat, despite the Kellys standing on 50mm thick granite plinths) albeit with some reduction in perceived volume level compared to the 43Hz tone which succeeded it. The final six tracks are choices from releases on the Opus 3 record label, each chosen to demonstrate a certain aspect of the sound, be it spatiality, rhythm or dynamic range. They range from Bach's 'Tocatta and Fugue in D

Minor', to 'Tiny Island' by Vaquero, recorded in a church, and involving a rainstick and a steel guitar. I found this disc to be well thought out and practical in the track choices offered. Another must for the toolbox! **TB**



[www.hi-fiworld.co.uk](http://www.hi-fiworld.co.uk)

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# The Audio Beat

## IsoTek's Full System Enhancer Kit

by Roy Gregory, January 28, 2019

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Special tracks designed to speed component burn-in or eliminate residual magnetic fields that have built up over time are nothing new. They are so established that few people even question their sonic benefits -- even if there are still those who dispute the explanation for those benefits -- and no test or setup disc seems complete without them. But just having a burn-in track is far from the whole story. It will work brilliantly on everything from your CD transport to your speakers -- but that isn't everything. Not only does it ignore the analog replay chain, a realm in which the signals are much smaller and burn-in thus much more critical, but the advent of computer audio has created a whole new category of components that are no less susceptible to burn-in than anything else in the audio chain. However, devoid of analog signal processing, they require a completely different approach.

My own experience suggests that the cables that run through a great many tonearms never actually achieve burn-in, so small are the signals they handle, while the

same problem applies to captive tonearm leads, or external leads that haven't been removed and burnt in separately -- and that's before we start thinking about what lies beyond the inputs of your phono stage. Clearly that's not an experience that's unique to me, as IsoTek has launched the Full System Enhancer Kit, a system-conditioning solution that's specifically designed to fill the gaps in the existing range of burn-in tools. The Kit, which costs \*\*\* , consists of two parts: a dedicated burn-in CD and an inline RIAA filter about the size of an XLR plug that enables you to use the burn-in tracks with analog equipment. You can also buy the filter separately for \*\*\* .

Let's start with the disc. CD only (I'm guessing they can't justify an SACD hybrid, although that really would cover all the bases), this contains four tracks: a 30-minute combined burn-in and degauss track that's intended to be used on repeat; a shorter, five-minute version of the same combined track, intended to be used once a week; a 15-minute combined burn-in and degauss track intended

specifically for the phono replay chain (which must be used with the supplied filter); and finally a 17.5-minute data track designed to burn in and degauss music servers/streamers.

So far so good, and all very effective and efficient; but for me, where things get really interesting is when you use that third track in conjunction with the supplied filter. Supplied by sister company Blue Horizon, the prosaically named RIAA filter is

a neat solution to a significant problem that most audiophiles aren't even aware they have. With an RCA socket on one end and an RCA plug on the other, the fat barrel in between contains a passive RIAA network and resistors to reduce the input signal level. Connect it between your CD player and the inputs on your phono stage, play the "Phono Burn-In" track on the

IsoTek CD on repeat and, presto, a continuous signal designed to burn-in your phono stage, complete with the appropriate EQ and selectable for MM or MC level via a switch on the filter itself.

This is very ingenious and, for vinyl lovers, very, very useful. But that's not all. With a little ingenuity, you can extend the benefits of the RIAA filter further still, taking in the all-important tonearm leads as well. All you need is a cartridge-type adapter of the kind I described in a previous blog. This combines the body of a dead cartridge with a patch lead to allow you to connect a burn-in machine to your tonearm -- but the RIAA filter would be better still. The only change required would be the substitution of female RCA sockets in place of the plugs on the patch cord. Mind you, if you lack the manual dexterity or parts required to manufacture such a device, I think it's a pretty safe



bet that you'll be able to buy one off the shelf shortly -- with no prizes for guessing where from.

If you are serious about vinyl replay, then I can't recommend the IsoTek Full System Enhancer Kit highly enough. Burn in your analog replay chain and you'll be shocked at just how firmly it has had its foot on the

throat of your record replay. Personally, I'd recommend splashing out on both the Kit and a separate filter -- that way you can burn-in both channels at once and, even if you already possess one or more burn-in and degauss tracks, the dedicated examples on this disc are still worth having. At close to \*\*\* that's not exactly small beer, but this is no one-time fix.

Not only should you repeat the treatment on a regular

basis, but if most of my vinyl-loving acquaintances are anything to go by, then the notion of owning one tonearm or tonearm wand, together with one 'table and phono stage is entirely alien. Instead, their systems resemble a revolving door of different record-replay combinations -- all of which will need burning in or refreshing each time they reach the top of the heap. Finally -- and if you still need convincing, do I really need to point out that \*\*\* is also considerably less than the cost of most of those individual components, let alone complete replay chains?

Having the right tools for any job is crucial to both getting that job done and getting the best results. The Full System Enhancer Kit is exactly that -- the right tool at the right price, and the right place for it is in your audio toolbox. Like any good tool, it's a solid investment in the equipment you'll be maintaining, keeping your system tip-top and ready to play.



## IsoTek EVO3 Polaris and Premier

IsoTek is on a mission to convince those of us that appreciate sound quality that the condition of the mains is equally as important as the components we use to reproduce sound. The argument is that without electricity there would be no audio reproduction, it is intrinsic to everything that CD players, turntables and amplifiers do. The theory is that if you put in dirty power you will get out dirty sound.

The likelihood of polluted mains is greater now than it has ever been. The main culprit is the confounded computer – most of us have them at home and they are renowned for emitting all sorts of nasties into the mains. The other scourge of good sound is RFI, airborne interference created by the wireless networks that so many of us depend on today. That too gets into the power lines, and if you use a home plug to send broadband around your home you are surely making matters even worse.

To combat this, IsoTek has been building serious power conditioners for quite some time, but they are expensive things and many are yet to be convinced of their worth. The company has introduced the EVO3 products so that we can find out what benefits might accrue without spending too much. EVO3 consists of an extension block and a power cable at entry level prices but with high quality build. This is not mere hyperbole either, these components offer remarkable value by comparison with the competitors I've seen.

The EVO3 Premier power cable plugs have solid copper connectors with 24k gold plating, the cable itself uses silver plated six nines oxygen free copper (OFC) conductors in a Teflon FEP dielectric, the sort of thing that also makes an excellent audio cable. The cables are pressure terminated and encased in a moulded plug assembly.

The EVO3 Polaris is a six outlet distributor that removes common mode and differential noise, with a claimed reduction in RFI of 30dB. Each outlet is independent to avoid cross contamination and internal wiring is also in silver plated OFC with a PTFE dielectric. You need to buy a separate power cable to connect it to the wall but it's very nicely put together and looks a lot better than most as well.

### Sound quality

I tested these components with a Leema Tucana integrated amplifier and Metrum Acoustics Hex DAC, the source was a Naim Unitiserve, but it takes a while to boot up and so was left out of the loop. Firstly I changed from a regular black mains cable to the Premier on the amp, using my existing Russ Andrews extension block. This resulted in a distinct cleaning up of the sound, one that notably lowered the noise floor which let through more high frequency sparkle and more of the acoustic in the recording. That seemed pretty impressive but what I didn't expect was for the timing to get better as well. Moving the DAC from standard to Premier cable had

a marked benefit for dynamic range, a consequence of lowering the noise floor, as well as a refinement and a general opening up of the soundstage. Going back to the standard cables made things sound coarse.

Moving from the Russ Andrews extension to the Polaris with standard cables was also beneficial with more space, lower noise and greater resolution becoming apparent. To get a better idea of the potential of this extension I also dug out a cheap Duraplug extension block and contrasted that with the Polaris, the improvement was unsurprisingly even greater with an increase in timing precision, depth of bass and a much greater sense of musical flow. I also compared standard and Premier power leads from the Duraplug extension and discovered that their benefits were not as clear-cut as they are with the Polaris or Russ Andrews. In other words if you can't connect the system directly to the wall then the Polaris is the thing to get first.

These two products work well on their own but the sum is clearly greater than the parts. There is a cumulative effect in using both together that makes a striking difference to the overall performance of the system. They really open up the soundstage and let you hear more music because noise is reduced. This was the effect that they had on a DAC and amp that already have some serious power supply regulation onboard, so I would expect the change to be even greater with more affordable equipment. Highly recommended then, and particularly good value for money in these straitened times. **JK**

OUR VERDICT



REVIEW

# Cleaning up



## Noel Keywood uses Isotek's EVO 3 Corvus filtered mains distribution block.

**T**he Isotek Evo 3 Corvus is a multi-way power distribution block fitted with internal filters to reduce noise from the mains, degrading sound quality. It has nine mains output sockets and can pass a maximum of 16A, although when plugged into a UK mains socket the limit will be 13A as set by the UK's fused mains plug. That's still enough for any hi-fi and, for most systems, enough outlets too. The only niggle is that of wall-warts – always a difficulty. Those that extend above their mains plug cannot be accommodated if the opposite socket is used, except by one central socket. But at least it can accept one such wart, unlike many distribution blocks.

The case is strongly built, measuring 363mm long, 147mm wide not including small attachment lugs, and 46.5mm high overall. It has a brushed aluminium cover, steel base tray with lugs that allow screw fixing, and a three-pin socket providing power input. The unit comes with a stoutly built Isotek Evo3 Premiere mains attachment cable 148cms (4.5ft approx) long.

Isotek use both common mode and differential mode filtering inside – to combat the two common forms of noise encountered. Common mode

comes in on the cables from a noisy source, by the way, whilst Differential mode typically comes in over the air as transmitted interference, this stuff happening outside your home to dirty the incoming supply. A small blue LED shows when the unit is live.

Although all mains powered electronic equipment turns the mains to d.c. internally, killing such noise in the process it would seem, subtler forces are at work, dirty leakage currents from the mains transformer (cheap variety with no internal screen and high leakage inductance) being one problem and RF noise re-radiation into sensitive internal circuits being another. We've all heard those small "cracks" that can occur when a fridge or similar switches on, showing that mains noise gets through; a mains filter like this eliminates such noise, whilst also lowering continuous background mush.

### SOUND QUALITY

I used the Corvus between our mains and a system comprising McIntosh MC152 power amplifier feeding Martin Logan ESL-X loudspeakers, that have mains power units I'll note. Sources were digital from an Oppo BDP-205D universal CD player/DAC, and analogue from LP spun by a

Timestep Evo Technics SL-1210 Mk2 turntable with SME309 arm, Ortofon Cadenza Bronze MC cartridge and Icon Audio PS3 valve phono stage, this lot occupying six sockets in all.

The sonic impact of this unit was quite obvious, giving a quieter background and a smooth, more liquid flow to music through reduction of apparent hash. It didn't quite knit the electrostatics together; XStat panel to bass bin, as well as Isotek's Evo 3 Mosaic Genesis regenerator that we rely upon – a peculiar effect that took us all by surprise – but it did in similar fashion make the whole system obviously more couth and civil, offering a marked improvement from both digital and analogue sources. This gave a sound that was more dimensional, relaxing and convincing. At the price the Corvus isn't cheap, but it works very well, providing an obvious step up in sophistication.

### CONCLUSION

Both the Corvus and Evo 3 Premiere mains lead feel and look like the quality components they are. With nine sockets and 16A capacity this is a large distribution unit able to cope with most hi-fi systems, no matter how ambitious. It offers a marked improvement in sound quality and is recommended.

### ISOTEK EVO 3 CORVUS



**OUTSTANDING** - amongst the best

#### VERDICT

Expensive but well built and effective in improving the sound by giving a quieter background and smoother flow.

#### FOR

- copes with large systems
- well made
- improves sound

#### AGAINST

- bulky
- one large wall wart only

## IsoTek

# Evo3 Corvus nine-way mains distribution block and conditioner



OUR VERDICT



**IF YOU ARE** looking to introduce mains conditioning to your hi-fi system, something that can prove immediately off putting is that many devices simply can't accommodate all the different components in a well-specified setup. If you have a turntable, external phono stage and then music streaming networking hardware plus amplification needs to manage, four or even six-way socket distribution systems just aren't going to be sufficient.

IsoTek has taken this on board and its Evo3 Corvus has nine sockets and the power handling capacity to accommodate some fairly substantial setups. As part of its entry-level range, the Evo3 Corvus is designed to counter Common Mode and Differential Mode mains noise as well as RFI. Each of the sockets is star earthed and individually wired rather than in series and is fitted with a version of IsoTek's Delta filter with a view to resisting external noise sources. The Evo3 Corvus doesn't allocate any of the sockets for high-power devices such as an amplifier, so you are free to choose whichever outlet suits your needs best for a tidy installation.

### Block rocking beats

The mains input is a 16A IEC – rather than the more common 13A version – and it comes supplied with a suitable Evo3 Premier mains cable in the box – \*\* when purchased separately. Externally, the Corvus is solid if not visually spectacular. The sockets are arranged in opposed pairs (different configuration shown) and the ninth socket sits in the centre opposite the IsoTek badge, which is useful if you have a plug that sees the cable exit the top – which can often foul the opposite plug in a pair. The entire chassis can be wall mounted and while it isn't exactly a thing of beauty, it feels solid and well-engineered and doesn't take up significantly more space than a conventional six-way inline mains distribution block.



In one extremely important way, the Corvus closely mimics the behaviour of IsoTek's \*\*\*\* Evo3 Sigmas that sufficiently impressed me when I reviewed it in *HFC* 394. This is not a device that will correct any perceived faults in your equipment, so if you're at all unhappy with how your system sounds you should really go about rectifying this first.

For those that are already in love with the sound of their system, the Corvus allows it to continue to do what you enjoy but from a background that is quieter and more controlled. This is especially apparent with vinyl. With a Rega Planar 6 (*HFC* 427) connected to a Cyrus Phono Signature (*HFC* 408), the difference compared with a respectably solid individually switched mains block is readily apparent. The Corvus drops the already low noise floor to make it inaudible, allowing fine details buried in the mix of Public Service Broadcasting's *Every Valley* to be easily observed. The archive vox pops in *Britain Will Always Need Coal* are considerably easier to decipher with the IsoTek in place.

The effect with digital material is similar, but as most competent digital

devices already have an inaudible background, the realisation here is a little different. What the Corvus does with a Naim ND5 XS network player (*HFC* 352) and a Melco N1A NAS drive (*HFC* 397) is to gently expand the sense of dynamics and scale in the performance delivery. This extra scope is readily apparent in a DSD64 of Pink Floyd's *Welcome To The Machine* where the brooding space is more tangible, giving instrumentation that little bit more space to breathe plus an effortless boost to dynamics.

### Cloud nine

Crucially, none of these benefits have much in the way of appreciable downsides. The Corvus does show a fractional reduction in the absolute bass depth available compared with the significantly more expensive Evo3 Sigmas, but the improvement over a standard mains distribution block is marked and I don't know of any similarly priced rival that can better it. This is a no-nonsense piece of engineering that can handle expansive multi-component systems and help to deliver even more of the qualities you enjoy. **ES**

## IsoTek EVO3 Initium power cable

**OPALESCENT GREEN IS** not a colour that one would usually associate with a mains cable, but it does look rather good on the new EVO3 Initium. This is IsoTek's entry-level power cable, designed to offer a high-quality performance at an extremely keen price.

The 1cm diameter cable consists of three 2mm<sup>2</sup> conductors arranged in a parallel construction with a slight rotational twist to reduce the effects of RFI and EMI. The conductors are made from 99.9999% oxygen-free copper (OFC) and insulated with a polyethylene (PE) dielectric. In order to reduce microphony and improve the internal strength, a cotton filler is used and a paper wrap secures the construction of all this prior to the application of the PVC opalescent green outer jacket. Together with the cotton filler, the paper wrap forms a buffer with the

PVC to maintain the overall dielectric properties of the cable. The cable is terminated in IsoTek's audiophile-grade moulded connectors featuring solid OFC conductors with robust nickel plating. The 13A mains plug is fitted with a 10A SEM fuse.

### Flex appeal

The EVO3 Initium has a nice, robust feel to it and is very flexible. The extra half metre over a standard 1m cable is useful, easily accommodating the longest runs in my hi-fi rack.

When connected to my valve preamp power supply, it certainly improves the clarity of the sound and there's a noticeable step up in the quality of instrument focus. In addition, the background seems quieter and the bass is more extended and fuller sounding. The silences in the solo vocal of Todd Rundgren's *Wailing Wall* and the super-deep bass



line demonstrates this particularly well. The EVO3 Initium is a great value for money cable that provides excellent build quality. **NR**

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# SOUNDBITES

**HI-FI WORLD**



### ISOTEK EVO3 PREMIER MAINS CABLE

Last November, Hampshire based mains specialists, IsoTek, introduced a new affordable mains cable called the EVO3 (Evolution 3) Premier.

The core of the cable are three 2sq mm conductors made from 99.9999% OFC

which are silver coated. This is covered in an extruded Teflon dielectric and given a rotational twist to aid EMI and RFI rejection. A cotton filler reduces microphony and adds internal strength. Between this and the flexible, heat resistant PVC outer sheath is a paper wrap.

The moulded IEC and three pin mains plugs were specially designed and manufactured by IsoTek, and boast solid copper conductors coated in 24ct gold.

Using the cable to power a Leema Acoustics Agena phonostage, replacing a first generation IsoTek cable, the effect was transformative. The older cable had a raw honesty in its presentation. This one had at least the same honesty behind it, but was more sophisticated. I found that there were improvements from tonal colour to its substantiveness. It felt weightier yet more agile, and more fluid and detailed.

Changing over to using it to power the Leema Antilla CD player, I again found an

improvement. This time the EVO3 Premier replaced a Merlin Cables lead. In this case the sound had more open and obvious detailing. The Merlin had a smoothness that was very pleasant, but with the Premier I could pinpoint the start and finish of a sound with greater accuracy.

I also tried it on the Leema Tucana II amplifier (150W). It did a reasonable job but the sound felt as though there was a little bit of restraint in it. Used on the less demanding Rotel RA-04 amplifier (40W) I found it benefitted the sound.

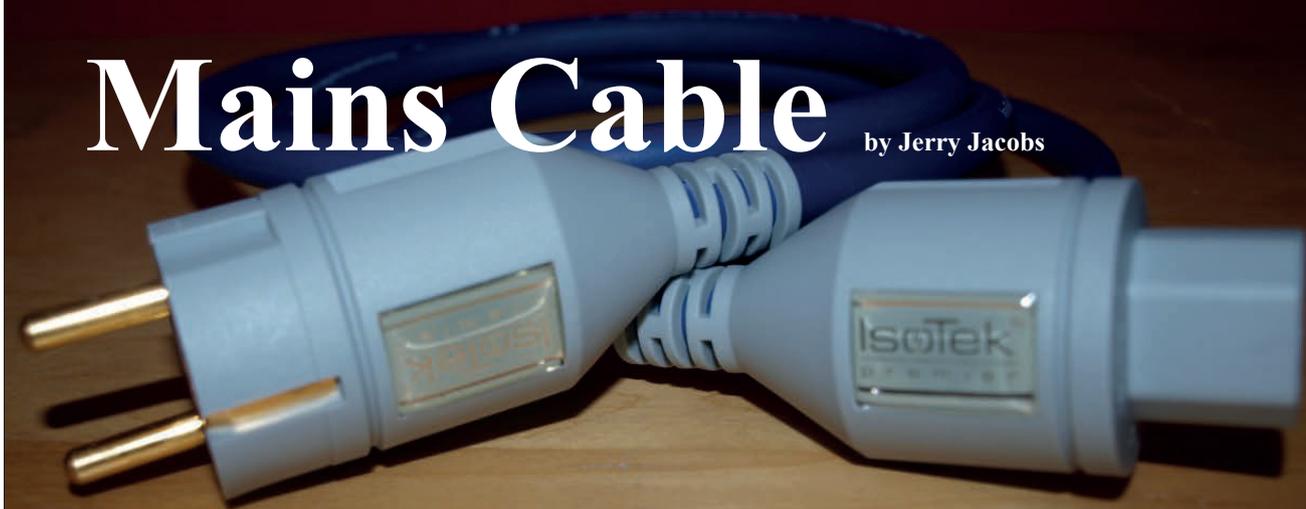
This lead seems to offer a level of performance that can compete effectively with considerably more expensive cables. It works very well with low current equipment, and with low powered budget amplifiers. I think it is so effective and such good value for money that I now have three. **TB**

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APRIL 2013 HI-FI WORLD

# Isotek EVO 3 Mains Cable

by Jerry Jacobs



I hadn't planned to review this cable at all, but one was supplied by David Brook at Mains Cables R Us (MCRU) as part of the package with the excellent LongDog Audio VDt1 DAC that I recently reviewed here. Swapping out this mains cable for one of my own favourites produced an unexpected diminishment in sound quality. "Hmm", I thought, "interesting".

Solidity and control, dynamics and resolution, clarity and precision. All seemed to benefit from this cable on the LDA DAC.

At \*\*\* or so for a 1.5m length, reasonably flexible

***How can mains cables affect the sound of a component? - I have no idea, but experience demands me to accept that they do.***

and looking very well made and presented, this cable is by no means expensive as such things go.

It's available in any configuration of plugs you care to think of, including high current, Schuko, Figure-8, UK 3-pin, US 2-pin etc ....

**Technicalities**

Three 2 sq mm conductors made from silver-coated 99.9999% OFC (oxygen free copper) are used to carry the current. The dielectric covering is extruded Teflon and the conductors are given a rotational twist to improve RFI rejection.

A cotton filler reduces microphony and bolsters the internal strength of the cable and a paper wrap is used to secure the construction prior to the application of the flexible PVC jacket

The moulded IEC and three pin mains plugs are designed and made by Isotek, and the solid copper conducting components are coated in 24ct gold.

**Comparisons**

Ah, the 'sound' of mains cables. One of the more contentious issues in hifi! How can mains cables affect the sound of a

component? - I have no idea, but experience demands me to accept that they do. I could list a discouragingly large number of mains cables that spoil a component's sound for me.

I tend to keep several brands, each with their own sonic characteristics that suit some components but that do not necessarily synergise with others.

## Reviews

Here's a comparison between the Isotek cable and a couple of my established favourites ....

Nordost Magus (re-branded as Blue Heaven at around

\*\*\* for 1m) has been one of my 'keeper' mains cables for quite a while. As well as looking great with its lovely deep blue outer sheath, it also performs admirably sonically! It has a slightly relaxed but fluid take on the music; there's a natural flow and tonal richness that is very appealing. In comparison to the Isotek, though, it seems a bit too laid back, less tonally neutral and missing out on some of the excitement, boldness and solidity of more rhythmically propelled music. The Isotek EVO3 Premier sounded closest to my old MusicWorks mains cable, the latest version of which retails at around \*\*\* for a 1.8m length. Similarly controlled and dynamic, it was actually quite difficult to tell them apart on small to medium scale music. When the music really gets going, though, and with higher powered amps like my 250wpc Krell, the benefits of the more expensive cable can be heard as a further expansion of dynamic freedom and heft. With a lower powered amp like a Topping TP-60 27wpc t-amp, or with low powered source components, differences of this kind were marginal at best.

#### Summary

All 3 of the power cables mentioned here are fine examples of the cable maker's art, and I would happily commend any and all of them to you. The Nordost has a bit more 'flavour', and that may suit your system or preferences. The MusicWorks is similarly neutral, defined and explicit as the Isotek, and is capable of taking a high powered amplifier's dynamic freedom even further - but it also costs several times as much!

So, the Isotek EVO3 Premier power cable is a bit of a no-brainer as far as I am concerned - the benefits of high end power cable design, but without the high price.

## *So, the Isotek EVO3 Premier power cable is a bit of a no-brainer as far as I am concerned*

#### Equipment used:

Speakers: MBL 116F, Dynaudio Excite X14, Waterfall Audio Victoria Evo Power Amps: Atoll AM-80, Topping TP-60 and Krell KAV-250a  
Pre-amp: Restek Consens  
Source: Vincent CD S7 CD Player.  
Signal cables: RFC Pluto & Oscar's Audio Dark Knight i/c and Tellurium Q Black speaker cables.  
Mains cables: Nordost Magus, MusicWorks



A bit of a no brainer says Jerry Jacobs

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# IsoTek EVO3 Initium power cord

by Alan Sircom

Initium sounds like the sort of name an advertising agency from the 1990s might use, but in fact it's a bold new departure from IsoTek. Initium is designed to bring the company's EVO3 performance to a new affordable level.

This is not the first time IsoTek undercut itself to release a great power cord at a good price; EVO3 Premier uses an FEP dielectric, 40 strands of silver-plated OFC form the three 2mm diameter conductors, an RFI-busting rotational twist in the construction, a cotton filter, a dinner service, a fondue set, 24ct gold plating, a cuddly toy, and a nifty PVC jacket. Some elements of that list might have come from classic British Saturday night TV of the 1970s. That resulted in a truly high-performance power cord coming in just under the £\*\*\* mark.

EVO3 Initium uses the same OFC conductors, without the silver plating, moves from FEP to PE dielectric, and uses nickel plating in place of 24ct gold on the terminations. In the process, it has allowed IsoTek to effectively double each production run, bringing the cost of each cable down to a more manageable £\*\* IsoTek has instigated a 'no swapsies' rule – the cable is pre-terminated with moulded terminals at both ends, and comes in a 1.5m length and a standard C15 IEC only. Initium is also a shiny emerald green colour with sparkly green IsoTek logos embedded in the IEC plug. And unlike many lower cost audiophile power cords, it doesn't smell like a cheap plastic raincoat.

Initium has to contend with a host of rivals, and be good enough to overcome the 'screw it, I'll just use the one that came in the box' black cord default. It will end up being used with components that might cost a few hundred to a few thousand pounds, and will also be one of the first 'trial' power cords for the sceptical. That's a tough list of jobs for one mains lead.

Fortunately, EVO3 Initium is more than up for the task. Lower cost audiophile power cords have a habit of either packing too much RFI treatment into the mix (making for potentially quieter backgrounds, but at the expense of dynamic freedom) or sound immediately exciting by seemingly filtering the bottom end to make the top sound exciting. Initium, instead, plays a longer game, with an absence of sonic signature and a good sense of dynamic freedom on integrated and smaller power amps. Initium also shows up just how inconsistent give-away power cords can be, by simply sounding like the device should sound. In the context of a demanding high-end system, there are better power cords in the IsoTek range and the limitations begin to show in dynamic foreshortening. But this isn't meant for high-end powerhouses; it's meant for people with really good affordable audio equipment who want to give that system a more consistent performance.

IsoTek's EVO3 Initium is now our all-rounder default mains cable choice, and comes highly recommended as a result. +



## SPECIFICATIONS

### IsoTek EVO3 Initium

Available in UK, EU, US, AU, and CH power plugs, C15 IEC socket only

REPRODUCED FROM **HI-FI CHOICE** ISSUE 135

IsoTek Sirius mains conditioner [Review]

# Sirius benefit

IsoTek's new mains block offers tangible improvements

**PRODUCT** IsoTek Sirius  
**TYPE** Mains conditioner



IsoTek certainly didn't invent the mains conditioner (people were selling them before the company started trading), but it has certainly made a big mark in aftermarket mains kit. This must be partly due to the sheer range of products available; at the time of writing, the company's website lists over a dozen models at a variety of prices.

But there are plenty more in the pipeline, including the latest model Sirius, which is part of the new 'EVO3' range. Set to replace the GII products, Sirius is a simple enough proposition, a six-way distribution board, good for ten amp output (2,300-watt) with filtering and protection built-in. Unlike the PS Audio Quintet (reviewed in *HFC* 307), it doesn't include any switching features, but then it is considerably cheaper. It does, however, come with handy wall-mounting brackets.

It might still seem a lot of money to throw at a 'mere' mains accessory. But it's an expense that can easily be justified in the build quality of the Sirius, which is very high. The basic chassis is a substantial piece of aluminium extrusion, on which are mounted high-grade sockets. The mains inlet is a standard IEC type, which IsoTek naturally recommends should be fed via one of the company's own mains leads. The clever stuff is inside, on a modest-looking circuit board which carries all the filtering components.

Arguments rage in the nerdier corners of hi-fi-dom about how best to filter mains supplies. The Sirius adopts a relatively non-intrusive approach, with mostly shunt-connected components that are not 'in the way' of the mains voltage. There are also protection devices capable, apparently, of handling 22,500 amps, a claim we're happy to take on trust in the absence of a sudden lightning strike to use for testing. Rather ingeniously, IsoTek has also come up with a simple, but effective means to provide a degree of isolation from socket to socket, so that mains noise generated by one component does not significantly affect other components

plugged into the same board. This is not always taken into account – certainly not in any of the cheaper mains boards we've seen.

### SOUND QUALITY

It is only honest to add to any review of a mains filter or conditioner that your mileage may vary. Subjective results can, indeed will, vary significantly from system to system, location to location and even time to time (depending on just how much noise is on the mains and how sensitive the connected kit is to it). But we tried a variety of hi-fi components, in three locations, with the Sirius and were very favourably impressed.

Effects were most pronounced with source components, while power amplifiers – at least, the ones we tried – were less affected, showing just a small improvement in general subjective cleanliness of presentation and image. But we noted a similar improvement to four quite different CD players, each of which seemed to produce sounds from a quieter background when nourished via the Sirius. Small, subtle details were more in evidence and images both tightened up and extended a little further in all directions.

An elderly, but upmarket FM tuner benefited similarly and we were once again slightly perplexed to hear a subtle improvement also from an LP player – this is just the motor and control circuit we're talking about here, quite independent of the phono amplifier. The latter was also given a touch more detail and solidity in its sound, but that's a little easier to explain!

None of the improvements wrought was massive and yet when we fed an entire system through the Sirius, it was given a distinct lift in overall musical performance. We would not hesitate to suggest this as an effective upgrade for any system. It's effective, well priced and clearly makes the case for adding mains products to hi-fi systems. **HFC**

Richard Black

VERDICT	
<b>SOUND</b> ★★★★★	<b>PRO</b> Well made and practical, this board offers a clear improvement in clarity of sound to a range of components and helps prevent cross-contamination between units connected to it.
<b>FEATURES</b> ★★★★★	<b>CON</b> Lacks the switching features of more expensive products, does little for power amps.
<b>BUILD</b> ★★★★★	
<b>VALUE</b> ★★★★★	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> We've heard bigger leaps in performance from other mains filters, but they all cost considerably more than this one. Even with 'standard' mains leads, this is a worthwhile addition to a decent hi-fi set-up.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE</b> ★★★★★	

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**ISOTEK AQUARIUS EVO 3 MAINS CONDITIONER**



**Dominic Marsh and Dan Worth take a listen to the IsoTek Aquarius Evo 3 mains conditioner in their systems.**

I have often wondered what they feed thoroughbred race horses with. I bet it isn't carrot tops and potato peelings, that's for sure. Nor would I imagine they fuel Formula 1 racing cars with petrol from the local supermarket either. The same goes for Hi-Fi systems; feed them on a poor mains supply and they are not going to run at their optimum performance.

What does a "mains conditioner" do then? In simple terms it gives the electricity supply a jolly good tidy and smarten up, taking out surges, spikes and fluctuations, removing noise and induced radio frequencies, neutralising them so they don't enter your Hi-Fi components. "I don't have any of that" some may say, but you would be truly shocked just how much the electricity supply varies in voltage and sometimes frequency too, plus these days the National Grid is being used for digital data transfer, not forgetting either that many home broadband systems operate via the mains in the house wiring, not confined either solely to the house itself that has it installed, because some will leak back into the supply lines. Thermostats and motors found in fridges, washing machines and central heating controls are notorious for causing unwanted clicks and whirring which can be clearly audible through a Hi-Fi system. If you live near an industrial estate or a farm you might get all sorts of nasty artefacts reflected back into the mains supply. Add to that some DC offset where direct current voltages appear within the AC waveform, imbalances where either the positive

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or negative cycles are curtailed (this happened in my previous house) and as you can see, a mains conditioner clearly has its work cut out standing sentinel over what can be transported inwards via the mains supply. Therefore I don't regard a mains conditioner as an accessory or a luxury, I regard it as essential and hence have had one in my own system for a number of years and wouldn't be without one now.

However, I have also heard some mains conditioners in the past that managed to squeeze the life out of the music and suppress dynamics to a marked degree, so I will be paying particular attention towards that trait during the evaluation.

**Construction**

Built into a substantial case, this is a solid piece of engineering. Measuring 444x85x305mm and weighing in at 9kg it is the right size to slot into a standard sized rack. When powered it has just two small faint blue LEDs in the central backlit panel which are not distracting, so it's rather nice having a power indicator lamp telling you it's switched on, rather than TELLING you it's switched on with a glaring light – a nice touch. The power switch and safety cutout is underneath the chassis just off centre to the front right. It is a bit of a fumble getting your fingers in beneath the case to locate the switch, but given that the unit should be permanently powered up then it isn't such a major issue for the rare times you may need to reach underneath for it.

On the rear of the unit is six 3 pin UK mains sockets, two of which are deemed high power outlets for use with components such as amplifiers and power amplifiers that can deliver 3,680 watts continuously per socket and the remaining four are for lower current draw units like CD players, DACs and phono stages, etc., able to supply 1,150 watts continuously per socket. The sockets are of good quality and grip the plugs well. IsoTek say that each individual socket is monitored for power consumption and are isolated from each other so a heavy current demand on one socket will not detriment the others.

Power inlet is by a 3 pole 20 amp C-19 IEC connector. IsoTek thoughtfully provide a power cable suitable for the role with the Aquarius and it isn't just any old power cable of indeterminate or generic parentage plonked into the box, it is one of their own products, namely an Evo 3 Premier. As it is included as part of the Aquarius package I will give a brief description of it here and Hifi Pig's own Jerry did in

fact carry out a brief review of this cable back in December of 2013.

The Evo 3 Premier is only supplied as a 1.5 metre length, which should be more than adequate to fit the majority of installations. Conductor material is 40 strands of 99.9999% OFC silver-plated conductors with Teflon (FEP) dielectric with a 2mm<sup>2</sup> diameter. Connectors are custom made 24 carat gold plated and to IsoTek's own design, which is a refreshing change from the norm.

**Sound Quality**

Or rather, how it doesn't sound. The sound quality heard through my Hi-Fi system wasn't directly attributable to the IsoTek Aquarius itself, more the profound effect it had on the performance of the other components attached to it and allowing them to work unhindered by mains borne pollution. Because of that the "Sound Quality" rating I have given at the end of the review is only a notional figure, as it should be by rights much higher if it was a standalone sound producing component, as opposed to affecting other components in the chain as mains conditioners are wont to do. Even so, it is still given a 9.1 out of 10 rating, a more than respectable scoring nonetheless, given the context of its function.

The Aquarius was tried with 3 different amplifiers; a valve amplifier, an all digital amplifier and a conventional transistor output amplifier, plus two CD players too, so all of them benefited immensely from the cleaned up mains supply it provided, so practically any device should derive gains from using the conditioner in the system.

Background became totally silent, with not even the tiniest amount of hiss when the amplifier's volume was cranked up to maximum, whereas it was there before the Aquarius was introduced. I heard no hums or buzzes either.

Of course, part of my brief was to analyse whether or not the Aquarius was compressing any of the dynamics and I would be paying particularly close attention to that, given my previous experience with other mains conditioners. Pleased to report that I couldn't detect any compression effects at all, in fact the system was even more dynamic than hitherto without the Aquarius being installed and never once felt that it was running out of available power at any time.

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## ISOTEK AQUARIUS EVO 3 MAINS CONDITIONER

The sound just opened up and flowed with absolute ease from the speakers, fine details had acquired a polished refinement, presented in an endless stream of new found details, so it was no effort at all to hear all of the tiny nuances in the recording without having to strain to hear them. Bass too acquired a palpable firmness and solidity without any trace of boom or overhang at all. Drums and bass were immense in scale yet under perfect control at all times. Of particular note however was the sound stage and imaging which really was holographic in every sense of the word and it was effortless in placing musicians and instruments into fixed points in space with an ethereal quality to them, being surrounded and enveloped by an inky blackness. In short, I believe the IsoTek Aquarius simply unshackled my system and let it do what it does best, with the benefit of having what the Aquarius doing what it does best, forming a perfect symbiotic partnership.

### Conclusion

So, would you feed that thoroughbred race horse with carrot tops and potato peelings? Would you fill up a Formula 1 car with supermarket petrol? No you wouldn't answer 'yes' to either of those questions and the same goes too for your Hi-Fi system with the mains quality you feed it.

I will say it again so there is no doubt, I believe a mains conditioner is an essential component and provided the conditioner you choose doesn't compress or curtail the dynamics and lets the music flow out your system without any hiss, hash, mush, or extraneous noise in effortless and untroubled ease, then the outlay is worthwhile in sound quality gains. On that basis, the IsoTek Aquarius Evo3 easily meets all of those important performance criteria and I am convinced that IsoTek have also sprinkled some "Ingredient X" in there as well, because it performed for me way better than I had expected it to, comfortably beating my long term resident mains conditioner with aplomb.

Therefore I give the IsoTek Aquarius Evo3 mains conditioner an unequivocal recommendation.

**Build quality:** 8.9/10  
**Sound quality:** 9.3/10  
**Value for money:** 9.1/10  
**Overall:** 9.1/10

**Recommended for:** Any Hi-Fi system, enabling it to perform at it's best.

**Dominic Marsh**

**As is customary with Hifi Pig, whenever a product scores 8.5 or more then a second review is called for, so after Dominic's scoring ratings, it was handed over to Dan Worth for him to conduct the follow up review.**

I've had many mains products in my time, ranging from simple basic to more complex filters and conditioners, regenerators, balanced power transformers and isolation transformers.

What I look for in a mains routing system is a unit that imposes no sonic signature on the sound and simply allows the equipment to work closer to its full potential. The Aquarius is a product that gets a tick from me.

The unit is extremely well made, has a substantial aluminium case and great looks to match. Available in various socket output types it will cater for all, regardless of plug choice or country of origin.

In the box, accompanied with the unit is an EVO3 Premier mains cable with gold plugs, an extremely welcome addition over a stock throw away cable which comes with most units regardless of price.

I ordinarily use Schuko sockets so a quick change over to some MS HD Power plugs and the Aquarius was easily swapped into my system and fired up ready to go.

My initial take on the sound was very pleasant and music seemed to be able to breathe very well indeed giving a spacious and 3D soundstage with a black background listened for an hour or so until I had other things to take care of that day and appreciating and anticipating an even better result from the unit later that evening once it had the time to settle in and warm up etc.

Later that evening I returned to the music and played some acoustic material I was very familiar with. I can't really say that I felt the sound was much better than earlier the same day. The sound was spacious and engaging, the soundstage was definitely carved out from the black background and a sense of effortless prowess was a stand out feature of the Aquarius in my system, easily giving the impression that the

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unit was allowing my equipment to work more efficiently.

Imagine a calmness over the sound that can be definite, solid, bass confident and delicate and you are on the right track to understanding how the Aquarius works in the system.

Listening to vocals, especially female vocals triggered my brain to note that the upper midrange was less forced than using a direct wall or simple mains extension to power the system and other cheaper filter type units which generally always have a sense of compression or squeezed dampening of the dynamics, contrasted very to the Aquarius' sonic appeal.

The dynamic range obtained with the equipment being fed by the Aquarius was very exciting, dramatic and enthusiastic. Orchestral movements had vigour and explosive expression, Electronica was very beat driven with slam and subtle more intricate dynamics of delicate acoustic work was sublime.

It was easy to be seduced with what the Aquarius was achieving in the system and when the review was discussed with Keith Martin GM at Isotek, we discussed sending an extra power cable that could be seen as an upgrade to the already included Premier.

Keith suggested we take a look at and listen to the EVO3 Optimum with a Furutech 1363 (G) and Isotek's own copper 24ct Gold plated Furutech style IEC connector.

Plugging the Optimum into the system wasn't a revelation but it was for sure a strong upgrade that was easily discernible over the Premier. Where the Aquarius allowed the equipment to work at a greater potential, the Optimum allowed the Aquarius to work at a better potential. Was there a different characteristic to the sound? Yes, there wasn't a different tonality or sonic signature but there was definitely a better characteristic. The most standout addition to the overall sound field for me was an increased openness in the midrange, vocals had better projection and were a little smoother and controlled, allowing male vocals to be more masculine and female vocals to command more power and delicacy.

Bass notes also gained a degree of stability and shape, mellowing the upper bass to come through with a little more detail, giving a perception of more strength to the undertones of the midband. Treble remained much the same yet had an addition of smaller micro details being a little more easily depicted especially when the music got busier. The Op-

**The Aquarius offers no sonic signature of its own, simply put it will allow the system components to work much more towards their full potential, allowing for better sound staging a quieter background and more ease, control and strength to the overall sound.**

timum isn't cheap but it's combination with the Aquarius did allow for a further improvement to the overall feel and dimension of the sound.

**Conclusion**

The Aquarius is a strongly made unit which offers all the benefits of a shelf sat extension block in a sleek looking package. But that doesn't mean anything if it's performance isn't strong.

The Aquarius offers no sonic signature of its own, simply put it will allow the system components to work much more towards their full potential, allowing for better sound staging a quieter background and more ease, control and strength to the overall sound.

The included EVO3 Premier power cable is a fantastic touch and works incredibly well with the unit. Adding a better mains cable though such as the EVO3 Optimum as tested in the review will rep further benefits again.

**Build Quality - 8.7/10**

**Sound Quality - 8.9/10**

**Value For Money - 8.8/10**

**Overall - 8.8/10**

**Recommended for an ability to enhance the overall performance of a system without imposing on the equipment's sonic signature.**

**Dan Worth**



IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius



POWER PLAY

Anyone wanting good sound has to keep an eye on every stop along the signal chain. And what is the first stop? The power outlet. But is starting off here really worth it? We will hear.

By Jochen Reinecke Photos: Ingo Schulz, Cai Brockmann



Can it be a sign of old age already? If someone had told me twenty years ago that I would one day write a piece about a mains filter – I would have laughed as I hurried off on my way. But when editor in chief Cai Brockmann approached me with one of his infamous, bimonthly cold calls to review a new test object, I accepted without hesitation. "Give it to me", was my ecstatic response.

It's bound to happen to every hifi nut eventually. You start saving early on and carefully assemble your loudspeakers and all kinds of components, usually replacing them one by one over several stages, until one day you can finally call the provisional hifi system your own. Then comes the initial fine-tuning. You invest in the acoustics of the living space (you'll also experience your first relationship upheavals in this phase at the latest), experiment with different loudspeaker arrangements, spikes, equipment platforms and support feet, all kinds of LF cables and much more. Most people call it quits at some point, but not everyone.

Some take the shortcut right to hardcore esotericism, investing in "informed" granite slabs, mystical blue electrosmog remediation lights, drawing with black marker around the edges of their CDs, putting up "activated" stickers on their windows, waving expensive magic wands over their cables before listening, and hanging bell-like resonators in the room (this usually marks the official start of the separation, including maintenance payments). Others remain at least pro forma on the science-based path and invest in costly power cables – or in a mains filter, the purchase price for which one could easily buy a record player and have something that could be called useful. This piece of equipment is exactly what I now have at my home. How could it come to this?

Very easily – in the past ten years, I have found (and I needed to, at times reluctantly) that astonishing things tend to happen in the hifi segment. Some tuning measures, though they may sound esoteric, actually do make an audible, reproducible sound improvement. And by the way, many don't – that is worth emphasizing once again at this

MAINS FILTER

junction. It became clear to me that mains current is anything but "clean" (i.e. except for a flawless sine with a constant mean amplitude, it supplies no further harmonics), when a knowledgeable master electrician once lent me an amusing device that allowed me to hear the background noises floating around in the mains current. Sort of like an amplifier for sound coming from the power outlet with a steep notch filter at 50 Hz. Holy smokes! The things you could hear – a hearty burp when the refrigerator started up, a shrill hissing and buzzing when using the dimmer on my halogen ceiling light, a strange creaking when turning on my laser printer – combined with lovely, intermittent musical interference from the radio and waves from the Tempelhof airport that used to reach all the way to Schöneberg.

And since alternating current is by definition foreign when it comes to operating hifi components, all of the transformers, switching power supplies and such built into the components are simply

a crutch. As a consequence, some manufacturers of ultra-premium hifi equipment turn to battery power, as this is the only way to truly deliver "pure" raw power material. If you then consider that what ultimately resounds from our loudspeaker is simply rectified, strained, stabilized current, onto which the music is modulated with considerable effort, it follows that one needs to begin right at the front of the signal chain – right at this very current – in order to achieve maximal sound quality.

This is exactly what the products from IsoTek do. This manufacturer has dedicated itself wholeheartedly to the issue of "clean power". The product portfolio primarily encompasses power cables of the highest quality (and price categories) as well as active and passive mains filters. I have received the IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius – a mains filter with six outlet sockets, which could easily pass as the output stage when viewed from the front. Supplying power is the affordable power cable EVO Premier from the same the company; it not only goes well with the



Interview with Keith Martin, IsoTek



*Keith, this device looks like a sophisticated output stage – but it's actually a mains filter. Is that really necessary?*

Well, the time and effort we at IsoTek have put into mains filtering is considerable – it might be unparalleled. For example, the EVO3 Aquarius features six filter sockets in the back; inside, each one of them has its own current path which is isolated from the others

– to my knowledge, no other company is doing this. It's actually like an extremely complex power strip in which the connected devices cannot interfere with one another. That's the reason we can't really make it much smaller. And we gave it a "classic" design, which allows it to be integrated in existing high-end systems as easily as possible.

*But why should I add a mains filter to my expensive system in the first place? Doesn't the music lose some of its dynamism?*

That criticism comes up often, but that's not the case with

IsoTek. We pay meticulous attention to filtering out only the disruptive elements in the current and to maintaining the full dynamics of the music recording. In fact, we can demonstrate the effect of the mains filter with this device here (*he presents a mains noise analyzer*). It allows all of the mains interference signals to be heard as actual sounds (*he demonstrates the difference between "with" and "without"*).

*Wow, I didn't expect such a drastic difference ...*

Yes, it is quite amazing to see what a clean current can do. It's no wonder that a premium hifi system will show its appreciation with a substantially better performance.

*So an electric current that is as "good" as possible is essential for the listening experience?*

If I may offer an analogy: No one would think of filling their fancy sports car with inferior gasoline. So why should I expect my premium system to run on contaminated power?

*A good comparison, Keith. Thank you for our talk.*



1



2

» Aquarius, on the practical side, it is also included in the price.

I have the ideal working conditions and challenges to offer the British double pack: Last August I moved into a new apartment; downstairs, a snack bar is located on the first floor. Apparently, their massive pizza oven packs a heavy load: In the evening when their business is booming, my power is so compromised that even my living room lamp slightly flickers. Things calm down again at 11:00 pm sharp, when the place closes. And now we – finally – have the reason that I wanted this device for a test. Get it?

### What does the EVO3 Aquarius do?

On the one hand, it filters out all of the harmonics and interferences from the incoming mains current. It can reduce the types of interference described above – also called RFI by electrical engineers – by up to 60 dB, for instance. On the other hand, it ensures that the interferences generated by the hifi chain itself are eliminated to the greatest extent possible. During rectification and straining of the supply voltages, the power supply units of the components distribute the harmonic impulses "back" into the mains. In other words, a battle on two fronts.

- 1 Clear the ring: Six outlets are ready and waiting for power-hungry components
- 2 Could be an output stage but isn't: pleasingly minimal, yet premium-quality and substantial design.

The good news: It actually works, especially for me at home. I deliberately scheduled my test sessions during the times in which the power in my apartment was noticeably strained. And as soon as the EVO3 Aquarius came into the game, the improvement in my chain's performance was astonishingly clear. My CD player is an Audiolab 8200CDQ. Its digital signal is led by coax into the BMC PureDac and symmetrically converted via XLR to the Abacus Ampollo output stage. From there, it goes to my reference loudspeakers, the Neat Acoustics Momentum 4i and the Tannoy Turnberry Gold Reference.

But what exactly happens as the EVO3 Aquarius performs its duties? I observed noticeable improvements in three areas. The most significant effect can be seen in the spatial representation. With the EVO3 Aquarius in the loop, there are considerable enhancements. Sound sources can be more precisely located, seem firmly anchored in their position, and are perceived to go a half meter further in depth and fan out more extensively in breadth. This positive effect can be seen in all musical genres and styles. Orchestras have a more precise depth gradation, mixed voices sound considerably more convincing, even chamber music is more enjoyable, especially when produced in such a manner that the space in which it is recorded is "alive" with the music. Hall sounds more natural, refined – it even seems possible to actually imagine the qualities and nature of the place it was recorded (cool, warm, woody, etc.). In Mogwai's song "Take Me Somewhere Nice", for instance, the second guitar after the intro is perceived to be coming from one meter to the right of the right loudspeaker. When the drums come in, it almost seems possible to visualize the room in which the microphone is set.

**MAINS FILTER**

In terms of high-frequency representation, my chain can deliver considerably more with the EVO3 Aquarius as well. This is especially true when it comes to drums and percussion instruments: Cymbal, rattler, shaker, sizzler – they all sound remarkably more detailed, and it's easier to differentiate them from one another in their timbre – even the cowbell sounds positively more metallic, more bell-like.

Last but not least, there is also a bit more to enjoy in terms of bass. Obviously, the mains filter can't provide any tonal modifications (that would be questionable from an electrical point of view, and you'd also have to worry about the mental state of the reviewer if he said it could). But the impulses seem to me to be crisper and more refined. This can be heard beautifully in Linton Kwesi Johnsons "Reggae Sounds": The bass drum appears to have a more immediate effect, the bass lines sound groovier and purified.

In short: The IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius is worth its salt in every respect. It enhances the system with an undoubtedly audible upgrade, while giving its owner the good feeling of not having purchased it based on esoteric nonsense but on an immaculate design that can be relied upon. Pure genius!

[redaktion@fidelity-magazin.de](mailto:redaktion@fidelity-magazin.de)

**IsoTek EVO3 Aquarius****Mains filter**

**Input:** Mains inlet (C19 IEC)

**Outlets:** 6 mains outlets (2 x 16 A, 4 x 5 A)

**Mains voltage:** 100-240 V.

**Total available power:** 3680 W

**Total transient power:** 18400 W.

**Delivery contents:** IsoTek EVO Premier power cable (unit price: € 99)

**Finish:** Silver or black

**Dimensions (W/H/D):** 44,4/85/30,5 cm

**Weight:** 9 kg

**Warranty period:** 2 years

REVIEW

HI-FI WORLD

# New Age

Is Isotek's Aquarius the dawning of a new era in mains conditioning? Paul Rigby finds out...



I've always been suspicious of gadgets and liquids and sprays and boxes which don't appear to do anything but light up in various shades of blue. However, despite my inherent mistrust and concomitant grumpiness I do pride myself with having an open mind. The result, after testing, has been a reviewer in a constant state of surprise. Yes, cables *do* improve sonics, demagnetising your vinyl and CDs *does* make a difference, correct shelving *does* enhance sound quality, and leggy blondes can put a smile on your face [steady on Paul! Ed.]...

So it was with this growing sense of assurance (although I may have dreamt about the last one), that I tackled Isotek's new mains conditioner, the Aquarius, the official successor to the company's own popular Mini Sub, originally released in 2003.

So what does a mains conditioner actually do? Basically, it gives your electricity supply a wash and brush up, filtering out any spikes, removing noise and preventing any sort of contamination either directly from the mains or from one component to the other (utilising, in IsoTek's case, Kirchoff's Equal Path of Resistance technology). If you believe in that old adage, 'rubbish in, rubbish out', often applied to sources such as turntables and CDs, then look at your mains electricity as the real source of your hi-fi. Once distorting noise enters your system from the mains then your hi-fi is up against it from the off.

The new Aquarius arrives with six sockets, two 16 Amp, high current

outlets for power amps and the like, plus four 5 Amp, medium current outlets for CD players, tuners, *et al.* Each socket is isolated from each other and features its own filtering system. The medium current sockets also feature Adaptive Gating that changes the degree of filtering dependent on the load. Other enhancements include a new choke design with improved filter stages and updated magnetic materials plus the outer aluminium case (measuring 444x85x305mm and weighing in at 9kg) which, in effect, acts as a Faraday Cage providing enhanced shielding.

## SOUND QUALITY

Listening tests took place with an Isotek-supplied Extreme cable that plugged the Aquarius into the mains plus two IsoTek Optimum cables (\*\*\*) each to attach my power amp monoblocks to the high-current sockets and two IsoTek Elite cables (\*\*\*) each attached to the medium-current sockets to plug in my other system components.

I initially span the Jeff Beck reissue 'Blow By Blow' (see classic cuts, p115) on vinyl, and jazzman Brad Mehldau's new 'Highway Rider' (Nonesuch) CD. My initial impression was that a sense of calm suddenly reigned over the whole performance. There was extra focus to the stereo image while extended listening alerted me to new details and information that emerged from both mixes. Bass remained tight but more relaxed, lower frequencies seemed to have to make less of an effort to be heard.

Probably the most notable effect

of the Aquarius was heard on the Nancy Wilson LP, 'Who Can I Turn To' (Capitol). Whenever Wilson extended a note by utilising her vibrato, the Aquarius was able to more easily follow the voice as it moved up and down the frequencies during the vibrato sequence and do it more effectively than the older Mini Sub I had on hand for reference, too. The greater clarity and enhanced, quiet background of the Aquarius allowed the voice to be properly tracked for the first time. Without the Aquarius, an upper midrange bloom tended to mask the vibrato at source.



## CONCLUSION

Don't view the Aquarius as a method of solving problems in your current system set-up, but see it as a way of enhancing what's already there. I regard the IsoTek as another step in helping to remove what I consider to be the most critical obstruction to good music in any hi-fi – distortion and its associated noisy cousins. Purifying the musical signal, via improving speaker design, better cables, demagnetising your LPs and CDs, lifting your turntable to an isolating platform or buying a mains conditioner, not only allows your components to really show what they're capable of, but also enhances the appreciation of the music you're playing. That the IsoTek Aquarius revealed previously unheard details from my familiar LPs, says it all.

<p><b>VERDICT</b> </p> <p>An effective improvement to a good hi-fi system, this serious product justifies its premium price.</p>
<p><b>ISOTEK AQUARIUS</b> IsoTek</p>
<p><b>FOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clarity</li> <li>- midrange detail</li> <li>- bass control</li> </ul>
<p><b>AGAINST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nothing at the price</li> </ul>

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

## The IsoTek Aquarius mains conditioner

By Alan Sircom



**T**his product arrived just very slightly too late for consideration for this year's awards. So think of this as a preview for the 2010 Awards, because a mains product really has to do something extremely special to beat the IsoTek Aquarius.

The new 'EVO3' Aquarius sports a pair of 16 Amp, thermomagnetically fused high-current outlets, plus a quartet of 5 Amp, bayonet fused, auto-adjusting medium-current outlets. These feature the company's own 'Adaptive Gating' technology – an auto-sensing filter stage that adapts to the current draw of the load. First appearing in the high-end Nova and Sigmas power conditioners, this is claimed to provide the perfect filter delivery for each piece of equipment connected. It also calls upon IsoTek's new KERP (Kirchoff's Equal Resistance Path) technology developed for the latest EVO3 line of conditioners, said to deliver a more coherent sound, because it spells a very pure, symmetrical signal path through the unit.

IsoTek has also developed a new choke design, with improved magnetic material that is claimed to offer increased frequency bandwidth, 67,500 Amps of instantaneous and repeatable protection and a case that creates an effective faraday cage when closed.

I've been a Gil Minisub user for some years. It was the product that above all others made mains conditioning a feature in the UK hi-fi scene, even winning over those most curmudgeonly of mains hold-outs, Naim users. It was keenly priced, sorted out the sound of mid-priced equipment perfectly and was the sort of thing that sat nicely in the equipment rack. I'm not the only Gil Minisub user out there, and here's a hint... put it on eBay or trade it in before word gets out about just how good the Aquarius really is.

The whole auditioning process took about 30 seconds. Play piece of music on Gil MiniSub. Play it again on Aquarius. Wonder why you were so attached to the Gil MiniSub (in fairness, without the Gil MiniSub, there would be no Aquarius, but those intervening years of development made their mark). What we have is a sound that is fuller, seemingly louder and more dynamic, rising out of a quieter background. All the things the MiniSub did to music a few years ago... but more so. Over the next two days or more, things get even better. Add in the Extreme power cable

(highly recommended in its own right, and if you buy the two together you shave £100 off the cable price) and things just improve still further. Going back to the original is like going back to hamburger when you've dined on steak. Going back to the original mains is like eating the box the burger came in.

And the downside? Well, the short answer is we're still looking.

Sometimes we worry about 'mk II' products when the original was so good. Will it be a *Godfather Part II*, or will it be a *Blues Brothers 2000*? Fortunately, it's a real treat and a giant leap forward, especially for (soon to be ex-) Gil Minisub owners. Very highly recommended. +

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- Number of outlets: 6
- Type of outlets: 16A UK unswitched
- Standard mains inlet: C20 IEC
- Mains voltage: 100 - 240VAC
- 2 x High current 16 Amps
- 4 x Medium current 5 Amps
- Maximum current: 16 Amps continuous
- External mains fuse: 5 Amps (13Amps UK)
  
- Dimensions: 444mm x 85mm x 305mm (WxHxD)
- Weight (boxed): 9.0Kg

# IsoTek

## EVO3 Syncro Uni mains DC filter

**A PRE-FILTER DEVICE**, the EVO3 Syncro Uni can be used with any power cable, conditioner or mains distribution block. It plugs into the mains wall socket and its 13A output socket takes the mains supply and realigns its waveform prior to any subsequent filtration or conditioning. According to the manufacturer, it synchronises the mains supply to provide a perfectly symmetrical sine wave, designed to deliver significant sonic improvements to hi-fi separates.

### **VAD's the way to do it**

It's housed in a steel and aluminium chassis and uses a solid silver-plated OCC (Ohno Continuous Cast) copper internal wiring cable. It also includes IsoTek's VAD (Virtual Air Dielectric) technology, claimed to result in a

#### **OUR VERDICT**



[www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk)



dielectric constant close to that of a vacuum of just over 1.0548 (actually, this figure is the dielectric constant of air at 100 atmospheres), and this is considered to be a good safety feature. This air barrier is achieved by minimal conductor contact and the use of an FEP (Teflon) bridge.

Plugging the EVO3 Syncro Uni into my mains wall socket using a supplied EVO3 Initium power cable (*HFC 413*) and my equipment distribution system into the Syncro Uni, I am instantly aware of an increase in the

spaciousness that's around the instruments. With a recording of Eivør's *Mín Móðir* the members of the orchestra appear slightly further apart from each other, the vocals are more lucid and the powerful bass has a more forceful punch, as does the drum thumping throughout the piece. IsoTek's EVO3 Syncro Uni is a little costly, but is an effective addition to my setup. **NR**

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EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# IsoTek EVO3 Elite power cords

by Nicholas Ripley

IsoTek gets power. Every product the company makes is designed to improve the performance of audio equipment by addressing the power somehow. So, it should be logical that IsoTek is the go-to company for power cords. The current range has a 'good, better, best' approach, and the RVO3 Elite tested here represents the 'better' cable in the three-strong range. The brand has been moving from its previous GII range to EVO3, and in power cord terms, this means a seven-core, silver-plated, 6N, oxygen-free copper cable, with each conductor shielded from its compatriots and the outside world by a Teflon FEP dielectric and a cotton filler. These are then wrapped in mylar, further shielded by an earthed oxygen-free copper shield, then jacketed in an outer sleeve of dark yellow/gold PVC. IsoTek's own 24ct gold plated IEC socket is used at the product end, but Furutech plugs are used for UK wall sockets. The result is a thick, but not inflexible, power cable. I received four cables in all, enough to completely power up my system.

Why EVO3 Elite won me over initially had nothing to do with the cable. I've noticed that my system sound frequently 'goes off the boil'. Sometimes it sounds wonderful, sometimes it doesn't. Through a process

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

[IsoTek EVO3 Elite power cord](#)

of elimination, I found it is directly related to whether I am listening to music by plugging my laptop into the system. If I'm playing LP or a SACD, with no PC in the system, it sounds fine. Even if I'm not listening to computer audio, simply plugging that PC into the same distribution block as the system compromises the sound. I'm faced with three options; buy a newer preamp (I like the one I already have), stop using the computer, or find a way the system can come to terms with 21st Century audio sources. EVO3 Elite facilitates that last option. I can now use my system with or without a computer in the mix without it sounding poor.

In direct sonic terms, when not considering PC deployment, IsoTek's EVO3 Elite also polishes the sound of a component. I played 'Shadows of Time' by Dutilleux [*Correspondences*, DG], a structurally dense piece of modern classical music, and the sound had greater depth and solidity, the treble became less strident and the bass more forceful, but more importantly – and this sounds off – it was as if the music was standing straighter. The more EVO3 Elite I put in the system, the more these effects helped liberate the music and conversely, when you take them out, the hitherto fine sound of the system became that little bit smaller and more tarnished. Impressive stuff. +



REPRODUCED FROM **hi-fi** ISSUE 112



**ISOTEK EVO3 ELITE FOR 2M**

The new Evo3 replaces the GII Elite cable and sits in the range, just above the EVO3 Premier. The Elite features seven 1.25 sq mm conductors made of silver-coated 99.9999% oxygen-free copper (OFC) with a Teflon

FEP dielectric sheath and cotton filler. A Mylar wrap surrounds the conductors, enclosed in an earthed shield of OFC. Termination is via IsoTek's bespoke connectors, with conductor pins made of solid OFC and coated in 24ct gold.

Playing jazzman, Sonny Rollins' 'The Bridge' via my Avid Acutus and comparing the Evo with a basic power lead into the Acutus' power supply, the Evo opened up the tenor sax, providing air and space around Rollins while giving him more time to emot. Bass was now fixed within the stereo image instead of wandering around the soundstage, providing the track with a rhythmic force and grounding. Percussion, meanwhile, was bouncy and vibrant, crisp and responsive

to what was going on. Hall's guitar offered improved timing signatures that provided better focus and detail.

Black Rhodium's Libra was now introduced. At only \*\*\* it provides immense value for money and trumps many cables of a higher price. I plugged that into my Densen B-475 CD player and span Yes' 'The Yes Album'.

Although the Libra tried hard to replicate the epic presence of the band on the soundstage, the Evo impressed because it gave them plenty of elbow room during their performance. The Evo provided a rich, detailed playback. Again, bass was excellent via the Libra but the Evo tightened the focus a few extra notches, giving this frequency more command of the soundstage.

The IsoTek Evo3 Elite is a top quality cable. **PR**

*"The IsoTek EVO3 Elite is a top quality cable."*

**Hi-Fi World**

# Clash of the Titans

Tony Bolton tries out the new EVO3 version of the Isotek Titan mains conditioner.

Following on from the recent upgrade of the Sigmas mains conditioner from G2 to EVO3 status, improvements in technology have made their way into the Titan, taking it into EVO3 form as well.

Originally introduced in 2005, the new Titan looks visually similar to its older sibling but contains a whole range of new technologies that have percolated down from the flagship Super Titan. One of these is KERP (Kirchoff's Equal Resistance Path). This was specially developed for the EVO3 products and features equal resistance and equal power delivery to all outlets. The internal wiring has been upgraded from that of the old model and is now made from UP-OCC (Ultra Pure-Ohno Continuous

Cast) high purity copper solid core cabling. This is silver-plated before being coated with Teflon. A fine Teflon tube is wound helically around the wire before it is covered with an extruded Teflon tube, thus creating an air gap between the wire and the tube to form an air dielectric which has virtually no capacitance.

A pyramid of VDR (Voltage Dependent Resistor) devices provide 112,500A of instantaneous protection from surges and spikes. This is combined with the ability to deliver up to 4,600W of continuous power with up to 25,000W transient ability, if the power supply permits this. Alongside there is a nine-stage Direct Coupled conditioning network in a series parallel configuration that delivers extremely low impedance and high current power.

The filter system removes both common mode and differential mode noise with increases of 600% and 20% respectively over the previous model. RFI is reduced by 82dB (50 Ohms standard) down to 5Hz frequency range.

All of this technology is housed in an alloy case that measures 275w x 182.5h x 275d and weighs 17kg. The casework can be finished in either the silver of this example or black. IsoTek's EVO3 Premier power cable, fitted with a 16A C 19 IEC conductor is supplied.

There are two 13A power outlets on one side of the case, alongside the power switch. Beside these there is an IEC mains input and a Neutrik socket for the output to either the multiway six output socket bar that is available



REVIEW



for \*\*\* or to the Sigmas EVO3 which can be attached to the Titan EVO3 to provide power to source components.

Since the previous model could only use the six-way socket unit, I first listened to the new Titan with the same socket bar plugged in that had been attached to my G2 Titan.

I started listening with one of my favourite CDs, Morcheeba's 'Big Calm', and found myself being pleasantly surprised by the new levels of detail and texture that flowed from the speakers. The bass, in particular, seemed to go far deeper than previously but with added layers of colour and shape to it. Skye's velvety smooth voice also gained layers of detail that made it seem more rounded and naturally shaped, helping to increase the sensation of realism in the sound.

Turning to vinyl produced some real surprises. On one of

"just occasionally a product comes along that is so far ahead of its predecessor in all areas of performance that an upgrade to the new unit is essential..."

my favourite versions of the '1812 Overture' featuring real canon and a carillon adding sonic fireworks, the EVO3 Titan delivered these with so much bass energy during the canon shots that I was almost scared for the safety of the subwoofer cones.

I also fired up the Nakamichi Dragon and found a freshness to the sound of a 40-plus year old cassette that I would never have thought possible before experiencing the new version of the Titan.

a real explosion taking place in my sitting room, while the carillon rang out loud and clear with the strike of the hammer on each of the bells seeming to be defined throughout their cascade of ringing. Even an elderly cassette showed big sonic improvements with a far more projected image of Dusty in fine form, covering the Little Anthony and the Imperials track 'It Was Easier to Hurt Him'. Morcheeba's CD gained in depth, tonal colour and a seemingly

*The Titan EVO3 is supplied with an IsoTek EVO3 Premier mains lead*



*The blue switch in the middle of the casework acts as the main power on and off control.*

**MUSIC USED**

Tchaikovsky. '1812 Festival Overture Op.49' (Original scoring). Antal Dorati conducting the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. University of Minnesota Brass Band. Bronze canon, Douay, France (1775). Bells of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon, The Riverside Church. Spoken Commentary by Deems Taylor. Mercury Olympian Series Records. AMS 16010. 1959.

Dusty Springfield. 'Ev'rything's Coming Up Dusty'. Philips. CPP 1002. 1965.

Morcheeba. 'Big Calm.' Indochina Records. ZENO17CDX. 1998.

**SYSTEM USED**

Clearaudio Master Solution turntable, Magnify arm, Benz Micro Wood SL cartridge. Leema Acoustics Agena phonostage, Tucana II amplifier and Antilla 2S ECO CD player. Nakamichi Dragon cassette player. Chario Ursa Major loudspeakers.

far tighter grasp of rhythm.

Just occasionally a product comes along that is so far ahead of its predecessor in all areas of performance that an upgrade to the new unit is essential, and the EVO3 Titan is just such a product. I thought the performance of the G2 Titan was already first class and am amazed at just how much this could actually be improved upon. The addition of the EVO3 Sigmas to the ensemble took it up another level to the point where I am now unable to contemplate going back to using my system in its previous form. There are some upgrades that, once heard, cannot be lived without and I am somehow going to have to find the wherewithal to ensure that this combination of mains conditioners stays permanently in residence.

I can only congratulate IsoTek on this product. It is nothing short of superb and once you have heard its effect upon a system I am positive that you will be in the market for one as well.

**ISOTEK TITAN EVO3 MAINS CONDITIONER**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst the best**

**VERDICT**

A very successful upgrade of the G2 Titan that is superb on its own but excels when connected to the EVO3 Sigmas

**FOR**

- very deep and detailed bass
- near holographic imaging
- fluid and natural timing
- micro-details in sound

**AGAINST**

- nothing, not even price

REVIEW

HI-FI WORLD

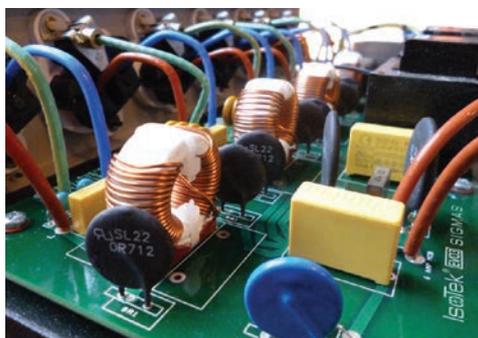
# Unto the pure

Tony Bolton tries out IsoTek's new Sigmas EVO3 mains purifier and is stunned by the results.



I have been using a GII IsoTek Sigmas mains purifier on my upstairs system since it came on the market, and I was surprised to discover that this was some 8 years ago. Technology, and our usage of it moves on and the Sigmas has been updated, now called the Sigmas EVO3.

Similar in size to the previous



*Normally the internal components of an IsoTek product are covered over but the Company have kindly let us have this internal shot to give some idea of how the inside looks, without giving away any trade secrets.*

model this new version has redesigned casework which features a screen on the front panel that houses three buttons. The left one causes the incoming mains voltage to be displayed, the right shows the percentage of distortion that is detected on the incoming mains supply, and the centre one switches off the display.

The only other controls are two switches mounted underneath at the front which provide power to the two high power (16 Amp) output sockets situated at the back left hand side, and the four lower power (10 Amp) sockets that occupy most of the rest of the back of the unit. The IEC mains input socket is also at the back on the left. An IsoTek EVO3 Premier power cable is provided.

IsoTek are understandably cautious about revealing too much of what is going on inside the Sigmas EVO3 but provided a block diagram to explain the circuit. Most of this is self explanatory and features the "Direct Coupled" technology from the Company's high power Titan purifier and the "Adaptive Gating" from the Nova, which is optimised

for source components. The former is claimed to provide optimal high current, low impedance filtering to maintain transient and dynamic performance from amplifiers and subwoofers, while the latter auto senses and adapts the current draw through the lower power sockets to the demands of the load plugged into it.

A new technology for the EVO3 series is KERF (Kerchoff's Equal Resistance Path) which ensures equal resistance and power delivery to all sockets. None of these are connected to another to avoid cross contamination of the power feed and each has its own dedicated filter network.

The internal wiring uses IsoTek's newly developed Ultra Pure - Ohno Continuous Cast copper, solid core internal wiring. This is silver plated before being insulated with Teflon. A fine Teflon strand is wound helically around the wire before a secondary Teflon tube is extruded over the top. This provides an air dielectric with virtually no capacitance. The printed circuit board uses 24 carat gold-plated 2oz copper. Power surges and

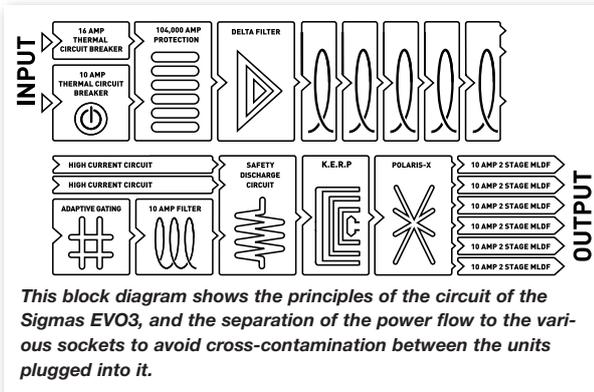
REVIEW



spikes are catered for with a claimed 108,000Amps of instantaneous protection via a pyramid array of voltage dependent resistor devices.

From the moment I plugged this device in, replacing the GII version, it was apparent that the Sigmas EVO3 was a bit special. It seemed as though my entire system had received a major adrenaline shot, with a sense of power and control over the music that was akin to a substantial system upgrade.

I discovered a whole new layer of low bass that had only previously been hinted at. Saint- Saens Organ Symphony sounded truly majestic



“.. with a weight to the lower notes that was made of pure granite, yet seemed to have the agility of an Olympic athlete.”



**The two sockets (16Amp) in the red coloured area are for high power components such as amplifiers, while source components use the four lower power (10Amp) sockets in the black section. The IEC mains input is on the left.”**

with a weight to the lower notes that was made of pure granite, yet seemed to have the agility of an Olympic athlete. Mid and upper band sounds gained in colour, texture and definition, so the complex section towards the end of the second movement, where the orchestra, organ and pianos combine, had a clarity that I have never heard through this system.

Gentler sounds from the Everly Brothers LP 'Beat And Soul' were very well described with a space around the voices that helped the imaging appear nearly three dimensional. Since this is a mono recording I found this level of air and definition to the sound very impressive. The opening track, a cover of Mickey and Sylvia's 'Love Is Strange', had a throbbing beat below the guitars and vocals that drove the music along effortlessly, leaving the vocal harmonies floating through the air.

I also tried running my TV through the Sigmas EVO3 and found that, apart from very obvious improvements to the sound quality, the picture gained definition in the shape of the images. I use the BBC News channel as my default test for image quality since the studio lighting and other variables should, hopefully, be fairly consistent. I felt that colour saturation was improved, with darker shades and blacks seeming to be deeper and more consistently textured. Background detail through the windows behind the presenter were also better defined and there seemed to be a greater sense of the dimensionality of the studio.

I am truly impressed and amazed at how much of an improvement the Sigmas EVO3 is over the previous model. I tried comparing it to the GII Titan that I use on the downstairs system and found

that the Sigmas was surprisingly close to the bigger unit in perceived performance. The Titan was still better, but the performance gap had narrowed considerably.

Often a new version of a product offers improvements over the previous design but not enough to warrant current owners upgrading. This is one occasion where owners of the GII version will find such substantial benefits from upgrading to the EVO3 model that the financial outlay can be fully justified. Whether you use it in an audio or AV system, the improvements in every aspect of that equipment's performance are so obvious that it is a complete 'no-brainer'. This product is truly awesome in the effect it has upon a system and can be regarded as an essential purchase.

**SYSTEM USED**

Linn Sondek/ Hadcock 242 Cryo/ Clearaudio Concept MC. Luxman E200 phono stage. Townshend Allegri pre-amp. 2 x Quad 303 power amps. Kelly KT3 loudspeakers.

**MUSIC USED**

Saint-Saens. 'Symphony No.3 in C minor, Op. 78. "Organ Symphony". Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim. Gaston Litaize, Organ. Deutsche Grammophon Records. 2530 619. 1976.

The Everly Brothers. 'Beat And Soul'. Warner Brothers Records. W 1605. 1965.

**ISOTEK SIGMAS EVO3**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst the best**

**VALUE - keenly priced**

**VERDICT**

A mains purifier that offers a truly stunning improvement in performance over the previous model that more than justifies its price.

**FOR**

- wider perceived bandwidth
- improved dimensionality and imaging
- deeper colours and textures of visual images

**AGAINST**

- absolutely nothing

IsoTek Systems  
www.isoteksystems.com

Choice **EXOTICA** ISOTEK EVO 3 SIGMAS  
MAINS CONDITIONER



# Watt's up?

If you're looking for a performance boost without the box swapping risks, **Ed Selley** thinks IsoTek could have just the solution

**T**he business of upgrading a system that has a synergy between components can be a slightly fraught experience. Even when you stay with the same manufacturers, the arrival of a new product can throw a previously happy relationship between existing products out of line. This can then demand further updates to cure and in some unhappy instances, leave you wishing you hadn't bothered. Equally, if you want a performance boost, you have to look at swapping a component out – or do you?

IsoTek has been in the business of providing another upgrade option since 2001. The company focuses on

the mains supply that a system receives and seeks to improve the quality of the electrical current your system takes in to assist with performance. This is focused on the removal of mains-borne interference. Depending on how power lines are rigged in your corner of the world, your power supply can find itself infested with electromagnetic and radio frequency interference. Even once it reaches your home, the proliferation of Ethernet over mains devices, baby monitors and white goods can throw a great deal of noise back onto your mains.

The Evo 3 Sigmas is actually a combination of two IsoTek

## ▶ DETAILS

**PRODUCT**  
IsoTek Evo 3 Sigmas

**ORIGIN**  
UK

**TYPE**  
Mains conditioner

**WEIGHT**  
10kg

**DIMENSIONS**  
(WxHxD)  
444 x 85 x 305mm

**FEATURES**  
• Quoted power output: 3,680W (high current) and 2,300W (low current)  
• Six output sockets

components – the Titan, which is designed for power amplification and the Nova optimised for source equipment. These functions are cut down in the Sigmas, but when you take into account what the Sigmas can do, this is more a reflection that the Titan and Nova are determinedly over specified than any sense of cost cutting in the Sigmas. As such, the Sigmas is fitted with six mains sockets. Two of these are intended for high-voltage applications such as power amplifiers, while the other four cater for source equipment.

The amount of power the Sigmas disposes of to do this is impressive. The two high-voltage sockets have a total of 3,680W available to them while the four low-voltage ones have a total of 2,300W on tap. As such, even though the Sigmas is very much in the centre of the IsoTek range, it can handle some distinctly high-end power requirements. The other arresting number from the specifications comes in terms of protection. By using an array of voltage-dependent resistors, it offers 108,000A of protection against surges, spikes and other nastiness.

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ISOTEK EVO 3 SIGMAS MAINS CONDITIONER **Choice EXOTICA**

dubious behavioural characteristics connected to the IsoTek, those characteristics shouldn't have an adverse affect on anything else. Internally, it is wired with high-purity copper wiring while the circuit boards make use of gold-plated copper connectors for optimal signal transfer.

This attention to detail extends to the outside of the product, too. The Sigmas is finished to a standard that is extremely good even at the asking price. The casework is solid, exactly assembled and – as much as a power conditioner ever can be considered attractive – aesthetically pleasing with a clean and uncluttered appearance. The only slightly discordant note is the display that will either show watts being supplied or the total percentage of total power that the Sigmas is delivering. This is clear and easy to read, but also extremely bright. With the lights off in the listening room, the effect brings to mind an alien abduction and while it can be switched off, it can't be dimmed which is a little irritating, but not the end of the world.

This is perhaps the only design curiosity in an otherwise very well thought out product. As someone that has used an Evo 3 Aquarius for some time now, one of the most useful tweaks to the Sigmas is that the mains sockets are now at a 45° angle, which makes the 'flow' of cables out the back much easier than the 12 o'clock arrangement of the Aquarius and makes the installation of the Sigmas simplicity itself.

This ease of installation means that the performance of the system in question – a Naim Supernait 2 integrated amp, ND5 XS streamer with XP5 XS power supply, Arcam airDAC and Michell Gyrodec with Avid Pellar Phono stage – goes in with minimal fuss. Given the care Naim lavishes on its power supplies, particularly the external ones, I am

interested to see what the IsoTek can bring to a system of this nature.

**Sound quality**

The good news is that the impressive technical specification of the Sigmas translates into performance gains and the really good news is that none of these gains change the basic character of the system. The Naim electronics keep their powerful, slightly dark presentation and the excellent detail retrieval takes another step forward as noise levels that were already low simply drop away to nothing. The bass response was never an area I felt

**If you are looking for a wholesale boost to your system, the Evo 3 Sigmas is it**

short changed in, but now it has a little extra speed and agility over and above what it had before. Soundstage is not a concern of the Naim sound, but the Sigmas manages to create a sense of space to the performance that opens the presentation out without losing the sense of focus and drive that the system excels at. The effect is uncannily like the strapline for Berocca vitamin tablets – my system, but on a really good day.

One of the more unusual aspects of the Sigmas is that the improvements don't seem to negate the effects of other power products. When connected directly to the IsoTek, the ND5 XS streamer is unquestionably better than when hooked up to the mains, but connecting the XP5 XS power supply back up still reaps the benefits that it does when the Sigmas isn't used, and removes almost any sense of 'digital' to the presentation. This does mean that if you are unhappy with an aspect of your

The figures are certainly impressive, but there is so much more than just brute force to the design. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Sigmas – and certainly one that matters to the overall performance – is that it is made up of six individual filters. There is no connecting wiring between the sockets and each one has a dedicated filter network. This means that even if you have a component with some decidedly

**That display can be bright, but it can be turned off**

**CONNECTIONS**



- 1 IEC mains input socket
- 2 High-voltage sockets
- 3 Low-voltage sockets

Choice **EXOTICA** ISOTEK EVO 3 SIGMAS MAINS CONDITIONER

**Q&A**

**Keith Martin**  
General manager, IsoTek Systems



**ES: Is there a cut-off rule of thumb for best use of the high voltage outputs over the low voltage ones?**

**KM:** The question of high current and medium current isn't just power consumption, it is how that power is consumed. For example a plasma will draw continuous current, thus the circuit would be different to that of a power amp (not class A), which needs to gulp current when the music is dynamic. So it's also a question of high-current and low impedance.

The medium-current side of the Sigmas auto adjusts to the load, so if you were to place a CD player (30W typical) next to a projector (300W typical) the circuit would auto adjust to give the best filter environment.

**Is there a system price point where you would recommend the Sigmas over the Aquarius and Solus?**

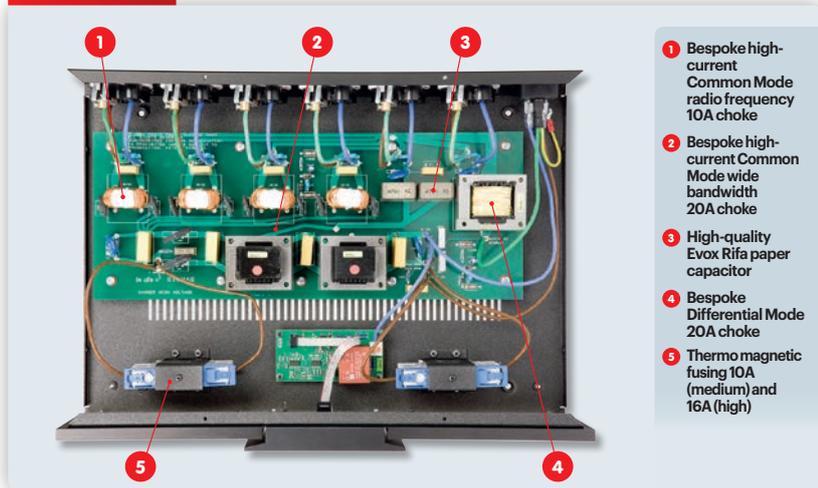
This is always a contentious question. We say between 10-20% of a system's value, however in some demos we've put in power conditioning systems costing double that of the system's value, and the system sounds more than twice as good!

But we'd say you're probably getting 80% of system potential without considering a good, properly designed (for purpose - for audio usage) power cleaning solution. It's similar to purchasing a sports car and not thinking about the road on which you drive it. Logic states driving it on grass won't be as good as flat tarmac!

**With the changes to what we connect to the mains, are there best practice principles to follow?**

The basic problems of common mode, and differential mode noise are always there. We have increased challenges by the increased use of Class D power supplies that disrupt the mains more (differential mode). The use of more and more electrical appliances in our homes. The use of wi-fi in our homes (common mode), some companies offer products to boost wi-fi signal by turning your ring main into a giant aerial - nice for common mode and RFI. Products will be released to deal with this, which will be backwards compatible with existing IsoTek systems.

**IN SIGHT**



- 1 Bespoke high-current Common Mode radio frequency 10A choke
- 2 Bespoke high-current Common Mode wide bandwidth 20A choke
- 3 High-quality Evox Rifa paper capacitor
- 4 Bespoke Differential Mode 20A choke
- 5 Thermo magnetic fusing 10A (medium) and 16A (high)

system's performance, the Sigmas is unlikely to correct it and could theoretically exacerbate it - although in this case you'd surely be looking to change the equipment in question before you think of adding a product of this nature.

The other trait of the Sigmas that might be worth taking into account is that while I feel devices that run at standard mains voltages benefit quite considerably from its addition, I am less convinced the benefits on low voltage 'wall wart' type products are as clear cut. The Arcam airDAC I use mainly to allow streaming of the Tidal service to the system doesn't seem to show the same benefits as the main streamer. It certainly doesn't get any worse, but the performance is fairly consistent across connection to a standard mains gantry and the IsoTek. Neither is this limited to the Arcam. The Chord Hugo also behaves in much the same way (although as there are batteries in the Chord, this is less surprising). Given systems that run on lower overall voltages are popping up at higher price points, this might be something to take into account before choosing one.

The news for equipment that uses higher voltages is almost exclusively good, however, and even when the current demands are not very high - the Avid Pellar barely registers on the voltage consumption display - the benefits are immediate and effectively viceless. Neither are they limited to audio. Some tests with a Panasonic plasma TV (which is habitually connected to the Aquarius conditioner) see a small but useful drop in picture noise when connected to the Sigmas, which means that if

you have sockets going spare on your IsoTek, other bits of AV equipment will benefit from it.

**Conclusion**

The Sigmas is not a magic bullet product. It won't correct glaring errors in the way a system performs and there are conditions - both in terms of product design and your location - where its impact will be lessened, but this should not take away from what it does. If you have a system that performs in the way you want it to and you want to try and make it better, the Sigmas delivers in spades. There are very few products that can deliver improvement across the board to a multiple unit system, but this is very definitely one of them. It is able to wring that little bit more out of a system and given its transparency and immense current delivery should be able to handle a few upgrades if you do decide to push the system further in the future. If you are looking for a wholesale boost to your system, you've just found it ●

**HOW IT COMPARES**

The Sigmas is most closely competitive with the Isol-8 SubStation (reviewed HFC 344) and both products go about trying to achieve the same role and offer similar functionality. The Sigmas is less expensive than the Isol-8 and the single chassis design is more convenient in terms of placement. Both units are well finished, but the consumption display of the IsoTek, while a little bright is a useful feature to have. Both products have similar provisos in terms of what they can and can't do, but the IsoTek looks like the better value option in this context.

**Hi-Fi Choice**

**OUR VERDICT**

- SOUND QUALITY** ★★★★★
  - VALUE FOR MONEY** ★★★★★
  - BUILD QUALITY** ★★★★★
  - FEATURES** ★★★★★
  - OVERALL** ★★★★★
- LIKE:** Offers a boost to performance without changing character
- DISLIKE:** Less effective on some low-voltage components
- WE SAY:** This is a tremendously effective and very well implemented mains treatment system



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Choice **EXTRAS**

## IsoTek

### EVO3 Optimum mains cable

**IS THERE ANY** audiophile who still doubts that power cables make a difference? Even the simple expedient of polishing the pins of a standard mains plug with Brasso will yield an improvement to your system's sound, so the full cable assembly is bound to have a real effect. Logically then, different materials used in them will give differing results, and that's why we're seeing a number of quite expensive, fancy designs now coming out. IsoTek's new EVO3 Optimum is one such product, and replaces the company's previous GII. It's not an inexpensive cable, so it goes without saying that readers with mid-to-high-end systems should be thinking about investing such a sum on a product like this; budget systems can be improved by diverting funds elsewhere.

#### Silver service

It's a silver-plated copper design, using Ohno Continuous Cast (OCC) copper conductors of higher purity than conventional OFC copper. Three 3.0mm<sup>2</sup> conductors each have a square shaped configuration of 40 strands, claimed to increase electrical conductivity. Each one gets Teflon FEP dielectric (insulation), and is then twisted to aid RFI and EMI rejection. This is then surrounded by cotton damping to reduce microphony and then everything is double shielded by Mylar wrap and an OFC copper braid, which is given a tough, heat-resistant PVC outer jacket. IsoTek's own audiophile-grade 24-carat gold-plated connectors terminate it; there's a choice of C7, C15 and C19 IEC varieties. It's fair to say that the quality of finish is excellent even at the price, and the cable has a sense of ruggedness way beyond many such products I've reviewed in the past – it looks like this one at least is here to stay!

Given that Hampshire-based IsoTek has made a name for itself making a wide range of well designed and effective mains power conditioners, it's no surprise that the EVO3 Optimum turns in an



extremely impressive performance – even considering its lofty retail price. The improvement it makes over a standard power cable – the sort of kettle lead supplied with your average CD player or amplifier – is profound and should leave no one in any doubt about the importance of getting your mains power in as good condition as possible. Cue up even a relatively lo-fi track like Dub Pistols' *Bad Card*, a brilliant bit of dubstep that sounds like it's been recorded in a bathroom with 8-bit samplers, and the difference is palpable. Where the song previously sounded scratchy, coarse and somewhat disjointed, the IsoTek brings smoothness, space and a sense of unforced ease that's so profound you begin to wonder if someone has switched your silver disc spinner without telling you. The track becomes tonally fuller, but the bass is tighter and more tuneful. The midband opens up in depth and breadth, only to reveal a lot of fine detail – in this case the scratches from the sampled vinyl record – but oddly it's no harsher. Quite the reverse in fact, and this goes for the treble too, which gets sweeter and more spacious.

Running the IsoTek up against similarly priced power cables narrows the gap considerably, but not completely. Indeed, the EVO3 Optimum has a wonderful

combination of natural musical flow to it, and a delicate, open midband that lets the flavour of the recording flood out. For example, a classic piece of eighties pop like the beautiful Thomas Dolby-produced *Appetite* by Prefab Sprout is rendered sublimely. You can really hear all the different layered synthesizers, even through the wash of sound that is the chorus, and singer Paddy MacAloon's vocals have a lovely, easy quality about them. Indeed, this power cable makes it easier to discern the plaintive feel of the lyrics than other such wires I've tried. Its finesse and insight are normally something you'd expect from the likes of my reference Furutech Powerflux cable, which costs \*\*\*\* for 1.8m. So the IsoTek may be expensive, but still punches well above its price point.

#### The mains man

An excellent mains cable then, but for higher resolution systems only. Sure, you'll get a nice boost from plugging it into an Audiolab or a Cambridge Audio, but you would do better by spending \*\*\* buying the next model up the range. Those running a well balanced, higher end system will get serious sonic gains, even if they're already using fairly expensive mains cabling. As such, this is well worth auditioning. **DP**

OUR VERDICT



hi-fi+

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# Isotek EVO3 Nova power conditioner

by Alan Sircom

It's easy to get this a bit mungled up. IsoTek make a product called the Nova One, which is a single £\*\*\*\* power outlet filter from the company's Mosaic range. Delete the word 'One' and you have a £\*\*\*\* 12 outlet passive filter/conditioner in the company's Select range. It's also not entirely right to class the Nova as a dozen Nova Ones in a single box, although there is some element of truth to that statement. You can understand the confusion.

Of course, one look at the product in its own right clears up any such confusion. The Nova One is a neat little box that could be mistaken for a phono stage power supply or a tiny DAC. The Nova is a full sized product that stands about twice as tall as the company's popular EVO3 Sigmas conditioner. You could mistake it for a power amplifier, were it not for the front LED panel. In fact, the Nova is a bit of a brute by IsoTek standards, up there with the bigger Mosaic and Ultimate conditioners in size and weight terms. It's fed by a single C20 plug (IsoTek supplies a mid-blue cable called Premier from its Discovery range) and the unit is neatly sub-divided into four high-power sockets and eight sockets used for sources and preamplifiers. You'd need a pretty large system to run out of plug sockets with a Nova in the mix. The curious part of the Nova is powering it up; there are three thermomagnetic fuses on the underside of the box. To power the Nova up, first throw the one under the right hand side of the box (this powers the box up, fires up the display, and powers up the high-power side). Then flip the switches on the left side to enable the upper and lower sets of four lower power three-pin sockets. 10A won't work until 16A is powered.



Having these switches on the underside means the Nova has to use the supplied spikes (or alternatives) to allow for clearance. However, the clearance is tight and unless you have long, thin fingers, you might struggle to throw all three switches with the spikes in place. The Nova also features DC cancellation circuit, which rebalances the mains sine wave on the zero volts line, thus reducing transformer hum. This technology is usually found in the company's Syncro power cable, or most recently in its new Syncro Uni box.

When powered up, there is a single constant blue LED and a bright blue numeric display behind a semi-mirrored panel in the middle of the Nova's front plate. This is controlled by the three buttons on the front panel; left displays input voltage, the middle one turns the display off, while the right shows percentage THD on the AC line. My home voltage was usually around 240-242 pretty much throughout the day, although the harmonic distortion did increase in the evening until about 11pm, when it began to fall again. ▶

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW / ISOTEK EVO3 NOVA

*“We quickly run out of power conditioner in modern systems.”*



- ▶ IsoTek suggests a couple of cable upgrades on its basic – but useful – red instruction manual.

Truth be told, I was fairly blown away by what the EVO3 Nova can do. The best way of thinking it is two EVO3 Sigmas joined at the hip and then given a bit of a spit shine and a power up. The EVO3 enhancements mean those 12 sockets are completely isolated and see equal resistance. I used it with a range of digital and analogue audio devices, in part to try and fill-up all its sockets to test it under stress. Except it didn't get stressed. It took everything in its stride.

It also does that great thing that IsoTek devices are so good at; enhancing without changing. The system seems to be taking less effort in making music, and does so with vastly improved transient attack and speed of delivery, and yet somehow does all this without changing the character of the products connected. A Primare amp sounds like a Primare amp, just better. And that applies whether the device plugged in is a CD player, a Class D integrated amp, or a hulking great beast of a power amp. It is especially good at isolating the nasties put into a system from a plug-top power supply. I have an old Wadia DAC that uses a plug-top that now seems to act as a radio for the rest of the system. Plug it into the wall directly and the system's quality takes a turn for the worst. Put the Nova in place and the influence of this patently dying power supply is reduced to near-enough zero.

The Nova's limits are relatively minor and at the extremes. Someone using the Nova with an amplifier that looks as if you are trying to smuggle jet engines into your listening room should be calling out for IsoTek's Ultimate models, not the Nova. At the other end, the very low power AC feed (often used to trickle-charge battery systems in portable audio devices), seem to extract little benefit from the Nova. The benefit is still there, just not as brightly lit as it is through larger audio equipment.

The big question is would you buy the EVO3 Nova if your system was never going to require more than an EVO3 Sigmas, and I think the honest answer is 'probably not'. There are some improvements to be had, but the

jump in performance brought about by the EVO3 Sigmas is fairly substantial in its own right. The Nova isn't quite gilding the lily, but the jump in price between the two is more justified if you are edging toward running out of sockets. With a relatively humble high-end system now comprising a streamer and a server alongside a turntable, preamp, phono stage, DAC, power amplifier or amps, and potentially a reel-to-reel and CD player, the Sigmas fast runs out of road next to the EVO3 Nova.

And that's the reason why the IsoTek EVO3 Nova will, I believe, prove as popular as the EVO3 Sigmas does. We quickly run out of power conditioner in modern systems. Even excluding more computer-side products like the network switch or a NAS drive elsewhere on the system, the number of products in a system soon adds up, and something as versatile as the EVO3 Sigmas begins to look as if it has some shortcomings. The EVO3 Nova takes on the task for today's bigger systems, with all the capacity and heavy-lifting needed to drive all except the most vast of amplifiers. +

### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**Type:** filtering 12 outlet mains conditioner

**Number of outlets:** 4x 16A high power three pin UK sockets, eight 10A three pin UK sockets for sources and preamps

**Outlet:** 3,680W

**Power cable:** IsoTek Premier, C19

**Specifications for:** UK, EU, US, ZA, Australia, Switzerland

**Dimensions (HxWxD):** 250 x 182.5 x 350mm

**Weight:** 15kg



# Mains thing

Martin Pipe tries out an expensive mains conditioner from IsoTek.

**T**he Evo3 Nova is a heavy (15kg) and expensive (\*\*\*\*) box billed as 'twelve power conditioners in one' from IsoTek, a Winchester-based firm

whose goal is to 'create a better solution to the problem of poor mains quality'. It's an imposing and solidly-built piece of equipment, as one has every right to expect given its price. The Evo3 Nova is supplied with spiked feet, which – if you're worried about scratching surfaces – can sit in machined velvet-backed pucks that IsoTek also includes in the package.

The ribbed aluminium front panel of the conditioner is dominated by a raised section, on which lives a blue numeric LCD screen able to display incoming RMS mains voltage or distortion levels (3.5% for most of the time, here in South East Essex); it can also be turned off altogether. Around the back are no fewer than twelve 13-amp power outlets arranged in colour-coded banks. One block of eight ('B') is rated at 10A a throw, while those in the other ('A') are claimed to cope with loads as high as 16A. The latter sockets, which incorporate 'IsoTek's Direct-Coupled

circuit to deliver low impedance power with a maximum continuous output of 3,680W', are designed for 'high-current electronics' like 'power amplifiers, active loudspeakers and subwoofers'.

Into the 'B' block that features IsoTek's 'Adaptive Gating' circuit – a system that 'auto-senses the connected electronics and provides the optimal level of conditioning required at a maximum 2,300W of continuous power' – would be plugged less power-hungry kit like CD players, DACs and turntables. Each of the outlets, as the IsoTek's description suggests, benefits from its own filter. The benefit of this, according to IsoTek, is 'the optimal isolation between each outlet' and elimination of 'differential mode cross-contamination'. Basically, the unit behaves as twelve independent conditioners that happen to share a common housing.

The Evo3 Nova is claimed to reduce RFI (radio frequency interference) by 75dB, eliminate mains noise, cancel any DC component (a frequent cause, they say, of transformer buzz) and 'fully re-balance' the sinusoidal mains waveform.

Also playing a protective role are three circuit breakers, which are accessible from the base of the Evo3 Nova. Each set of outlets has its own breaker, while the third looks after the combined load presented to your mains supply by all of the connected equipment – and for that matter the conditioner itself.

On which subject, getting power into the unit involves an enormous C19 IEC connector fitted to the rear panel – you'll also find this type of connector on big power amplifiers. An IsoTek Evo3 Premier cable connects this to an appropriate mains outlet.

A peek inside reveals a high standard of construction; some components have been sealed in a pitch-like material, presumably to damp vibrations. IsoTek has of course paid attention to the internal wiring interconnecting these elements. It has specified 'silver-plated OCC (Ohno Continuous Cast) Copper' cable, which incorporates its 'VAD – Virtual Air Dielectric – technology'.

## PERFORMANCE

I partnered the Evo3 Nova with a system comprising Arcam A49 integrated amp, Quadral Aurum

REVIEW  
**HI-FI WORLD**

Wotan VIII speakers, a Cambridge CXN streamer/Chord Qutest DAC fed from a music collection held on a NAS drive, plus a vinyl playback system comprising a Systemdek IIXE900 belt-drive turntable, Alphason Opal arm, Denon DL304 MC cart and Pro-Ject Phono Box S2 Ultra.

A turntable with MC cartridge was deliberately chosen as its tiny output requires a considerable amount of preamplification – the effects of clean power should be



*The outlets of the first B block of eight (black), rated at 10A, are intended for source equipment. Amplifiers and other hungry components plug into the A block (red), with four 16A sockets.*



*Each outlet has its own conditioner – there's an additional layer of filtering components not obvious in this photo. Note the use of pitch to damp vibrations.*

more evident. To deliberately dirty my mains, I installed a Devolo power networking kit.

The Evo3 Nova definitely killed off the effects of the latter. A pristine 180g pressing of Mark Beazley's Stateless sounded noticeably quieter, space between the notes (and for that matter) the tracks of this minimalist work being endowed with an inky blackness that simply wasn't there before. The record has a notable low-end – well, Beazley is the bassist with ambient group Rothko – and I noted, contrary to expectations, that the bass elements of tracks like Three Twenty-Two were both deeper and tighter. Even with LPs in lesser condition (more surface noise) Isotek's conditioner seemed to have a positive effect when it came to bringing out the music.

Analogue may demonstrate the biggest improvement, but there are benefits for digital sources too. David Bowie's 'Tis a Pity She Was a Whore (Blackstar, 24/96) benefitted in terms

of both excitement and instrumental focus. More detail was the benefit that the Evo3 Nova brought to

another hi-res favourite, Britten's War Requiem (LSO Live/Nosedá, 24-bit/48kHz). It was easier to define individual singers in the choirs, while the orchestra's brass instruments gained poise and attack. CD-quality material wasn't left behind, either. A lossless rip of Sibelius' Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43 (Vienna Philharmonic/Leonard Bernstein, digital mid-1980s recording) sounded cleaner and more open.

**CONCLUSION**

It is undoubtedly expensive, but the Evo3 Nova had a positive effect when it came to the reproduction of music. In my system, deliberately assembled to be sensitive to mains condition, it was a great benefit. I'm left to wonder what audible benefits the Evo3 Nova would deliver to a £30,000 system...Vastly complex then, but equally capable it seemed to me. A unit you should consider auditioning if you own a top-end system.



*A trio of circuit breakers are located under the Evo3 Nova. Fiddly to access as the spiked feet provide little clearance.*

**EVO3 NOVA,**



**OUTSTANDING** - amongst the best

**VERDICT**  
Clean up and hear the difference!

**FOR**  
- all mains-conditioning in one box  
- tangible improvements in focus, clarity and cleanliness  
- twelve outlets for any hi-fi system

**AGAINST**  
- very expensive  
- fiddly 'pucks' for feet and base-mounted circuit breakers

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# IsoTek EVO 3 Genesis One power regenerator/EVO 3 Titan One power conditioner

by Alan Sircom

IsoTek has made the whole subject of power conditioning and regeneration more understandable with the launch of its EVO3 Titan One and EVO3 Genesis One products. Forming a core part of the company's penultimate Mosaic range, the combination of two Titan One's and a single Genesis One in essence equates to the EVO3 Mosaic Genesis (which won our 2016 power product award), but sub-divided into its component parts. This not only makes for a smaller footprint, it allows greater flexibility depending on the system and the quality of the power from the inlet, it means a step-by-step approach to power conditioning and regeneration, and could theoretically spell a conditioner for each device on the rack!

The EVO3 Genesis One is a single-cell sine wave generator, optimally designed for front-end and preamplifier duty. It's small enough to sit next to its designated component on the same rack (or you can place six side-by-side on a single 19" shelf), and can be daisy-chained, so additional Geneses and Titans can be used from a single socket. With a small Class D amplifier (but using a linear PSU) in the circuit, delivering 100W of power with a potential 85dB of Common and Differential mode noise reduction all the way down to DC (0Hz) on tap, the Genesis One is an ideal solution to mains-borne noise for a particularly vulnerable component, or the first step in a sophisticated, multi-box power solution. An audio power company with many good power cords to its name, IsoTek naturally



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► wires up the EVO3 Genesis One with high-grade cables; in this case, silver-plated PC-OCC conductors separated by a FEP dielectric. The EVO3 Genesis One comes in two finishes (brushed aluminium, and black) and can either be supplied with a blue LED panel to show a range of options (incoming voltage, THD, mains frequency, output voltage, and power consumption), or with the same panel blanked out. The performance is the same, but the LED-free version is a little cheaper and in daisy-chained systems where there is a dedicated Genesis per component, a bank of LEDs telling you the same story is unnecessary.

The EVO3 Titan One conditioner is even more minimalist, as it doesn't even have option of a display, or trio of buttons to navigate that display and turn the Genesis on or off. Titan is in the same extruded aluminium box as the Genesis One (the rear panels of both devices are almost identical, too) and internally it uses the same silver-plated PC-OCC conductors separated by a FEP dielectric for its internal wiring. It's also a single-cell conditioner – designed for one device. However, unlike the Genesis One, the Titan One is specified to work with up to 3,680W of power requirement, so is perfectly comfy hooked to power amplifiers, subwoofers, and so on. It features the same 'Direct-Coupled' conditioning system found in the Mosaic Genesis and unique to IsoTek, and is said to cut up to 82dB of RFI down to 5Hz. Like the Genesis One, it is designed to work on Common and Differential mode noise reduction, and the result is a high-current, low-impedance power feed.

System building can take many forms here. You might conceivably start with a EVO3 Titan One as a conditioner, then add the EVO3 Genesis One, and either move the Titan One down the line to the next component in the chain, or double them up for the best possible combination of clean power options. The EVO3 Genesis One rebuilds a cleaner power from the wall, and then the EVO3 Titan One knocks out the last bits of noise generated by the Genesis One itself. You could, ultimately, deploy an EVO3 Genesis One/EVO3 Titan One double whammy to each line level and preamplifier in the chain, with additional Titan Ones used for the power amplifiers. A better option at this point might

be a more integrated solution, unless you are building a power solution step-by-step, or are diametrically opposed to spare sockets on a power conditioner.

The two products work together in harmony, with the EVO3 Genesis One bringing a profound sense of a more organic, more structured sound to the music emanating from the product connected, while the EVO3 Titan One is the noise reducer and dynamic range enhancer. Taken on their own, they work exceptionally well. The EVO3 Genesis One takes the sound of your system and removes its edginess and hardness. It doesn't change the character of the presentation, just makes that presentation seem less 'angular' and harsh sounding. The overall presentation is just that bit more fluid, more able to process and draw together the themes within a piece of music. I can see where some might see this drawing the listener's attention away from the dynamic range of a component, but it's more about bringing more of the performance to the fore, rather than highlight a particular aspect of that performance.

Then there is the EVO3 Titan One, which brings the silence. It lowers the background noise of your system slightly, enough to liberate the dynamic range of that component somewhat without any compromises elsewhere. Used on its own, ►

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*“The EVO3 Genesis One gives her voice back all its gamine charm and lyricism, while the Titan One makes the music spring out of nowhere.”*

- ▶ it has a smoothing quality to the performance, opening up the soundstage slightly and presenting the sound in a more even-handed manner. But the Genesis One already covers most of this signal smoothing in these systems, so the noise-floor lowering and general perceived dynamic range increases the Titan One also brings to the sound are the key indicators in use with the rest of the Mosaic.

These are easy things to hear. Play ‘Lucky’ by Kat Edmonson [*Way Down Low*, Spinnarett] and as the track is so overused in advertisements all over the world, it’s hard for the track not to sound slightly dull, but the EVO3 Genesis One gives her voice back all its gamine charm and lyricism, while the Titan One just makes the music spring out of nowhere. Is this track massively overused by the advertising execs? Of course! But the IsoTek duo help remind you why it became the ad-creatives’ fave.

For my system, I would start with the EVO3 Genesis One. Its ability to bring out the refinement in a system helps greatly when using relatively ill-matched systems and continually plugged and unplugged devices. But I would quickly add in the EVO3 Titan One because in such ill-matched systems, it brings out the often hard-to-find impact and dynamic energy, without compromise. In a way, what I’d like to see here is an EVO3 Genesis Two in the range, especially as there is a move toward more powerful all-in-one systems. A power regenerator with more capacity would fit such systems well, without the call for the full-blown Mosaic Genesis. The ‘football score’ package of Genesis Two and Titan One would be the perfect combination for the likes of the Naim Uniti Nova, or even the D’Agostino Momentum Lifestyle, and I think this is becoming an increasingly important category in audio today.

There are two points where you might be gilding the lily with the Mosaic combos. The first would be to place an EVO3 Titan One before the Genesis One – there’s no point in doing this. The next is to use one or more on a turntable. In some cases, the combination of ripple-free, stable power that is subsequently neatly manicured and conditioned can help out power supplies in turntables, but in most cases the power supply feeding the motor of the turntable does the job admirably well. It’s unlikely that a power conditioner or regenerator will lower performance, but neither will it substantially raise the bar.

IsoTek suggests these products are designed to fit into systems costing between £10,000–£35,000 and I think that’s a fair assessment. Below that figure and the justification for using a £\*\*\*\* regenerator and a £\*\*\*\* conditioner become hard to parse. Above that and you might want to consider some more heavy lifting gear to cope with the kind of beefy power amplifiers that are likely to feature in such a system. And £10k–£35k is the kind of high-end sweet spot for carefully composed systems that will get an audible benefit from these two Mosaic products on each component you can put them

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

**IsoTek EVO3 Genesis One regenerator**

Number of outlets: 1 (+lining outlet)  
 Output (sine wave generation): 100W  
 Mains inlet: 10A IEC  
 Mains voltage/frequency: 100–240V,  
 50–60Hz, depending on model  
 Finish: aluminium, black  
 Dimensions (WxHxD): 7.5 x 12.5 x 47cm  
 Weight: 10kg

**IsoTek EVO3 Titan One conditioner**

Number of outlets: 1 (+lining outlet)  
 Output (low impedance, high current):  
 3,680W  
 Mains inlet: 16A IEC  
 Mains voltage/frequency: 100–240V,  
 50–60Hz, depending on model  
 Finish: aluminium, black  
 Dimensions (WxHxD): 7.5 x 12.5 x 47cm  
 Weight: 10kg

before. And, as the concept has the potential to grow effortlessly as you build your system, it’s hard not to think this a clever, modular, step-by-step approach to power products that works. Highly recommended! +

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## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis power regenerator

by Nicholas Ripley

**P**ower regeneration is a big thing among most serious audiophiles, but is quietly all but ignored in the UK. IsoTek's EVO3 Mosaic Genesis is on a one-regenerator mission to prove us Limeys wrong.

The AC power (or 'mains' as we like to call it) is reasonably good across much of the UK. However, 'reasonably good' is not in many audiophile vocabularies, and power conditioning and regeneration are starting to be taken seriously here, thanks in no small part to the work of IsoTek. The EVO3 Mosaic Genesis is a hybrid, with feet in both camps, pulling together some of the technology from IsoTek's top EVO3 Genesis 'generator' and Super Titan conditioner.

A power regenerator essentially takes the waveform of your AC mains, references it against a built-in sine-wave generator, then amplifies that signal to deliver a synchronous, DC-offset-free, 230V AC power, with a voltage variation of just a few per cent. This last point is more important than people often consider: given the best guarantee you can get from the power companies in the UK is 230V is +10% to -6%, which brings the UK in line with EU mains harmonisation legislation, although many power companies still work to the older 240V  $\pm 6\%$  standard by default. This variation in power can prove problematic, and with increased demand and competition forcing cost-cutting, the likelihood that the UK retains its 'reasonably good' mains is called into question.

The EVO3 Mosaic Genesis regenerator uses a Class AB amplifier and heavy-weight transformer delivering a 230V  $\pm 2\%$  voltage (fed from a 20A IEC input), to five power sockets – three for low-power source components or preamps, and two high-current SuperTitan derived direct-coupled outputs for power amps. If in doubt (say, an integrated

amp), go with the higher-power output sockets. With EVO3, IsoTek developed a technology called KERP (Kirchoff's Equal Resistance Path) for equal resistance and power delivery to all outlets. To minimise the chance of noise from the original mains leaking into the regenerated power, copper foil acts a shield between primary and secondary windings on the transformer. The internal wiring uses IsoTek's new UP-OCC (Ultra Pure Ohno Continuous Cast) high purity copper solid core internal wire, which is silver-plated before being insulated with Teflon.

IsoTek's EVO3 Mosaic Genesis also features 100,000A of instantaneous protection, and a series of voltage-dependent resistors to protect against AC power spikes – this not only protects devices plugged into the EVO3 Mosaic Genesis, but also prevents the regenerator from acting like a big, expensive fuse in times of crisis.

The EVO3 Mosaic Genesis has a handy blue LED read-out, which can be turned off should you so wish. You can monitor input and output voltage and THD (expressed as a percentage), as well as current and mains frequency. ▶



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EQUIPMENT REVIEW / ISOTEK EVO3 MOSAIC GENESIS POWER REGENERATOR

*“Play your system at 7pm. Now play it again at 1am. It’s likely the 1am system sounds a lot better than the 7pm system.”*



► The first two are perhaps the most interesting, but need to be handled with care – not because they undermine the sound, and not because they might cause any issue with the IsoTek device or anything connected to it. No, the simple reason is it can become almost a nervous twitch, a visual audiophilia nervosa indicator. You will end up constantly monitoring your AC distortion figure and comparing it to the outputted distortion. That way, madness lies.

Nevertheless, the input voltage and distortion figures do make for some grim reading. You see the distortion shoot up and the voltage go haywire in the early evening, as the world heads home to watch TV or use their iPads wirelessly. In my system, anything above about 2% distortion on the AC could be heard as adding grain and a hard ‘edge’ to the mid and treble, especially on high-performance audio, and anything below about 225V robbed bass of its detail, dynamics, and life. At its worst (7pm–8:30pm, Easter Monday), the figures were closer to 220V and 3.8% distortion, and this was clearly audible. The regenerator got this to a constant 230V and between 0.18%– 0.33% distortion, and this was clearly audible too, putting back what Coronation Street, EastEnders, and FaceBook took away.

How much of an effect will depend largely on the kind of electronics you are using and the demands they place on their AC inputs. This is hard to predict, especially with imported products that might have been tested in 110V environments like the USA and Japan. Of the devices I put through the IsoTek wringer, most benefitted from AC regeneration, while some (my Audio Research preamp for example) were transformed by it. None were ambivalent or were worsened by the presence of a regenerator. Given the price tag of the EVO3 Mosaic Genesis, it’s unlikely to be used with a £150 amplifier

of 25 years ago, but this seems not to be price-related, or quality of power supply related – I used it on a friend’s system who uses an old Sony ES CD player, with Audiolab 8000 pre amplifier and power amplifier and it worked wonders, too.

What does it sound like? That’s simple. Play your system at 7pm. Now play it again at 1am. It’s pretty likely the 1am system sounds a lot better than the 7pm system. The IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis makes your 7pm system sound more like your system at 1am. It brings out that best in your system, whether that best is cleaner, more extended treble, less hash or grain in the sound, a little more exuberance, or a lot more control.

IsoTek’s EVO3 Mosaic Genesis is the perfect game-raiser for small high-performance audio systems, and one that will become harder to live without over time, because our power is not going to get any better. It’s a one-stop shop of conditioner and regenerator that, once heard in action, it’s hard to live without. Highly recommended. +

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

**Details:** IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis hybrid power conditioner/regenerator

# The power and the glory

Despite years of inveterate tweaking, **David Price** never fully realised quite what a difference using regenerated mains could bring. Does this mean an end to the fiddling?

**T**here are two types of audiophile – those who listen to music and those that fiddle around with their systems. I fit into both categories, and as my setup has got better, I have spent a proportionally smaller amount of time messing with it. That's great, it was always the intention, and things are moving in the right direction. Perhaps by the time I am on the edge of deafness, I will have beaten the upgrade bug!

If we're brutally frank, one of the joys of this hobby/passion/vocation (delete as appropriate) is that there is so much room for fiddling. The hi-fi industry is a veritable repository of people who just can't sit still, who always want to go one better. This isn't bad in itself, because like maximum security prisons it keeps large numbers of dazed and confused people off the streets. A lot of these folk spend great amounts of time chasing rainbows so to speak, believing that this or that new mod will change their lives.

Whether it is exotic organic damping compounds, electrostatic charge field reducers, disc demagnetisers or whatever, there's a ready market for what I call 'hi-fi hocus pocus', and it never ceases to amaze me how much money is spent. Such wonder tweaks give the rest of the hi-fi accessory market a bad name. For every fancy £300 RCA phono plug that makes next to no difference, there's a £30 interconnect lead that usefully upgrades the free ones that

**The bass is cleaner, and a layer of upper midband mush has been stripped away**

manufacturers supply. This makes the whole territory awfully difficult to navigate; how do audiophiles know which tweaks to

'snog, marry or avoid', as the saying goes?

Decades spent reviewing all manner of products claimed to dramatically upgrade hi-fi systems, has taught me that you can't reliably predict results so you have to hear the difference for yourself. Cables are the classic example of this; the effects they have can be subtle or profound, depending on your system and you never know until you try. This goes for both signal and mains cables; some have a modest effect, others can be significant.

If mains leads can improve the sonics of a system, then what about the mains itself? When I lived in London, this was a big issue for me and I struggled to get my hi-fi to sound good, trying anything that claimed to alleviate the effect of the noise-riddled AC mains supply. I had varying success; some mains conditioners worked a bit, others seemed to 'over damp' the sound, making it smoother but flat and lifeless. This was especially detectable when playing vinyl, and in the end I gave up – electing instead just to use

good mains leads with plugs cleaned by Kontak. It sweetened things up, yet didn't detract in any way.

When I moved to the wilds of Wiltshire, I became less inclined to fiddle with my mains because it's pretty good here. For example, it's quiet enough to tell when the fridge has switched on in the kitchen, because the sound gets slightly more brittle, whereas in London, it was just so noisy that everything sounded mushy and harsh all the time. So it was interesting to try IsoTek's EVO3 Mosaic Genesis mains regenerator and power conditioner. I have been to a number of hi-fi shows where the company has run demonstrations of its products, and time after time it has improved the sound. Indeed, I chose them in the *Hi-Fi Choice* hi-res demonstration at the Bristol Sound and Vision show in 2012 and 2013. So although I have a real respect for IsoTek power products, I honestly doubted that they would make a difference out here in the sticks. I plugged the EVO3 Mosaic Genesis in not expecting much...

## Getting it right

I was wrong. It has brought about an improvement of the scale I had not envisaged. It has made my reference system sound tonally smoother, darker and deeper, with more widescreen presentation thanks to improved width and depth. The bass is cleaner, and a layer of upper midband mush has been stripped away. For years I have been trying to find an amplifier clean and smooth enough to drive my finicky Yamaha NS-1000M loudspeakers, and now they seem far less bright and more amenable to everything asked to work with them.

Unsurprisingly, the better the loudspeaker, the more the improvement the IsoTek has brought. My budget reference Cambridge Audio AeroMax 6 floorstander, seems better detailed and more dynamic, while my expensive Quad electrostatics are far less mushy and muddled than I have heard them before, especially in the treble region. Indeed, my opinion of them has been raised. At \*\*\*\* the IsoTek is very expensive, but delivers a resounding improvement, one much greater than expected. Indeed if I'm honest, it is probably more than a lifetime of tweaking has ever done ●



**IsoTek's EVO3 Mosaic Genesis achieves more than a lifetime of tweaking can**



**DAVID PRICE**  
The tweak that was

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REVIEW

# To Infinity and Beyond

The IsoTek EVO 3 Mosaic Genesis

By Jeff Dorgay

**O**ne of the most important things you can do for your system, and surely the thing you should do first, is to address the power in your listening room. Unless you live in the middle of nowhere, chances are almost 100% that you've got power coming in that is full of noise and distortion. That's right, distortion. Plug a Fluke analyzer into your AC socket and you'll be shocked at just how much distortion is in the AC power that you're feeding to your components. Even if you had super clean power, there is still a considerable amount around the house from all of your other electronic components and wireless devices. And God forbid your next door neighbor is doing a lot of arc welding in the evening when you're trying to listen to your hifi system.

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Conventional wisdom says that the power supply in your components and its associated filtration should take care of this, and to some extent that is true. The more massive and well designed the power supply in your amp, preamp, DAC and other components is, the better the sound. But you're still starting with dirty power. The suspension in your car filters most of the undulations in the road out, keeping you comfortable, but that same car always rides that much nicer when you hit a patch of smooth, just rolled pavement, doesn't it? Same thing here. The cleaner the power going in, the better sound coming out of your system.

A great power line conditioner should not do anything to alter the tonal balance of your system. What it *should* do is drop the noise floor, remove power related artifacts and in the end allow a smoother, more defined, less fatiguing sound, because your system doesn't have to traverse all of those bumps.

I've been using the IsoTek SuperTitan in my main reference system now for a couple of years, and after trying nearly everything else, it still passes muster in terms of not doing any harm and lowering the noise floor dramatically. The minute I plug directly into the wall, however, I feel the loss of its presence instantly. And even though the SuperTitan does a fabulous job, what if you eliminated the wall altogether? *(continued)*

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**Enter the IsoTek  
EVO 3 Mosaic Genesis**

Another alternative would be to generate fresh power and start from there. Others have tried this, with modest success, but in our experience have always fallen somewhat short in terms of ultimate dynamics and sonic coloration. As happy as I am with my SuperTitan, I must admit skepticism to this approach when U.S. importer Kevin Wolff was explaining the Genesis. No more than 15 seconds after inserting the Genesis into my reference system—consisting of a Pass Labs XsPre, Xs300 monoblocks, Gryphon Kalliope DAC and Quad 2815 speakers—that skepticism was dismissed.

Because the Genesis regenerates fresh AC power, rebuilding the AC sine wave with distortion figures in the .2–.3 percent range (where a typical US power outlet has 10–50 times this much distortion), if you're anticipating a smoother ride, you've got it. Just like taking a Ferrari with fresh racing tires out on the track, installing the Genesis helps your system to follow the curves, contrasts and other nuances with much less effort.

As good as the SuperTitan is, using the Genesis for the front end of the system redefines quiet for this music lover. With the Quads only requiring 6 watts each, the decision to run one outlet of the Genesis into an IsoTek EVO 3 Sirius power bar to power the speakers proves a good one and the Quads do benefit in the same way that the electronics do from being fed pure AC.





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The only bad news here is that the three Genesis outlets can only supply 150 watts of regenerated power. Should you need more, the standard EVO 3 Genesis with 600 watts of capacity is the model for you.

Wolff goes on to clarify, stating “The amplifier section of the EVO 3 Mosaic Genesis is more closely related to the EVO 3 SuperTitan, vs. the amplifier section of the Mosaic, but that makes for a great future upgrade. The SuperTitan is at another technological level that cannot be shrunk and keeps its uniqueness. This form factor was chosen so that if you needed more than five outlets total, you could fit two of them on a rack. The Mosaic Genesis was designed to bridge the gap between absolutely great and the outer ranges of what is possible.”

At \*\*\*\*\* , the Mosaic Genesis is by no means an entry-level power product and it does include one of IsoTek’s power cords in the box. A number of conditioners, even at this price, still make you buy a \$1,000–\$2,000 power cord, so this is a nice touch. In the context of a modest system, the Genesis is most likely an unjustified expense, but in terms of the reference system used here, with a price tag of about \$150k, the Genesis is definitely well worth the cost. The additional liveliness and natural rendition it adds to the presentation would not be heard by adding \$12,000 worth of cable or a fancy equipment rack. The improvement that the Genesis makes to the system

is not really available any other way, so in that sense it is totally unique.

With the Genesis in the system, even heavy rock sounds louder, more impactful, thanks to the lower noise floor. Classical, acoustic and vocal lovers will notice a greater delta between Genesis and no Genesis. Everything rendered sounds more organic, more natural as if another barrier has been removed between you and the music. The Pass now sounds more grain-free, like a passive preamplifier, yet with the dynamic drive of an active preamplifier, if that makes sense. The ultra clean power delivery of the Genesis helps the system to sound less electronic, if you will.

**Varied scenarios**

With three outlets at your disposal, what to plug in? In my original reference system, the Genesis effect was indeed impressive, so the next two places to try it were in the analog half of the chain and in bringing my four-box dCS Paganini system to replace the Gryphon.

Utilizing the Rogers phono-stage that we reviewed back in issue 62, which is an all vacuum tube design, was positively stunning, and reminds me of every tube component I’ve ever plugged into the SuperTitan. The noise floor drop with every tube preamp I plugged into the Genesis was greater than any solid-state component, except for the dCS stack. *(continued)*



Those with a high end digital player and the spare cash to match need a Genesis. While the Nordost cable upgrade to the Paganini was spectacular, again, the Genesis pushes the boundaries even further. Spinning the latest MoFi SACD of the Miles Davis classic *Kind of Blue* is a sheer freak out. The dCS stack has precious little grain or harshness in its presentation that you don't even notice until you pull the Genesis out. Everything gets smaller, more brittle, and less lifelike. I experienced the same thing with my Dylan SACDs played through the stack—his voice is so much more realistic, with more tonal saturation, more decay and more delicacy.

#### **Make no mistake**

Call me crazy, but if you have a mega system, you really should audition an IsoTek EVO 3 Genesis, or its big brother, the EVO 3 Genesis. Especially if you've optimized your system as far as you think it can go. If you've taken your system to 11, this will take it to 12. I guarantee you will be so enthused with the results that it will sell itself. ●

## REVIEW

### The IsoTek EVO 3 Mosaic Genesis

#### **PERIPHERALS**

##### **Analog source**

AVID Volvere SP/SME V/  
Kiseki PurpleHeart NS

##### **Phonostage**

Rogers PA1-A

##### **Digital source**

Gryphon Kalliope,  
dCS Paganini stack

##### **Preamplifier**

Robert Koda K-10

##### **Power Amplifier**

Pass Labs Xs300  
monoblocks

##### **Cable**

Cardas Clear

##### **Power**

IsoTek Super Titan

AWARDS / 2016



*Power Conditioner/Distribution  
Product of the Year*

**IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis**

UK audiophiles never took to power regenerators, until recently. In part, the reason for the change in stance is we are now swimming in EMI 'backwash' from phone chargers and computer power supplies, but it also comes down to high performance products like the \*\*\*\*\* IsoTek EVO3 Mosaic Genesis. This product features technology pulled from IsoTek's top EVO3 Genesis regenerator and Super Titan conditioner, but brings the cost down by designing the Mosaic Genesis specifically for smaller systems. This is the ideal regenerator for someone who doesn't use big and beefy mono power amps, but wants the benefits of what regeneration and conditioning bring to the noise floor of a system. The five output (including two 'high' power outputs) regenerator uses a full Class AB amplifier to rework and rebuild the power waveform to deliver pure power to within 2% of the ideal in your country. (Reviewed in Issue 123).



REVIEW

HI-FI WORLD

# All power to you!

**Martin Pipe tries out Isotek's no-expense-spared EVO3 Ascension mains cable**

**T**here is considerable interest in well-engineered mains cables, despite the simple fact that hundreds of miles of utilitarian (i.e. non-audiophile!) cable and transformers may lurk between the power station and your mains outlets. As with mains regeneration, though, there can be an audible effect. Some of these mains cables, which are designed to replace the cheap ones bundled with your equipment, are fairly inexpensive.

Not so the purple-coloured Isotek EVO3 Ascension, a 2-metre length of which will set you back no less than \*\*\*\*\*. It's terminated with a chunky bespoke Isotek IEC connector at one end, and an equally chunky Furutech 13-amp mains plug at the other (ours was fitted with what looks like a standard Bussmann 13A ceramic fuse). The 18mm-thick PVC-jacketed cable in between looks man enough to carry your entire street's current! According to Isotek, each of the three individually-insulated conductors within – earth, live and neutral – are pretty-sophisticated, as one might expect for the outlay...

They are “deep cryogenically-treated silver-plated Ohno continuous-cast copper conductors” of 4 square-millimetre cross-section, “wrapped in a dielectric of air, with partial FEP (fluorinated ethylene propylene, or ‘Teflon’) contact”. A further “extruded FEP sleeve seals the construction; each of these

individual conductor assemblies being wrapped in Mylar, with a further OFC (oxygen-free copper) shield, before being given a slight rotational twist with FEP tubes of air”. All clever stuff; Ohno, in case you're wondering, is the name of the Japanese professor who worked out how to manufacture the incredibly-expensive copper wire at the Ascension's heart.

And how does it perform? I used the highest-quality gear at my disposal – the Auralic G2 Aries transport, feeding a Prism Callia DAC and Focal Utopia headphones, plus revealing Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII loudspeakers. And yes, this cable does yield some subtle improvements when it comes to the timing and ‘space’ of hi-res audiophile material (among them superlative Blue Coast recordings like Emily Palen's Light in the Fracture, and Garrett Brennan's Alta Powder Day).

Listening very carefully I could hear the difference between plugging

the Ascension directly into a wall socket, and via an adaptor or distribution board (direct is better, natch). Likewise, when using the cable for the DAC or the transport; the former seemed to yield the most benefit.

To be honest, to truly make the most of the Isotek EVO3 Ascension you'd perhaps need equipment more revealing – giant electrostatics? – than I had at my disposal. And with that proviso in mind, I'd suggest to try before buying; it's state-of-the-art cable for state-of-the-art equipment.



## ISOTEK EVO3 ASCENSION



**OUTSTANDING - amongst the best**

### VERDICT

What a cable! What a price!

### FOR

- perceptible improvements in resolution, space and timing

### AGAINST

- very heavy  
- very expensive!

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# IsoTek EVO3 Ascension power cords

by Alan Sircom

As makers of power products that reach from the high-value to the high-end, it would be obvious to expect IsoTek to have followed suit with its range of power cords. But, in fact, most of the brand's power cords have been very much geared toward that value end of the market. Ascension is the first cable from IsoTek to plant its flag on *terra audiophilia extremus*, although such is the heady wine from that region, a \*\*\*\* price tag for a 2m cable doesn't seem *that* extreme. I mean, you can't even exchange it for a small car!

IsoTek are playing the purity card with Ascension. It uses a trio of 4mm<sup>2</sup> high-purity OCC (Ohno Continuous Cast) copper conductors, which are then silver-plated, and encased in a extruded FEP (Fluorinated Ethylene Propylene) with an air dielectric barrier. Each of these assemblies are then matched with FEP/air tubes to act as spacers. This is then wrapped in Mylar, shielded with a similarly high-purity oxygen-free copper braid, and given the deep cryo treatment, down to -196°C. The resultant cable is jacketed in a purple PVC outer and rated at 16A.

EVO3 Ascension's outer diameter of 17.5mm does limit the kind of connectors used, and IsoTek uses high-quality bespoke devices throughout. It means that finding a two-pin figure of eight 'Telefunken' plug might be difficult, but you can get the cable terminated for UK, EU, US, and Australian mains sockets.

A big part of the design of the Ascension cable is what the company calls an "IsoTek VAD Barrier". The best permittivity (dielectric constant) would be a vacuum, but that is impractical in a power cord (unless you live on a space station), so IsoTek goes for the next best thing; air, or at least as close as you can get to free air inside a cable. By creating a Virtual Air Dielectric, IsoTek claims a dielectric constant of just 1.0548 (air alone is 1.00059 in the same conditions). This is achieved by minimal conductor contact and using FEP to act as a bridge.

My take, however, is the use of solid-core conductors is one of the more important parts of Ascension. OK, so it's solid-core conductors with all the trimmings (otherwise you get 'Twin & Earth' used to hook up your cooker), but solid-core is key to Ascension's sound.



REPRODUCED FROM  ISSUE 155

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW / ISOTEK EVO3 ASCENSION

*“If you have one of IsoTek’s EVO3 power cords, Ascension does a lot more of the same and is the logical ultimate step.”*



### SPECIFICATIONS

#### IsoTek EVO3 Ascension

Available in UK, EU, US, AU, and CH power plugs, C15 IEC socket only

IsoTek’s EVO3 Ascension faces some stiff competition – literally and figuratively. Once you get past a certain price point, money almost doesn’t matter when it comes to power cords, and a \*\*\*\* power cord might well go up against the really big guns costing £10,000 or more. So, it carries the full load of IsoTek on its back. If it fails to reach the heights of high-end audio, those audiophile enthusiasts might look less favourably upon the company’s power conditioners and filters. But similarly, it needs to represent a tangible upgrade on existing IsoTek cables for the faithful who already own a collection of IsoTek products and want the best of the best.

Ascension scales both those heights and, while it’s not an ‘Odin-killer’, it makes a lot of sense for the absolute top-end of audio performance, both in absolute and relative terms. Let’s start with the easy one. If you have one of IsoTek’s EVO3 power cords, Ascension does a lot more of the same and is the logical ultimate step in the mains lead chain. The only reasons not to buy it are that you can’t afford it or that you have a device with a two-pin Telefunken input, and if you can’t afford it... start saving!

The question is more nuanced for the ‘clean sheet’ buyer, but not by much. EVO3 Ascension brings a hush to your system like an audience preparing for a concert. It’s like the system is running a little quieter, and sounds rise from a quieter, darker background. There’s more going on in the music as a result, especially in those quicksilver microdynamic shifts in level that come with live instruments and good performances. This makes the cable a little more John Zorn than ZZ Top, but where some of the lower IsoTek orders make for a presentation that’s big on staging and sometimes not so good on drive and energy, Ascension brings both strands of musical performance together.

There is a point where Ascension scores over many of the high-end superheroes. This doesn’t overstate the treble in the way some can. A lot of high-end designs have a distinct ‘flavour’ to them, and if you like that sound, you love the cable to the exclusion of all others. Ascension is more even handed than this, in a manner akin to Cardas, but with more leading edge attack and definition.

Our ‘systematic approach’ to audio is fairly well drummed into most *Hi-Fi+* writers, and the idea of using power cords from a different family to the interconnects and speaker cables is something close to apostasy. And IsoTek doesn’t make interconnects or speaker cables... it just does power. The thing is, it just does power so well that you can’t help viewing Ascension as a chink in the ‘systematic’ armour. This is a cable of balance and poise, doing all the background-noise-lowering processes we have come to expect from good aftermarket cables, but doing so without grace of favour, or exaggeration of performance. Yes, there are more exuberant sounding power cords and there are more ‘phat’ sounding power cords. There are even power cords that make for a bigger soundstage. But most of them do these things at a cost elsewhere; either elsewhere in the overall performance, or elsewhere in terms of leaving your bank balance lighter to the tune of tens of thousands. IsoTek offers the best balance in that respect.

EVO3 Ascension is not IsoTek’s first cable. Its not even the company’s first ‘real’ cable. But it is ‘born to the purple’; the first cable that will be taken really seriously by audio’s glitterati, who don’t get out of bed for less than £10,000. Highly recommended! +

REPRODUCED FROM  ISSUE 155

AWARDS

2013  
Product of the Year  
ACCESSORY

**IsoTek Super Titan Power Conditioner**

**W**e've had excellent luck with IsoTek products over the past few years, and the Super Titan has worked flawlessly in our publisher's reference system. Combining some radical ideas to power conditioning with vault-like build quality, electronic and mechanical noise is eliminated from your system with the Super Titan.

It's Neutrik connectors for the four power cords going out to your system is just another example of how everything under the hood of the Super Titan has been taken to the extreme. With a maximum capacity of 32 amperes (from a 110-volt AC line), the Super Titan requires you to call your electrician to get the maximum capacity it can deliver, but the results are well worth it. You've never heard your system sound so free of electrical artifacts until you plug into a Super Titan.



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REVIEW

# Clean-up Campaign

There are mains conditioners and then there's the Isotek Super Titan, says Paul Rigby...

**T**here are mains conditioners *and* mains conditioners; for everyone who's had a good experience there'll be someone claiming a bad one. So you've got to take each product on its own terms, in your system, and not arrive at any preconceptions. This said, Isotek's name precedes them; if there's one company that's made its (fine) reputation from mains-related products, this is it. They do a lot of live demonstrations at hi-fi shows, where time after time, they demonstrate the efficacy of their products. This prompted me to review this, the Super Titan, a flagship of their range.

At \*\*\*\* it's right on the edges of what even high end audiophiles would regard as acceptable, so for me it wouldn't be a case of it doing a bit of good here and there; to justify its price it would have to work wonders! Happily, I have a high end system (although even in this context \*\*\*\* quid is pushing it), so I duly installed it and listened with interest...

It certainly looks the part: it's a beautiful thing in its own right, and massive weighing a beast-like 30kg and spanning 500x500x300mm, in no small part due to the fact that it has to deliver 32A. It builds upon the current Titan model but offers twice as much power and doubles the filtering capability: offering a group of four, seven stage, filters to help remove differential noise (the noise from your fridge, for example) and common mode noise which is a more insidious distortion that you only often notice once it's gone.

Designed to work as a sort of pre-power conditioning combo with the current Aquarius conditioner, the reported ideal configuration for sound quality is to plug your power amp (or monoblocks) directly into the Super Titan, the rest of your

front-end into the Aquarius and the Aquarius itself into the Super Titan. The point of the Super Titan? To deliver clean and consistent power. So what does it sound like?

## SOUND QUALITY

Initially utilising Skunk Anansie's 'Stoosh' as a test CD on an Icon CD-X1 CD player within a valve system, the listening tests began with the basic reference system presenting a tight, thumping bass with a dynamic rhythm guitar, smoky vocals with discernible acoustic guitar and cymbal elements on the periphery of the soundstage.

Next, the Aquarius mains conditioner presented a more focused soundstage with now, centrally placed, rhythm guitar and bass. The downside was a slight upper midrange lift but the reduction in distortion, improved bass grip and more acoustic guitar and cymbal effects held promise.

My monoblock power amps were then plugged directly into the Super Titan chassis. My reference system has never displayed such a wide and deep soundstage; bass power was immense, almost visceral, while Skin's sometimes subtle vocalisations proved that the upper midrange and treble were particularly nuanced and delicate.

Finally, the monoblocks remained while the front-end loaded Aquarius was connected to the Super Titan. What I heard surprised and shocked me because, up until this point I was presented with more and better

fireworks. The Super Titan removed that. For the first time, I was listening to the music and not the hi-fi. That focused soundstage of the Aquarius-only rig sounded false, in retrospect, and the basic reference sounded relatively veiled and lacking in bass power. Now, the soundstage had a more organic arrangement while each instrument could be heard clearly. In fact, I could have easily written the bass guitar part on a piece of paper, it was that lucid.

Via my Avid Acutus turntable, Ella Fitzgerald's performance on Speakers Corner's 'Cole Porter Songbook' was simply arresting. In standard reference mode, her performance was relatively stodgy, slow and tired. Post Super Titan, Fitzgerald revealed sparkle, a crisp enunciation and elegance. Also, a tremendous instrumental separation was drained of distortion by the Super Titan and, within the resultant gaps, new detail was revealed.

## CONCLUSION

Power conditioning has always been of value, but with the Super Titan, it has finally come of age. Here is a system that never imposed itself upon the music. Here, in fact, the music was king, not the hardware. Yes, the Super Titan might cost a pretty penny but this is one of those high-end components which is actually worth every penny – providing you've got them in the first place!



## HI-FI WORLD

### VERDICT

Beautifully built and presented, this is an extremely effective mains conditioning device – but so it should be at the price!

### FOR

- tonal accuracy
- incisive detail and clarity
- bass interpretation
- 3D soundstaging

### AGAINST

- price!

# ULTIMATE | EVO3 SUPER TITAN



# IsoTek Super Titan

*The original Titan seemed to be as good as it got – then along came Super Titan*

**A**wesome is a somewhat overworked adjective when it comes to hi-fi. It's routinely applied to products that (while impressive) do not fully deserve such a description. But with IsoTek's Super Titan, awesome is for once fully justified. Its massive size, 'battleship' build quality and amazing performance deserve nothing less.

Looking like a big power amp, IsoTek's Super Titan stands about 30cm tall and measures around 50cm square. It weighs an impressive 30kg and has four power outlets using silver-plated 32-amp Neutrik connectors. It's capable of delivering 9,200 watts of continuous power. Wow!

Transient power delivery is around 35,500 watts, with a constant current delivery of 32 amps. Basically, the Super Titan offers a doubling over the company's highly regarded Titan model; twice the power, twice as much filtering and double the number of power outlets. If that's not truly awesome, what is?

There's no doubt that mains quality is a serious limiting factor when it comes to sound quality. Like contaminated petrol in a car, mains noise and distortion has an adverse effect on performance, meaning your equipment operates below its full potential. The result is poorer sound quality. The solution? A mains purification device that deals effectively with noise issues without restricting current delivery.

Super Titan came into existence because there was nothing being made to partner really big high-current power amplifiers. So, first and foremost, this mains conditioner was designed and built to address this specific need. We used our review sample with a system that included a Musical Fidelity kW750 power amp. This gives a meaty 750 watt output, with more than double this into lower impedances. But, while the kW750 is a large and powerful amplifier, the Super Titan is intended for much bigger fare than this. With its massive reserves, it's even suitable for some of the huge American behemoths.

Now, this might imply Super Titan is a niche product, aimed only at those with big powerful systems and wallets to match. But it's also usable with smaller set-ups. Having such vast current capability means there's almost no limiting effect on available power – a fault that can and does afflict smaller power conditioners.

Having vast headroom means superb transient detail and no restriction of dynamics. While aiming to provide clean, pure mains, IsoTek is committed to designing units that do not act as a limiter in terms of current delivery. Super Titan is the ultimate expression of this approach to design.

But, does one really need a product like this? Is it necessary to go to such extremes? Of course, if you're a rich audiophile with a big system and money to burn, then investing in something like Super Titan won't be an issue. But what about those of us with smaller systems? Do we need one?

## SOUND QUALITY

Annoyingly, the answer turns out to be a resounding 'yes'. Certainly, if your mains quality is badly contaminated with noise and distortion, and you have additional items like computers running off the supply, the improvement in clarity

and detail delivered by a device like this will be bigger than you'd ever imagine.

IsoTek's better mains purification devices, like Super Titan, deal with both differential and common-mode noise, along with RFI and EMI. Each mains outlet is isolated, which prevents cross-contamination. This means that self-noise generated by (say) a large power amp will not affect your preamp or CD player. Subjectively, this means you'll hear a cleaner, more solidly focussed sound that has greater clarity and separation. Depending on how dirty your mains supply is, the music will sound smoother and cleaner, yet crisper and more immediate at the same time. The sound will be noticeably more refined and effortless.

We'd say Super Titan will improve the sound of any hi-fi system it's used with. It will allow you to hear exactly how your equipment is performing. Moreover, the improved clarity and separation will allow you to fine-tune your hi-fi system as never before.

**"Your music will sound smoother, cleaner and much more immediate"**

You'll find that certain 'difficult' or disappointing recordings suddenly sound a whole lot better – in some cases, the improvement will be so great, you'll wonder how and why they could ever have sounded so bad. Lastly, your system will sound consistently good, regardless of when you listen.

Although Super Titan takes up quite a bit of floor space, it's otherwise undemanding. It doesn't get warm during normal use and it's whisper-quiet. Even with an ear close-by, there's no hum or buzz to be heard. So you can place it near to where you sit, without having to worry about mechanical noise or heat dissipation.

Our home mains supply is actually quite clean and we already use a high quality PS Audio Premiere mains conditioner. Even so, Super Titan resulted in an audible improvement. Be warned – don't mess with Super Titan unless you have the cash!

Jimmy *Hughes*



REVIEW

# Darth Insidious

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## IsoTek Super Titan Power Conditioner

By Paul Rigby

When most audiophiles are ready to upgrade their hi-fi, they immediately look towards the principle components: turntable, CD player, amp, speakers, and the like. It's an obvious move, but is it the right one? Are you, for example, absolutely sure that you're even getting the best out of your current system? While unbeknownst to many users, multiple varieties of distortion prevent stereos from performing at their expected capability.

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REVIEW

**Providing nine-section multiple filters in a series parallel combination—and doing so in a truly balanced supply—Super Titan aims to remove the noise by cleaning your mains supply without disturbing the natural transient musical information.**

Noise arrives in two flavors—differential and common. When your fridge switches itself off, do your speakers make a noise? If so, you've experienced differential noise, or distortion. This form of noise also derives from the less-obvious electronic switching of power supplies. Common noise applies to more subtle variants, and derives from point sources such as radio transmitters. These dual forms aren't related. But both diminish systems' abilities to resolve fine detail. Moreover, you usually don't realize such noise exists until it's eliminated.

Differential and common noise arrive via the live and neutral lines within your mains cable—precisely where the IsoTek Super Titan and its Direct Coupled Design circuit come into play. Providing nine-section multiple filters in a series parallel combination—and doing so in a truly balanced supply—Super Titan aims to remove the noise by cleaning your mains supply without disturbing the natural transient musical information. It also supplies impressive back-up figures that keep everything safe (a rated figure of 4,600W) and a fusing unit that handles enormous transient overloads.



Weighing in at a beast-like 30kg (66 pounds), Super Titan offers a quick and efficient way to gain your first hernia. Spanning 500 x 500 x 300mm, the unit works with its smaller brother, the already established Aquarius. The latter can be used as a standalone power conditioner but reaches new heights when used as part of a team alongside the Super Titan.

“Super Titan is designed for high-current product such as power amplifiers and electrostatic speakers,” explains Keith Martin, founder and Managing Director for IsoTek.

“The Aquarius (a six-outlet, full-system power conditioner featuring two high-current outlets rated at 16 amps and four medium-current outlets rated a 5 amps) sits on top and is used for front-end equipment such as CD players. As you go up the IsoTek range, we split our boxes into two for high and lower current, as you would a preamp and power amp.” IsoTek is currently working on a rack that will neatly hold the power conditioning boxes in place.

Martin claims the best reason for splitting the power

conditioners into two boxes relates to the different current demands associated with source components and power amplifiers. “Plug your CD player, et. al. into the Aquarius because the CD player will only draw around 35W,” says Martin. “It won’t demand power in transients, which is what a power amp does. A power amp, when faced with dynamic pieces of music, gulps current and power. That creates noise of its own. So you need the additional bandwidth that the Super Titan supplies for the power amp.”

You can also run your turntable and CD player off the Super Titan, but it won’t be quite as effective as opting for the two-box approach: You need a different class of filtering for front-end boxes. That’s why the Aquarius has two high-current outlets and four medium outlets to provide different filtering. Super Titan is optimized for high-current applications. Indeed, it can handle 32 amps of continuous current.

“We were looking at the nature of the amplifiers coming through on the high end,” notes Martin. “Big amplifiers from Levinson, MBL, and such require huge power delivery. With that in mind, we built a true 32-amp power conditioner for the extreme high-end user. The Super Titan will run happily on a normal feed, but having the extra capability matters—we designed this product to be future-proof.”  
*(continued)*



**Plugging the Quad 57s into the Super Titan provides noticeably less upper-frequency distortion, revealing soundstage structures I've never before experienced.**

**Amps and more**

IsoTek's monstrous, two-box power conditioning system works just as well in practice as in theory. I chose Skunk Anansie's *Stoosh* as a test CD, and fed it through an Icon CD-X1 CD player within a valve system. My basic reference system presents tight, thumping bass with a dynamic rhythm guitar, smoky vocals, and discernable acoustic guitar and cymbal elements located on the periphery of the soundstage. When the Aquarius mains conditioner is introduced into the chain, the latter yields a more focused soundstage replete with centrally placed rhythm guitar and bass. The downside?

A slight lift to the upper mid-range. Still, the reduction in distortion, improved bass grip, and added acoustic guitar and cymbal effects are promising.

Swapping the Aquarius for the Super Titan (and beginning with only the Icon monoblock power amplifiers connected) transforms the lower register of the system without slowing pace or rhythm. Bass guitar and drums remain sprightly and melodic, with more authority throughout the range. Plucked bass strings possess extended decay and claim deeper extension.  
*(continued)*



## REVIEW

Plugging the Quad 57s into the Super Titan provides noticeably less upper-frequency distortion, revealing soundstage structures I've never before experienced. The improved focus produces genuine 3D effects, complete with textural contours and layers. Bass stays powerful and authoritative. But it also assumes its place within the mix with a graceful coherency far preferable to just simply dominating, as it does when the Super Titan is absent. Midrange and treble frequencies are also markedly smoother, boasting excellent clarity. It's as if the music is scrubbed clean and sports a new sheen.

Please note: A tinge of upper-frequency hardness remains when the Super Titan is paired with the monoblocks alone. Connecting the Quads to the Super Titan offers maturity and drastically reduces such hardness, resulting in a rich, deep sound that unveils expressive musical elements.

Used as intended, the full IsoTek system produces an effortless sound—there's no stress or strain to be found. Don't confuse such ease with a lack of dynamics, power, or excitement. On Skunk Anansie's "Hedonism", Skin's lead vocals benefit from a fresh bank of vocal modulations, sounding almost choral. The bass-shy Quad electrostatics present a proud, full lower register full of grip and true authority. Such power affords the bass a grand magnificence and tonal accuracy.

Midrange frequencies also exhibit thrilling transparency, claiming a fuller palette of tonal colors and silkier treble. Every conceivable tremor of Kate Bush's delivery on "Bertie" (from *Aerial*) comes across stacked with emotion and nuance. Moreover, with the IsoTek combination, the soundstage is noticeably more natural and able to resolve low-level detail.

### Wash, Condition, and Go

The Super Titan and the Aquarius are sonic wonders. If you haven't addressed power delivery, get to know your system on a more intimate basis and consider adding these IsoTek components. Only then will you discover what your system can really deliver. ●

### MANUFACTURER

IsoTek Systems

### PERIPHERALS

#### Digital Source

Icon Audio CD X1

#### Analog Source

Avid Acutus, SME IV, Benz Glider

#### Phono

Icon PS3

#### Preamplifier

Aesthetix Calypso

#### Power

Icon MB845 Monoblocks

#### Speakers

Quad ESL-57

#### Headphones

Sennheiser HD650

#### Cables

Avid SCT, Avid ASC

REVIEW



# Power house

Paul Rigby looks at the Isotek Genesis dual cell mains generator.

DIAGRAM KEY

1. After passing through a sophisticated filter network, mains electricity is converted into DC, which is subsequently delivered to a high-voltage generation engine (300W amplifier). All of the mechanical noise caused by a low-quality mains supply is entirely avoided, as there is no input transformer to vibrate.

2. A high-quality synchronous sine wave generator feeds the generation engine at the same frequency and exact phase as the incoming mains supply. This ensures that no unwanted phase shifts are created between components connected directly to the mains and components connected directly to the Genesis. The phase shift between the mains input and output is zero – it is entirely synchronised with the mains.

3. Current positive feedback in the design allows the Genesis to deliver constant voltage, low distortion and zero phase shift to all connected loads.

4. The output from the generation engine is a pure sine wave with exceptionally low distortion.

5. An extremely high-grade isolation transformer brings the voltage back up to 230V AC.

6. Bright, clear OLED display shows snap-shot measurements for THD, voltage and power consumption. The advantage of this system is to avoid any pollution to output signals via the display circuit through continuous measuring.

7. Sophisticated protection systems include input protection, overvoltage protection and intelligent temperature protection, the latter incorporating a variable-speed, super-quiet fan that only comes into operation if needed.

Isotek treats mains-related problems with a seriousness that has to be seen (and heard) to be believed. New to the top of their wide range of mains conditioning products is the extraordinary Genesis power generator that I had for review. This is a statement product that comes at a lofty \*\*\*\* no less!

Isotek's boss, Keith Martin, told me the Genesis is, "...the world's first dual-cell power generation system." So, rather than scrubbing your mains clean, as a power conditioner does, the Genesis creates a new, clean, sine wave, synchronised to the incoming mains. This is then amplified by two 300W amplifiers and stepped up through transformers to a precise 230V output.

For mains power, such a signal is a sort of Holy Grail. "An industrial electricity generator will give you a THD (Total Harmonic Distortion) of around 2-3% which is not good. To get a THD down to a preferred 0.3% is very difficult. Others have claimed such figures but we have independent tests that prove it. In fact our THD is always less than 0.2%, in general terms, and in the critical fifth harmonic it's down to 0.06% which is extremely low. Rebuilding the mains is not a new concept, but to do it with a low distortion figure is hard."

Whenever you play music through your hi-fi, your system has to cope with noise in the power line such as: common and differential mode noise, power surges and spikes and asymmetry.

Whatever rubbish you throw at the Genesis, it will take that garbage, turn it into DC and rebuild from new a complete, full 230V sine wave

with incredibly low distortion. As such, your equipment will be working in the most optimal way. It will be receiving the best possible power with 600W headroom; CD players and DACs, for example, only draw between 35W and 50W.

"We didn't want to do what some companies do which is to rebuild half of the main sine wave or create a perfect sine wave template to match to and call the product a 'generator'. We wanted to rebuild a sine wave completely from scratch.

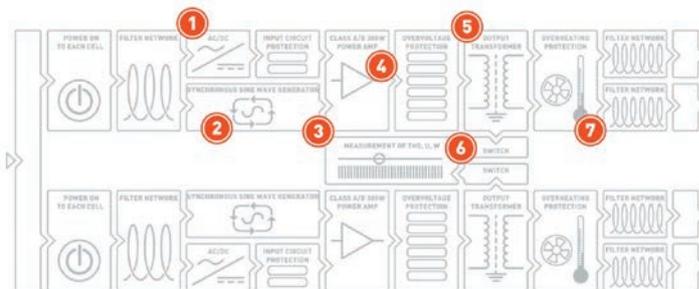
Yes, it costs a lot of money but it is an incredible solution that no-one else has done. Looking at the specs of the competition, no-one is doing it like us or with such low distortion."

Ah, the price. Well, you have

four sockets, intended primarily for front-end source items, although low power amplifiers and electrostatic loudspeakers that consume less than 600 Watts are suitable.

The Genesis is not meant to be used with high-power power amplifiers. That's what the Super Titan is for. Ideally, you sit the Genesis on top of the Super Titan and use both as a complete mains supply for the hi-fi.

On the front of the Genesis sits a bright clear OLED display that shows input/output voltage, input/output THD, power consumption of the connected audio equipment and the power status of the generation engines. It all looks very technical and impressive.



to keep the price of the Genesis in perspective. It's not designed for your iPod, after all. It has been made for high specification equipment and for those people who want the best that can possibly be achieved. It's an aspirational product like a Ferrari or an Aston Martin. That's how you need to look at the Isotek Genesis (and its sister, the \*\*\*\* Super Titan, for that matter). It demonstrates what can be done.

There is a main power switch plus two other power switches to start each half of the Genesis in order to save energy if only half of the Genesis is required. On the rear you have a C20 power socket (to take the high load of 16A) plus

Protection and monitoring circuits are fitted, plus fans that switch in if necessary. There's even an output filter network, Isotek's block diagram shows.

**SOUND QUALITY**

I initially hooked up my reference system to a basic electrical distribution block of the type you might pick up from a hardware shop for a few pounds. Playing the vinyl version of Frank Zappa's 'Bamboozled By Love', the music sounded a tad disorganised through the block. The upper mids were strident, guitar was piercing while vocals could shriek on crescendos. The sound stage was incohesive and displayed midrange

REVIEW



bloom while the bass and midrange were not clearly delineated.

The Genesis cured these ills. The soundstage filled with space, and both calm and discipline reigned. That didn't mean the music lost fluidity or flair, far from it. Guitars sounded aggressive, but detailed too. A widened dynamic spectrum provided the instrument with more character. Vocals found their place within the mix, stopped blaring and started informing.

I then plugged my Icon power monoblocks and Quad electrostatics in to a Super Titan mains conditioner and connected that to the Genesis. This firmed up bass. The stereo image also became firmer and more clearly centred, while cymbals now displayed lightness and a layered metallic sheen.

I then compared the Genesis with Isotek's last, best front-end solution, their excellent Aquarius. While the sound was very good indeed, a testament to the Aquarius' design, the Aquarius is very much a power conditioner. When compared to the Genesis, the sound was a little flat in the midrange and a touch plump in the upper bass regions.

The Genesis' ability to remove 'distortion' from the playback also meant that the Aquarius wasn't as clean in its sonic representation. Of course, you would expect – nay demand – such results considering the vast difference in price, but it was reassuring to hear the difference, nevertheless.

I have to emphasise the Super Titan's part in the Genesis' success,

however. Using Genesis or Super Titan alone adds greatly to a system's sound quality I have found from my experience with them, but music benefits when both boxes are hooked together.

Playing Yehudi Menuhin's 'Mendelssohn and Bruch Concertos' on vinyl, it was evident just how much silence there was behind the solo violin with the Genesis in place and how much Menuhin was compromised by the noise floor without it; the delicacy and fragility of his violin was more evident.

Compared with the Aquarius, the backing orchestra was truly involved via the Genesis, acting as a partner to Menuhin, not just sonic wallpaper behind him, while the Genesis was revealing of individual instruments within the orchestra, especially during high tempo sequences.

Turning to Horace Silver's 'Cape Verdean Blues', via my B-475 Densen CD, this jazz LP provided far more coherence via the Genesis, when compared to the basic power block, with a dramatic reduction in the noise floor. All of the musicians played at ease it seemed, free from background noise and distortion. Instrumental separation was impressive while individual instruments exhibited character and poise.

Similarly, against the Aquarius, the Genesis showed improved transparency, the edges of each instrument exhibiting better delineation, separating it from the silence surrounding it and from other instruments.

CONCLUSION

The Genesis shows you how important the mains electricity is in determining sound quality. In the hands of the Genesis, the mains electricity becomes a force for good. It provides a vibrant, exciting listen that shines a light on all aspects of a music mix. Here is a statement product that shows what is possible, setting standards in mains synthesis.

*"You sit the Genesis on top of the Super Titan" says reviewer Paul Rigby, for the ultimate in mains conditioning and generation. The Super Titan feeds large power amplifiers; the Genesis handles all else.*



ISOTEK GENESIS



**VERDICT**  
The Isotek Genesis enables you to hear – really hear – your hi-fi system, possibly for the very first time.

**FOR**  
- clarity  
- low distortion  
- detail  
- dynamics

**AGAINST**  
- size  
- weight

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW

# Isotek EVO3 Genesis

By Jason Kennedy

Power conditioning has got itself something of a bad rap in the UK. It seems to be big in the US, because they only have 110 volts to work with and the flimsiest looking plugs and sockets to connect to it. The mains grid in the UK delivers 230 volts of rock solid power (say the naysayers), and you connect to it with a fairly beefy three pin plug that can cope with rather more than the 13 amps it's rated for. So why do we need anything to improve the power that goes into our kit? The answer is that the increasing amounts of pollution that the computer, wi-fi and general electronica that fills our homes all produces noise that feeds back into the mains. Unless you live up a mountain with 300 solar panels and as many batteries to store the energy, your mains supply is a carrier for alarming amounts of RFI and EMI, detritus, which if the results I got with the Genesis are anything to go by, have a marked negative effect on the potential of hi-fi components.

The Genesis is not a filter, a lot of mains conditioners are just that and this is not a bad thing if it's done well, in fact it's just about the only way to get enough juice to a big

power amp without cramping its style. Instead Genesis is a re-generator, a device that takes the power coming out of the wall and uses it to build an 'optimised' mains sine wave which is fed to the output sockets. Genesis can deliver up to 600 watts, which is enough to run four source components and/or a preamp; possibly some low power amps as well, but it's designed for front end stuff first and foremost.

Inside the substantial and elaborately isolated case, which many mistook for a power amplifier, lies about as much copper and heatsinking as you find in a power amp. This is a substantial device because it runs two independent generation cells as Isotek likes to call them. These create a cleaned up version of the incoming sine wave, which is then amplified by a 300 watt 'generation engine', effectively a class A/B amplifier. Isotek is keen to point out that Genesis works in a different way to most AC regenerators, because it doesn't synthesise the



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► mains by imposing a template frequency on it (50Hz in the UK) as that approach doesn't remove distortion. Instead it builds a completely new sine wave at the desired frequency, which is then amplified and delivered via transformers with copper foil between primary and secondary outputs to stop any noise and distortion getting through. It's designed to dramatically cut harmonic distortion (THD) on the mains.

I put it to Isotek founder and chief proselytiser Keith Martin that the makers of serious audio equipment go to great lengths to design and build regulated power supplies that deal with the problems inherent in the mains supply, and asked him why Genesis should be able to do a better job. His response was: "We specialise in understanding power and what's going on and that makes a big difference. If you're designing an audio component there are always compromises and it's usually the areas that most people won't notice that are compromised rather than the features or casework, and power conditioning is one of those areas." He went on to say that he spends a great deal of time demonstrating his equipment to audiophiles around the world and has never found a system that doesn't benefit. But he would say that; the irritating thing is that results I got back this up.

Build quality is extremely high on the Genesis. The case is made from aluminium extrusions with an anodised finish that ensures resistance to knocks and looks great. It's a substantial beast too, thanks to the massive output transformers, extensive heatsinking and ISIS or independent system isolation support frame that sits like an exoskeleton around the body of the unit. It consists of aluminium uprights that are spanned by damped acrylic plates top and bottom which are shaped to minimise vibration. It's an elaborate arrangement that increases the units footprint and height quite considerably but does allow it to be stacked atop Isotek's conditioner for power amps the Super Titan.

On the connection front Genesis has a single input for the IEC input cable, an Isotek Extreme power cable is supplied to make the connection to the wall, and four independently connected output sockets, in this case 13A three pin types. The sockets themselves are silver (24k gold in the US) and internal cabling is silver plated, six nines OFC with PTFE dielectric. A proper job in other words which is probably why it works so well.

The improvements that can be wrought with Genesis vary from component to component but there are a few underlying qualities that are always apparent when switching from a decent extension block. The key one is an obvious drop in noise floor which makes low level resolution significantly better. Indistinct sounds are now fully formed, quieter instruments are far easier to identify and follow and reverb and decay extend

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for considerably longer. This brings significant amounts of the recording's character with it, acoustic spaces are precisely defined and soundstages expand in all directions, it's not at all subtle and very moreish. You have to play familiar albums again just to hear what's been hidden in the noise, it really does revitalise your record collection and I use the term in the broadest sense.

I put the Metrum Acoustics Hex DAC on first and revelled in the clarity of leading edges, this meant that timing improved – which it seems to with a lot of components. Subtleties of phrasing and character came out in John Lurie's voice (*The Legendary Marvin Pontiac – Greatest Hits*) which sounds richer and at the same time cooler than usual, and it always sounds cool. I also tried it with a Canary Audio CD300, a big tube powered CD player that already sounded pretty special but suddenly unearthed loads more space and delivered a far wider image. This was pretty dramatic. It sounded like the noise floor had literally disappeared below the threshold of audibility.

Going back to the Hex and then moving the Naim UnitiServe from standard to Genesis supply was also pretty dramatic, I didn't expect that the server would benefit as much as devices that process analogue signals but I was wrong. Again there was acres more space and far more depth of tone, high notes had real shine and vibrancy because so much grunge had been removed. Now there was a radiance to the sound of Michael Hedges 'Aerial Boundaries' that you usually have to spend a fortune on a vinyl front end to achieve.

Which reminds me, when you switch on Genesis its display tells you how many volts its receiving and how much THD is coming in and how much going to the output. The display turns off after about 10 seconds because it needs to connect in and outputs in order to display the information. It runs quite hot, much as you would expect of a 300 watt amp ►

## EQUIPMENT REVIEW / ISOTEK EVO3 GENESIS

### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

**Number of outlets:** 4  
**Type of outlets:** UK, EU, US, CH, AU, ZA  
**Mains inlet:** C20 IEC High Current  
**Mains voltage:** 230V 50Hz  
**Maximum current:** 16Amps  
**Total power:** 600W continuous  
**THD:** between 0.05% and 0.17% (typical).  
**RFI reduction:** +85dB extending down to zero Hz  
**Voltage stabilisation:** 230V +/- 1%  
**Dimensions (WxHxD):** 500 x 300 x 500mm  
**Weight:** 45Kg

and has a near quiet onboard fan that comes on when a lot of power is required. I can't say that I heard them once.

Back with the music I dropped Fleetwood Mac's 'Never Going Back' (the highlight of *Rumours* in my opinion) and discovered the way that echo and reverb was used to create the impression of a wall of acoustic guitars from only two. It sounded superb that was for sure. There is always a danger with extra transparency that detail can take centre stage and usurp the music but because the Genesis merely improves the hardware you have its musical capabilities remain as strong if not more so than ever. There were a number of occasions when timing became clearly stronger. Power and dynamics are likewise reinforced, there is less hash so the power is cleaner and this had an unexpected side effect. I started playing at higher levels than usual, not significantly nor deliberately but it became clear at the end of the session that the volume was quite a bit higher than usual. Of course the source material needs to be clean enough to encourage this but with a hi-res file of Samuel Yirga's superb new release *Guzo* (24/48 on Society of Sound) that is very much the case and I revelled in the sound of his piano and a great sounding rendition of *Black Gold of the Sun* at pretty serious levels without discomfort.

I tried the Genesis on all the source products that came through the listening room and in every instance it allowed them to produce significantly superior results. If

I had an active preamp rather than the Townshend Allegri I have no doubt that it would have benefited to the same extent if not more. Genesis is extremely expensive for a power conditioner but the fact that it can do so much for a system means that you really don't know what any component is capable of if you are just plugging it into the wall. It's also a lot cheaper than a self powered mountain top listening room, and easier to install. +



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*"I was blown away."*

*"As the results show, overall distortion from the Genesis is less than a twentieth of that from the mains supply. This, by any measure, is an excellent result."* **Hi-Fi News**



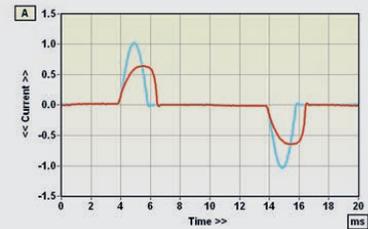
## LAB REPORT

### ISOTEK EVO3 GENESIS

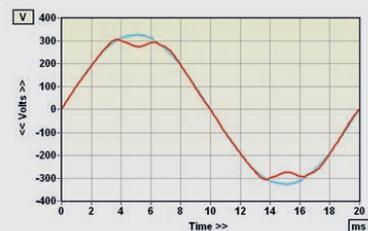
Testing mains regenerators requires some special, custom-built equipment. The first measurement, of charging current waveform, I made using an inline Hall-effect current transducer from LEM Components that can record currents of up to 80A at slew rates of greater than 60A/μs over a bandwidth exceeding 100kHz, while inserting a series resistance of only 0.18mohm. This is built into a box with flying leads terminated in a mains plug at one side and a mains socket at the other, allowing its insertion into the mains feed to any component.

Comparison of charging current waveforms from the wall socket (red trace) and from the Genesis (blue trace) is shown in below [see Graph 1]. The Genesis current pulses are textbook whereas those from the wall socket have a lower peak value and longer duration due to the distorted mains waveform. The distortion measurement itself was complicated by the output of the Genesis being floating – the secondaries of its output transformers are not connected to earth at either end, nor at a centre tap. IsoTek insists that a balanced test circuit must be used, with earth referred to the measurement computer, to achieve the best THD figures, so a balanced attenuator was built especially for the task, feeding a battery-powered INA217 low-noise, low-distortion instrumentation amplifier. Its output was recorded to hard disk as a WAV file via an M-Audio Audiophile 192 sound card for subsequent spectral analysis.

Voltage waveforms from the wall socket (red trace) and Genesis (blue trace) are also shown below [see Graph 2], while the test table lists individual amplitudes of the first four odd harmonics (each referenced to the amplitude of the 50Hz fundamental) plus a THD figure calculated from the first 20 harmonics. As the results show, overall distortion from the EVO3 Genesis is less than a twentieth of that from the mains supply and very close to IsoTek's claim of <0.3%. This, by any measure, is an excellent result. KH



ABOVE: Distorted mains (charging) current waveform (red) versus significantly more linear waveform delivered by the IsoTek EVO3 Genesis (blue)



ABOVE: Mains voltage waveform, from wall socket (red) versus IsoTek EVO3 Genesis (blue)

### HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Harmonic	Mains	EVO3 Genesis
3rd	4.35%	0.12%
5th	5.05%	0.06%
7th	2.09%	0.15%
9th	0.92%	0.17%
THD (2nd-20th)	7.05%	0.32%



## The power cleaning specialist

IsoTek's unique technologies win more awards than any similar brand. Here is a small selection of accolades from around the world...



"The effect of the EV03 Super Titan and EV03 Genesis pairing was uniformly, unequivocally positive...an effective, universal high-end system up-grade. The tech is clever, the operation faultless and there are plenty of outlet sockets for a comprehensive system. The cosmetic design is a triumph of heavy-metal engineering that delivers real pride of ownership. Highly Recommended."

**IsoTek EV03 Super Titan, EV03 Genesis**  
Hi-Fi Pig



"Ascension is definitely the right name for this product as it allows all areas of music playback to ascend to levels not experienced before and transcends all other mains cables I have yet tried."

**IsoTek EV03 Ascension**  
Hi-Fi Pig



"I don't know of any similarly priced rival that can better it. This is a no-nonsense piece of engineering that can handle expansive multi-component systems and help to deliver even more of the qualities you enjoy"

**IsoTek EV03 Corvus**  
Hi-Fi Choice



"Without any ifs or buts - with the EV03 Genesis One, the IsoTek crew around mastermind Keith Martin have once again achieved a milestone in the power supply of a high-end system"

**IsoTek EV03 Genesis One**  
i-fidelity.net



"The EV03 Titan One lets your system create a truly impressive, confident, holographic, three-dimensional sound. More settled, more precise and more readable. It's an excellent way to demonstrate how your high-end components can really play at 100%"

**IsoTek EV03 Titan One**  
Hi-Fi Voice



"The EV03 Ascension is a fine power player in its own right...and after 24 hours of running in, it can really deliver the musical goods. This cable really lowers the noise floor and lets the soundstage breathe!"

**IsoTek EV03 Ascension**  
Hi-Fi+ Awards 2017



"I was truly amazed at how much of an improvement the EV03 Sigmas is over the previous model. This product is truly awesome and can be regarded as an essential purchase."

**IsoTek EV03 Sigmas – Hi-Fi World**



"I was blown away... As the results show, overall distortion is less than a twentieth of that from the mains supply – an excellent result"

**IsoTek EV03 Genesis  
Hi-Fi News**



"Your music will sound smoother, cleaner and much more immediate"

**IsoTek EV03 Super Titan  
Hi-Fi Choice**



"I can only congratulate IsoTek on this product. It is nothing short of superb."

**IsoTek EV03 Titan – Hi-Fi World**



"Best Accessory 2013... Combining radical ideas to vault-like build quality, electronic and mechanical noise is eliminated from your system with the Super Titan"

**IsoTek EV03 Super Titan  
TONEAudio**



"A real buy recommendation for owners of better TV sets or high-quality projectors that still want to tease out the very best image quality."

**IsoTek EV03 Mini Mira  
Lite Magazine, Germany**



"Accessory of the year 2013"  
**IsoTek EV03 Genesis – Hi-Fi Voice**



"The EV03 Optimum turns in an extremely impressive performance. The improvement it makes is profound and should leave no one in any doubt about the importance of mains power."

**IsoTek EV03 Optimum  
Hi-Fi Choice**



"What I heard surprised and shocked me – for the first time, I was listening to the music and not the hi-fi... Tremendous instrumental separation, drained of distortion... Beautifully built and presented, this is an extremely effective mains conditioning device, worth every penny"

**IsoTek EV03 Super Titan  
Hi-Fi World**



"Excellent value for money... A great real-world product that is useful and inexpensively upgrades your system"

**IsoTek EV03 Sirius – Hi-Fi World**



"This product is truly awesome in the effect it has upon a system and can be regarded as an essential purchase"

**IsoTek EV03 Sigmas – Hi-Fi World**



"In every instance it produced significantly superior results... You really don't know what any component is capable of if you are just plugging it into the wall"

**IsoTek EV03 Genesis – Hi-Fi+**



"A distinct lift in overall musical performance"  
**IsoTek EV03 Sirius – TechRadar**



"[You hear] more space, lower noise and greater resolution... An increase in timing precision, depth of bass and a much greater sense of musical flow"

**IsoTek EV03 Polaris – Hi-Fi Choice**



"This power cable is a no-brainer as far as I am concerned – the benefits of high-end power cable design, but without the high price. Recommended!"

**IsoTek EV03 Premier – HiFi Pig**



"We would not hesitate to suggest the Sirius as an effective upgrade for any system"

**IsoTek EV0 3 Sirius – Hi-Fi Choice**



"A top quality cable"  
**IsoTek EV03 Elite – Hi-Fi World**



"The Big Daddy of power conditioners... It's like upgrading your whole system"

**IsoTek EV03 Super Titan – Hi-Fi+**



"A statement product that shows what is possible, setting the standards in mains synthesis... The IsoTek Genesis enables you to hear – really hear – your hi-fi system, possibly for the very first time"

**IsoTek EV03 Genesis – Hi-Fi World**



"Very highly recommended"  
**IsoTek EV03 Aquarius – Hi-Fi+**



"The Aquarius is brilliant"  
**IsoTek EV03 Aquarius  
Record Collector**

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