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A Quick Turntable Upgrade

The Furutech AG-12 Phono Cable

By Jeff Dorgay



One of the most overlooked segments of the analog world is the tonearm cable.

Many turntables come with a halfway decent cable. Some, such as my Rega P9, have a permanently attached cable that can't be swapped for something else. But if your tonearm has a standard DIN plug or a pair of RCA jacks, here's an upgrade you won't want to miss.



In today's world of mega-priced cables, the Furutech AG-12 is a steal at \$429. Judging by build quality alone, this cable looks like something that costs \$1,000, if not more. It uses Furutech's Alpha silver plated μ -OFC wire with a polyethylene dielectric material. Of course, it is treated with Furutech's Alpha Cryogenic and Demagnetizing processes, along with four layers of shielding.

What does all this mean to you? Take it from me, it sounds *damn* good. Actually, this cable does a great job at not having a sound. If you take a peek at the Furutech website (www.furutech.com), you can get the in-depth techie explanation explaining all the minute details about the construction details of the AG-12.

Speaking of Minute Details

Thanks to my TW-Acoustic Raven Two turntable, I have a pair of identical SME tonearms at my disposal and a couple of pairs of identical cartridges, so where it might be easy to be fooled into thinking this cable is all placebo, a simple switch between input A and input B on my ASR Basis Exclusive phono preamplifier made it a snap to discern the difference.

I can't write an encyclopedia about a turntable cable, but I can tell you that the Furutech AG-12 is the most cost-effective upgrade I've made to my analog front end. *Ever.* This cable strikes the perfect balance for me; it offers more musical detail without being even the tiniest bit harsh.

To hear instantly the effect of the AG-12, put on your favorite record with a lot of cymbals, or even (heaven forbid) a breathy female vocalist. Not only will you hear further into the recording, but you will hear more air and decay. The whole musical presentation is bigger, almost as if you moved your listening-room walls out two feet. Tonality is spot on without any timing issues being altered.

Going back and forth between the stock cable that came with my SME V tonearm (now used on my iV.Vi arm) was as different as night and day, as if a substantial veil was lifted from the upper registers. I tried this test with a pair of Dynavector XV-1s cartridges as well as a pair of Dynavector 17D3 cartridges, so you do not need a stratospheric cartridge to hear more music with the AG-12. A very nice side benefit of having the Furutech cable in my system is that extra resolution makes it even easier to dial in VTA. Booya!

So, perk up your analog rig!

Using the Furutech AG-12 has been such a good experience, I'll be buying two of them (one for each arm) to use in my reference system. I applaud Furutech for offering a cable with this level of build quality at a price point where most audiophiles can take advantage of it. I'm happy to award this cable one of our Exceptional Value Awards for 2008. ●

Furutech AG-12 Phono Cable
MSRP: \$425

MANUFACTURER

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