

# Quiescent Technologies Park

KEVIN FISKE IS SUFFICIENTLY SEDUCED BY THESE LOUDSPEAKER CABLES TO DIG DEEP INTO HIS OWN POCKETS

KEVIN FISKE

HIFICRITIC  
AUDIO EXCELLENCE



## Prices

Peak speaker cables:	
Single-wire 2m pair	£2,610
	(+£700/m extra)
Bi-wire 2m pair	£4,250
	(+£1120/m extra)
Absorption modules:	
Single-wire modules	£4,000-£4,500
Bi-wire modules	£5,000-£5800
Peak speaker links (4x0.2m)	£480

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I have long held the view that the deleterious effects of EMI, RFI and to a lesser degree microphony, have been exaggerated by an industry that just wants to sell us stuff. At the same time, accepting that these problems *do* exist, I have found them difficult to resolve without destroying musicality. A few products have lowered the subjective noise floor in my system, but all of them have to some degree throttled dynamics, corrupted tonal veracity, and sounded ‘sat-on’.

For me, the audio trinity of natural dynamics, tonal quality and timing are absolutely critical to musical enjoyment. I’d rather put up with a higher noise floor than suffer a less noisy system that fails to deliver the trinity, and is therefore musically deficient. Then Editor PM loaned me his Vertex AQ *Moncayo Hi-Res* speaker cables, designed to reduce the effects of EMI, RFI and microphony. PM’s simply said: “Let me know what you think.”

I took them home and within 10 minutes or so was eating a very large slice of humble pie. The cables lowered the noise floor and brought about a very pleasing increase in musicality, so much so that I begged PM to sell them to me. No dice. He hears what they do and is not parting with them.

Vertex AQ is currently re-branding itself as Quiescent Technologies, and has also recently launched a new type of speaker cable dubbed the *Peak*, a further development of the ideas that underpin the *Moncayo*. The *Peak* is modular, and comprises speaker cables, absorption modules and links, so it can be used as a system, or mixed-and-matched with purchasers’ existing cables or jumpers.

These *Peak* cables use solid round-core silver conductors in a wide Teflon dielectric tube, sheathed in proprietary EMI absorption tubing and then a sleeve that absorbs acoustic energy. Solid silver WBT bananas or spades terminate. Quiescent doesn’t use shielding because, it says, this simply reflects unwanted energy back into the conductors. And conventional damping techniques do little if anything to mitigate the vibrational energy in the system that can result in the ‘sat-on’ characteristic that I find so unnatural.

Quiescent’s *Peak* modules contain a very heavy ceramic multi-path, multi-length labyrinth that drains wide-band acoustic energy from the conductors, preventing it entering the speakers, or returning back

up the chain to cause intermodulation distortion. The module cases are deliberately disruptive of energy, having no parallel sides. They also contain further passive attenuation measures that the company will not discuss, except to say that they are founded on technologies developed to mitigate EMI and RFI in military and medical applications.

## Sound Quality

Sceptical though I was that the *Peaks* could really be any improvement on the *Moncayos*, when I swapped the cables around I heard a very obvious increase in weight, dynamics and tonality. Adding the modules lowered the noise floor still further, allowing subtle timing cues and top-to-bottom tonal complexity to be even more easily discerned. Soundstaging became crisper and less diffuse. These gains were accompanied by none of the effects that had soured my previous dalliances with anti-EMI/RFI/microphony products. Moreover the gains were blindingly obvious with both valve and solid state amplification, and with multiple speaker types.

Quiescent’s use of solid silver from end-to-end in the *Peak* system results in a presentation that may unsettle listeners attuned to copper wires, as the two materials do sound quite different. When well implemented, silver sounds more extended, sweeter, more open and natural. It also has a tighter, dryer bottom end. I prefer silver; others don’t.

It is impossible for me to say from a technical perspective what the *Peaks* actually did in my system. Did they reduce RFI, EMI or maybe microphony too? What I do know is that until they arrived I had not encountered a product that claimed to deal with these negatives effectively, yet left musicality undamaged. Too often the ‘cure’ seemed to leave the patient sicker still. But Quiescent’s new speaker cable demonstrates that musicality and RFI/EMI/microphony mitigation are not incompatible.

## Conclusions

At north of £8000 for a three metre pair of cables, two modules and the jumpers, Quiescent *Peaks* are ‘wires’ with a truly eye-watering price. However, they are also quite exceptional, being the best speaker cables I have heard by some margin.