

# 10 Audio

[Home](#)[Zen Page](#)[Reviews](#)[EARs](#)[References](#)[Projects](#)[Feedback](#)

## Analysis Plus Solo Crystal Oval 8 Speaker Cable [back to Reviews](#)

Date: November, 2002

The Analysis Plus Solo Crystal Oval 8 speaker cables are the best sounding cables to date from Analysis Plus, not including their gold-plated cables. I have already written about the [Oval 9, and that review](#) should serve as the basis for this one of the Solo Crystal Oval 8. There seems to be widespread agreement that the Oval 9 speaker cables are one of the better bargains in audio-land. It is a very easy to live with, high performance cable that works well in a wide variety of systems. It's strengths are deep, powerful bass, a midrange with good resolution and good imaging, and detailed and extended highs that avoid being too bright or glaring unless the source is bright or glaring.

The Oval 8, auditioned in the Solo or single-wired version, comes with it's own model of the excellent and imposing T1 spades, these being gold plated. The 8 gauge wire seems much larger than the Oval 9, but it is still quite flexible and easy to install. For those whose blood pressure changes around good-looking audio hardware, the colorful weave is attractive through the clear outer jacket. And with the latest shrink wrap that makes a very good appearance, the overall construction quality seems excellent.



The cable seemed to require about 20 hours to break in, as there were no notable changes for the next 30 hours. As an aside, I much preferred the Urushi cartridge with 100 ohm loading rather than 121, 133, or 150 ohms since the lower values reduced an unnatural edge to the sound. In an email discussion with Mark Markel, the very nice and accommodating President of Analysis Plus, he suggested that 300 hours might be needed for the cables to complete the break-in process. My experience has been that most electronic devices, including cables, need from 20-100 hours to break-in, and mechanical devices such as cartridges and speakers may need 200 hours or more to relax into their long-term character. Whatever the exact number is or isn't, everything seems to need at least 10 hours to stop sounding downright nasty.

In comparison with the Oval 9, the Solo Crystal Oval 8 offered more of everything: deeper,

more powerful and detailed bass, greater transparency in the all-important midrange, and more micro or low level detail in the upper frequencies. It was very interesting to hear the extra clarity of the highs of the '8' compared to the '9'. This was not presented in the Silver Oval manner, by seemingly shifting the tonal balance to favor the treble range. The Oval 8 just presented more information than the Oval 9. This was clearly audible in the decay of notes as they faded to silence; the fade simply lasted longer before fading to black. The Oval 9 is good in this area, but the Solo Crystal cable is excellent.

It is worth repeating that this increase in resolution - as if 4 bits of resolution were added - is not hyped treble. If we use the Oval 9 as a "control group" in this experiment, then the buzz is true: eliminating copper crystal barriers is beneficial. In comparison to Cardas Golden Reference speaker cables, my current reference and one based on a different design philosophy, the Oval 8 had somewhat less pinpoint imaging which is a strength of the \$2000 Cardas cables. The overall tonal balance and level of dynamics and detail was quite similar.

Are these cables worth the difference in price over the Oval 9? In our micro-economic corner of the world of stratospherically priced super-components and keeping in mind the law of diminishing returns, let me suggest that the improvements offered by the Oval 8 are worth every dollar or Euro or Yen. It is a small but worthwhile step up from the Oval 9.

The AP copper speaker cables share an uncommonly neutral family sound, and the Solo Crystal Oval 8 is undeniably the best cable yet from this talented team of scientists, engineers and audiophiles. And while not quite the obvious bargain as the Oval 9, I feel the Solo Crystal Oval 8 is priced quite reasonably for the level of performance it offers. Keep up the good work, Analysis Plus. I'm looking forward to hearing what's next.

**Overall Rating: 8 LPs**