



GROUPTEST

BLIND LISTENING
CABLE LOOMS £297-£460

Group test verdict

Opinions have been discussed and the final verdicts are in from our listening panel, and now it's down to **David Price** to unravel the final results...

THE LEAST POPULAR cable loom is the Chord Company's. In the context of the review system it simply doesn't shine, turning in a musically uninvolved performance. It is reasonably open, but seems a touch unforgiving on harder-sounding tracks. If nothing else, this shows the importance of synergy, as the brand is a popular one with many friends.

The Atlas loom comes next; here there are some strong positives, but some negatives too – there is no mistaking its energy and verve, these cables pushing the song along with verve and brio. But it isn't the most

transparent combination here by a long chalk, sounding a little congested and lacking in subtlety.

The Ecosse is the first of the cable looms that the panel really liked, praising it for its genuine openness, gentle musicality and affable nature. Indeed, one panelist put this up in second place, so enthusiastic is he about it. It's a great, general purpose performer, which is well worth giving an audition to.

The same can be said of Black Rhodium's cable combination, which again doesn't swing one way or the other too much; it gives an enjoyable,

open and spacious sound without exactly burning down the house, so to speak. It has just a touch more smoothness than the Ecosse in our system, hence its higher ranking.

Tellurium Q's loom is generally very well liked, with a spacious sound and musical gait that gets into the rhythms and works on communicating the emotion of the song. The trade-off is that it is a little indistinct in terms of its low-level detail resolution – you'd never call it forensic – and isn't a patch on the winner, which elicits strong, unanimous praise.

WINNER

The moment the van den Hul cable loom comes on, the panelists give a collective sigh of relief. Music has a lifting flow and a sense of purpose that isn't evident elsewhere. Comprehensively the best here, this cable loom comes heartily recommended.

Make/model	Atlas	Black Rhodium	Chord Company	Ecosse	Tellurium Q	Van den Hul
Price	£378	£460	£365	£340	£297	£310
Sound	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Build	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Features	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Overall	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
	Snappy rhythms make for a fun listen, but it lacks finesse or transparency	Nice, easy, open sound with decent detail and smoothness	Doesn't hit the spot in the review system, with a slightly cool, opaque sound	Fine sounding, musical loom with good levels of detail and grip	Smooth, soft, downy sort of sound allied to pleasing musicality	Grippy, fast and exciting sound, but with excellent transparency, too
Key features						
Copper	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Silver/copper	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Silver	No	No	No	No	No	No
Cop/sil/carbon	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Multi core	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

TRY WITH THESE

CD PLAYER: Audiolab 8200CD £700

Still our fave rave mid-price silver disc spinner, it gives nothing away in performance terms to any rival and provides a powerful, detailed source for them to work with. Match to a smooth, insightful cable such as the vdH or Tellurium Q.



REPRINTED FROM **HIFI Choice**

LOUDSPEAKER: Q Acoustics 2050i £500

We're recommending these *ad nauseum* – sorry if it's boring, but they're great budget boxes! They have a big, powerful sound, and are nicely tuneful, but can seem a little too warm for some tastes – which is why a clean and open cable loom will suit best, such as the van den Hul, Ecosse or Black Rhodium.



AMPLIFIER: Creek Evolution 50A £750

A very open and even-sounding amplifier with bags of detail and a confident overall demeanour, you'll never know you're listening to what's in relative terms a budget integrated. Still, it's not the warmest in tonal terms so again the Tellurium Q will go nicely here.



www.hifichoice.co.uk