

# Tellurium Q Blue Series



There's no need for an introduction to Tellurium Q - today I look at how the new 'Complete' Blue range stacks up in a triple review.

## Blue

The Blue is constructed to look like a ribbon and sits at the base of Tellurium Q's cable range coming in at £17 p/m.

The cable is extremely flexible and easy to twist turn and route in and around the system.

What I admired from the off with the Blue was how it was able to simply convey good strong musical flow right out of the box. Its signature is a little lively but soft(ish) in regards to instrument leading edges, digital music and recording of not the best quality.

**Now at £17 a meter we aren't expecting the earth but what we do get is a large chunk of the moon.**

The Blue likes to show off without showing off, taking that confident walk with head up and shoulders back, sporting a small grin as it walks past other budget cables in its price range and some of a greater cost in my experience as a bit of a cable nerd.

Now at £17 a meter we aren't expecting the earth but what we do get is a large chunk of the moon. A realistic take on what a performance means and tries to convey and a good deal of that emotion that makes things more 'real'.

A sparkly and vibrant top end that doesn't over step the mark, a transparent midrange with a decent bassline to conclude what I consider to be an established class leader and a best buy budget cable.

## The Ultra Blue

The Ultra Blue is also one of the smaller ribbon forms that TQ produce, very different in size to the larger band type cables, but equally as visually appealing with a nice sky blue finish and white heat shrinks.

Ultra Blue is immediately a stronger performer and allows through such a surprising amount of detail it really took me by surprise, how much is this a metre...£31...

There is still that softer edge to it, whereas the Black range of cables has a more neutral and tighter leading edge. It's a clever little devil in the way it presents information.

Take a brighter sounding chip amp and some bookshelves and the Ultra Blues will take that grainy harsh edge off of the edge of a note, yet flow through the note's extension with sparkle and vibrancy, a very difficult trick to pull off, but here it is right here right now doing it in spades.

# Tellurium Q Blue Series

I've heard many cables that can downplay or smooth out a note and be classed as a non-fatiguing and sometimes coloured cable, but the Ultra Blue doesn't do that at all. What it does do is kinda train the music like a dog getting to the roadside waiting to cross - wait, wait, go on then....good boy.

**The Ultra Blues may not have the crystalline slap, kick and punch to a kick drum of some higher priced offerings but they never lack presence in weight or shape of the bass**

The detail retrieval really is remarkable allowing me to hear all the small cues, nuances and rubbed strings on 'Seven Wonders' by Norah Jones, leaving her vocal sultry with that tiny bit of sombre edge that I love so much in her voice but which many find boring... I find it relaxing and the Ultra Blues conveyed all the late night intimacy I love about this track and others from the same album.

The Ultra Blues may not have the crystalline slap, kick and punch to a kick drum of some higher priced offerings but they never lack presence in weight or shape of the bass registers. Listening to a bit of dance music took away a sharpness which can intimidate the listener into turning the volume back a few notches. Instead I was allowed a louder listen with plenty of searing treble, deep bass and the over emphasised soundstage which make dance music sound so good for me. Not as esoteric as it can sound, but giving a definite representation of every frequency without missing any portions of enjoyability due to a lack of bandwidth or potential in conveying convincingly what the recording artist has laid down on the track.



# Tellurium Q Blue Series

They are actually such a good listen in my system that I could actually live with them and I've tried the likes of the Black, Ultra Black and Ultra Silver. Don't get me wrong, without a budget I could happily drop way more money, but if I had to strip down my system then the Ultra Blues would be a consideration for about two seconds and they would be in the mix.

The Ultra Blue just seem to do something special without even trying, I could definitely declare them as one of the very best budget cables I've ever heard. There's no, I can do this but can't do that, they just convey a coherence that doesn't allow the listener to criticise, especially at their meagre price point!

I've now had the Ultra Blues in my system for two weeks solid without even batting an eyelid. Normally if I have someone coming around and what with always chopping and changing kit in and out for review purposes, unless necessary for an opinion I tend to put my system back together as I am and have been making gradual changes and tweaks to it, but I can honestly say the Ultra Blues have been stared at, thought about and walked away from thinking, 'I'll leave 'em in I think'.

They don't warrant a second thought and that's a testament to Tellurium Q, I've always been very fond of their cables, but for me the Ultra Blue stands out because it doesn't make a scene, it just creates one.

## Blue Diamond

Well my enthusiastic self is a little worried now - I've given the previous cable so much praise I don't want to feel in anyway disappointed with the new Blue Diamond which tops the Blue range. I just hope it's not like the day when your son reaches 16 and says "No Dad, I'm bigger than you and if you want to go outside then we can sort this out like men".

The Blue Diamond are not of the smaller ribbon type of cable. I always look at the these, the Ultra Blacks, Ultra Silver and Black Diamond as a 'band' rather than a 'ribbon' due to their overall size, thickness and rigidity.

Routing these bad boys is somewhat trickier. Yes they will route, but you just need to take your time be a little more careful and all will go according to plan in next to no time.

So can the big daddy hold its own against its offspring? Uh, yes! I was hoping that I didn't have to



# Tellurium Q Blue Series

call Tellurium Q daft as I didn't fancy going outside as its cold now in November.

The Blue Diamonds are a good step up again from the Ultra Blues and coming in at £170 p/m I should think so.

Listening to London Grammer's Hey Now produced the deep dropped progressive bass notes in the first paragraph of play that roll across the room and gently resonate the sofa and which puts an instant smile on the face and leaves a bit of intrigue in the mind as to what these cables may be capable of, whilst listening to this slow and somewhat bland track that has good intimate characteristics, yet doesn't have the zip and excitement that you want to hear from first hearing something new in the system, before the brain relaxes and the music does too as the day progresses on.

A total change of direction and as I was scrolling through my album library I thought as I went towards Nils Lofgren I hadn't heard the Natasha Bedingfield album for years. Quite poppy but there are huge sections of tracks which offer an interpretation of strong 3D imaging if the systems components are up to the job.

People talk about sound memory only lasting for a matter of seconds and I had this conversation with our latest addition to the Hifi Pig team Dominic on the phone earlier. I personally remember very vividly attributes and aspects of equipment and music, he agrees and he does have ears I trust, so visiting this album was like shaking the hand of an old acquaintance whom I hadn't seen for some time.

Natasha's excited vocal had all of her passion and high pitched narrative to the tracks story. The Blue Diamonds seemed to register themselves as a controller of all that is wild without losing the faithfulness of the music and the aforementioned three dimensional, studio generated effects were completely as I remembered them in guises of better days when I've heard the album with some truly competent kit.

Not forgetting about Nils Lofgren I later moved onto his Acoustic Live album (for me his best work) I navigated to 'Keith Don't Go' in order to hear some exposed areas of the Blue Diamonds such as top end control, instrument timbre and vocal body.

**Soundstage is an area where all TQ cables are exceptionally well versed and the Blue Diamond is exceptional in this category also.**

This track is always played loud when I'm testing or reviewing an item as the guitar solo three quarters of the way through the track gets extremely lively and if not careful ear piecing and fatiguing very quickly.

The Blue Diamonds refinement addressed vocal clarity projection and body impressively. Decay of strings and timbre of the acoustic guitar led into spatial awareness including crowd interaction and theatre perspectives. Yet what I found really intriguing was how the clever top end functioned.

Remember the dog crossing the road? Well this was a little more sophisticated than that. The dog had migrated and matured from a walk around the block and gone to Crufts with a fluffy perm and a rosette! In English what I'm getting at is the Blue Diamonds reflect a note in a manner that allows it to shine, still have that clarity and controlled subtlety to its leading edge, but also allowed for that note to breath and that breath of a note was the key aspect that made this cable a substantial outlay compared to the other blue cables. The son may have grown into his boots but the father had time and experience on his hands and new how to address and deal with a situation.

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# Tellurium Q Blue Series

tional in this category also. I've found that with Tellurium Q cables it's not about how big their soundstage is as they can all spread their wings, it's about how clean and strong the boundaries of that soundstage can stay, maintaining the strength of the centre stage out to its borders and the Blue Diamond and it's clever upper end attenuation and presence produces width height and perceived depth extremely well indeed displaying attributes of its internal construction which has obviously been filtered down from the even more expensive and complex designs further up TQ's range

## Conclusion

All three cables are in their own right and price range terrific achievers and more than that stand-out music making aids, and each deserve respect, not just as the link between amp and speakers, but as a key integral part of the whole and never any less.

From Blue to Ultra Blue and Ultra Blue to Blue Diamond, there is an aura of consistency even if the price jumps considerably. But then so does the performance.

There's no denying that the Blue Diamond is an absolutely stellar performer, but the level of performance to price ratio that the Blue and especially the Ultra Blue exhibits is something of a statement.

I appreciated the Blue range as a whole has a certain sound preference of control and careful explanation of leading edges and top end attributes that puts it in

its own class of cable from TQ. I simply suggest not to jump in straight away on the more well known Black range and see your local dealer about trying the Blue against the Black and even the Silver, as each range has a particular characteristic which you may realise that you don't need until it sits in your system and explains the music to you in your own living space.

## Dan Worth

### Blue

**Build Quality - 8/10**

**Sound Quality - 8.5/10**

**Value For Money - 8.5/10**

**Overall - 8.33**

### Ultra Blue

**Build Quality - 8/10**

**Sound Quality - 8.7/10**

**Value For Money - 9/10**

**Overall - 8.56**

### Blue Diamond

**Build Quality - 8/10**

**Sound Quality - 8.9/10**

**Value For Money - 8.7 (sound quality is respective of price and vice versa)**

**Overall - 8.53**

**As is customary with Hifi Pig, whenever a product scores 8.5 or more then a second review is**



# Tellurium Q Blue Series

**called for, so after Danny's scoring ratings, I have been asked to conduct the follow up reviews.**

It's very nice (although rather rare) for a reviewer to be asked to review a component or cable that the reviewer themselves has actually owned at some point in time. Being the curious and fickle lot that we are, we do like to dabble amongst the available equipment on the market, hoping to perhaps make that rough diamond find that nobody else has yet latched onto. It isn't curable, trust me!

So it was with me and the TQ Blue speaker cable, back when TQ as a company was in it's infancy so to speak and a blind purchase if ever there was one, as to the best of my knowledge there were no published reviews to analyse for making an informed choice. I enjoyed it immensely back then and it was a pleasure to revisit it again wearing the reviewer's hat this time.

## **Blue**

Built as a flat rectangular 'shotgun' layout, it is an unobtrusive cable that isn't difficult to route and minimize it's profile. It can be purchased in off the reel lengths to terminate yourself, or better still TQ will do in my opinion a very neat and professional job with compact 4mm "Z" banana plugs or spade connectors soldered on and heatshrunk to make a solid and lasting connection.

As with all the TQ cable products, there is absolutely no technical specifications supplied regarding construction and materials. You may think differently of course, but personally speaking I would not care if the major constituent in the construction was cold porridge as long as the cash pounds I paid bought the sound level I have paid for.

## **Blue Sound**

Talking of which then, here is my perception of this cable's sonic performance.

Given that it can be bought for around £17.00 a metre unterminated, we are not talking bank-busting expenditures now. It has a bouncy sound but not to the point where the listener is fatigued by it. Treble is well defined and clean with no nasties, easily picking up details and nuances in the music, presenting them clearly and concisely. Cymbals have a crisp metallic 'ting' to them without unwanted shimmer and without any sting to it, so no concerns at all there either. Bass is firm and solid, full of articulation,

**Treble is well defined and clean with no nasties, easily picking up details and nuances in the music, presenting them clearly and concisely.**

while not the quickest on transients, it's no sluggard either. All in all, a great performing honest cable which belies it's modest price. Rather short description I agree, but see that as a good sign from me folks!

## **Ultra Blue**

Virtually identical in size and physical layout to the Blue cable, the Ultra Blue has a different (lighter) shade of blue for the outer covering and bright white heatshrink over the terminations. Price has risen to £31 per meter for the Ultra Blue and the burning question then is can a person justify the additional cost of the Ultra Blue or the standard Blue? Read on and judge for yourself.

## **Ultra Blue Sound**

A step up in price and performance from the Blue and the differences are rather more than just subtle. From the first note onwards you can tell instantly it

# Tellurium Q Blue Series

is a Blue by ancestry, but fed on a course of steroids, rippling with energy. The same fundamental tones with an equally balanced treble and bass palate as hitherto found with the Blue, just a 'bigger brother' version with maturity, expansion and power that says "Don't mess with me". I found it excitement all the way and not in a brutish way, hell bent on savaging the senses with its presentation, more like a larger or magnified version of the Blue's sound, similar in fact to selecting a larger font size on your computer screen to make reading text just that little bit easier on the eyes. When required to, the Ultra Blue was as light in touch as a feather and female vocals exemplified that with a sweetness that allowed what we all love in female vocals to convey richness, silkiness and depth, yet snap into instant dynamics as only the ladies know how to. The cable could also demonstrate the velvet touch as well, with music that was recorded at very low levels or with a close intimate feel, played back with delicacy, softness and beguiling finesse that left you utterly spellbound.

## Blue Diamond

The construction of this cable moves away from the flat rectangle shotgun style seen in the Blue and Ultra Blue into a widely spaced parallel configuration, not unlike the Ultra Black and Graphite models in the TQ range. This is in fact a revamped Green model and given its new "Blue Diamond" epithet to place it precisely in the product lineup. It is a stiffish cable and less easy to make inconspicuous because it has a propensity to do what it wants to do, not what you want it do. Still, the serious audiophiles among us bothers not about such irrelevances do they?

## Blue Diamond Sound

Surprisingly, the Blue Diamond manages to create a smooth silky understated sound that isn't at all lacking in detail and refinement. Don't arrive at the conclusion though that it is laid back or sluggish, far from it, it does transients and dynamics, but not in a spotlight manner that waves a flag or draws attention to itself, rather going about its business efficiently and diligently as a great cable should do. This cable also does imaging and soundstaging you can almost walk into and around the musicians and vocalists, the effect is so palpable and real. The word "holographic" does tend to get over used these days but describes the effect perfectly and I searched for ages for a bet-

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ter word to use and failed, so you are stuck with it I'm afraid. Nevertheless whatever word we do use, it adds another layer of listening pleasure to be derived from this cable and a live recording really does come alive and a smoke filled room with the clinking of glasses comes flooding back to the memory as you listen to some good jazz music. Microdynamics are another forte of the Blue Diamonds and during my listening sessions I noted many instances of subtle tonal textures and nuances that I had heard before in the recordings with other cables of a similar performance level, but not with the same degree of absolute accuracy, so a gently struck triangle for example would ring with better clarity and detail and for a much longer duration as well, then fading away to silence in a delicious way. With that also comes treble content that is completely under control. Think about it, that is a bold statement to make about a cable's treble performance.

I am a lover of fast transients and not ashamed to admit it. A snare drum MUST have a sharp "crack" to the sound so you are under no illusion whatsoever it was struck with anything other than a wooden stick for only the briefest of moments, with a razor sharp defined start and stop on the proverbial sixpence. When evaluating the Blue Diamonds I played a direct cut recording on Sheffield Labs by James New-

# Tellurium Q Blue Series

ton Howard 'And Friends' which isn't that enervating or involving in a strictly musical sense, but can certainly put a system through its paces and unerringly finds the weak spots in a hi-fi system like a Cruise Missile. The track from the album called "L'Daddy" starts with a three beat countdown with the drumsticks and then some intense strikes of the snare drum that simply EXPLODES at you to catch you unawares, because the previous track called "She" has a quieter more relaxed pace and flow. The point is that the Blue Diamonds relished those fast transients and delivered them with realism and sure-footedness, with that anticipated sharp "crack" delivered rather impressively, equally so with deep articulate bass laden with well defined and executed timbres and textures found on this album recorded impeccably as a bonus.

## Conclusion - Blue

The Blue speaker cable is a good example that good sound on a budget is within easy reach. It is not a finicky highly strung cable, but a good all-rounder with no vices to speak of – at least I couldn't detect any and I humbly suggest that I am rather accomplished at that task. It has a bouncy sound that pleases with its vitality and I would suggest it will find many admirers of its performance.

## Conclusion - Ultra Blue

Effectively, this outshines the Blue in what the Blue does best, so it really has a strong kinship with its sibling and no mistaking it is the better cable of the two by a good margin. More detail, more definition, more bass and a cleaner midrange not only sets it above the Blue, it sets it well above a great number of other cables in the market at this price point too. In terms of price and performance, the latter is greater in value to you the listener than the former. In other words it offers huge bang for the buck, so rightly deserves the high praise I give it.

## Conclusion - Blue Diamond

The lineage is less clear here between the other two cables in this review, but I believe it is allied more closely to the Blue range than any other and fits here logically. The construction is completely different to the other two cables under review and hence that will be reflected in its cost, so that factor negates the progression in price we have seen with the Blue and the Ultra Blue. While there is no denying the cable is capable of top-notch performance, we the reviewers

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must also balance out all the factors like price versus performance and that of course affects the "Value For Money" rating. Having said that, if price tags don't faze or give you the shivers, then who am I to argue?

## Dominic Marsh

### TQ Blue

**Build Quality – 8/10**  
**Sound Quality - 8.8/10**  
**Value For Money - 8.8/10**  
**Overall - 8.53**

### TQ Ultra Blue

**Build Quality – 8/10**  
**Sound Quality – 9.1/10**  
**Value For Money - 9/10**  
**Overall - 8.7**

### TQ Blue Diamond

**Build Quality - 8/10**  
**Sound Quality - 8.9/10**  
**Value For Money - 8.6/10**  
**Overall - 8.5**