

Colleen Cardas

meet your maker

by Alan Sircom



WE SPOKE TO COLLEEN CARDAS, President of Cardas Audio about the genesis of the Clear cable line, and how it calls on more than 20 years of development by Colleen's father and chief designer, George Cardas.

AS: How did Cardas Audio start?

CC: My father started Cardas Audio in the late 1980s. He's always been involved with a lot of live music, and he recognised that they were unable to recreate the live experience, when they brought it into living rooms. He identified that one of the things that was lacking in that area related specifically to cable.

AS: Why is the Golden Ratio so important to Cardas?

CC: When people think of Cardas Audio, they think of the Golden Ratio. The Golden Ratio is found everywhere. It's in nature. It's not like we created the Golden Ratio, but we identified it as something we could use in cable design that made cables sound better.

It's a big part of our lives, in terms of what Cardas is. That stranding and the sizing of the strands has been used in everything from the first cable Cardas released up to and including the Clear. We may make improvements in the dielectric, and the terminations used along the way, but we would never stray from that being what's most important.

AS: You make almost everything. What does that involve?

CC: It requires more 'hands on' treatment, so the copper being mined in the US and drawn to our specifications – that

includes going through diamond dies and being coated – all of that process is not only time consuming, but requires a lot of involvement with suppliers. But each component can be made to our specifications in terms of purity and manufacture. So it actually makes for a longer, more difficult process, but it makes for a purer end product.

AS: Does Clear continue to build on the successes of the past?

CC: Clear is the evolution of all that is Cardas. There have been four 'families' of Cardas products; the initial range, then there's the family called Hexlink Gold, followed by the Cross series (with its air-cored dielectrics and crossfield conductors). After that, we created the Reference series of products. And now Clear. Each one is a derivative of the improvements made in the previous cable.

AS: How long did Clear take to design?

CC: The product took the longest of all for George to develop. It was a bit frustrating because he had to develop things like the process of terminating the speaker cable. It's not 'oh let's smash a connector on the end of it', we had to make custom dies and machine custom spades. There was no buying anything off the shelf; we even made each machine to make the connectors. And, then there's the stripping the cable itself, because there's no solder involved in the speaker cable connection, it uses an elaborate crimping system, but we still have to deal with the litz coating.

We announced the speaker cable in January 2008, and it took us another year to get the process just right. By which time we had two speaker cables, an interconnect and a revolutionary new XLR to go with the phono interconnect line.

AS: Where do you go from here?

CC: The Neutral Reference cable separated out into a three product line, with loudspeaker cables, interconnects and power cords in each one. The technology from Neutral Reference went into a greater product line and I assume that's going to happen with the Clear as well. As opposed to Neutral Reference, though, we are going to work from Clear down, and probably have less expensive variants of the Clear. +