

DMconnect NASA N1 CAT8 ETHERNET CABLE

DMconnect as a brand is the brainchild of the award-winning NuPrime Audio (specifically, the Amercian team's cable department), including the highly regarded Demian Martin.

NuPrime was founded by Jason Lim, who has a very impressive resume in technology as an engineer and designer, among numerous other skills. Notably, as a very recent convert to Class D amplifiers, I was already very intrigued by his involvement with DMconnect, owing to his reputation "...as a leading innovator in Class D amplifier design."

Martin is considered something of a technology guru. Perhaps, even more so, he has a true knack, as a consumer electronics consultant, for designing and marketing products that add great value to not only the customers with whom he collaborates, but also the end user.

I note that NuPrime, "...has consistently received top accolades from audio publications around the world." DMconnect carries on that reputation with the DM series, "Innovative Cable Solutions for Enhanced High-Definition Music Streaming". Read on to find that this review is no exception.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES OF THE DMconnect NASA N1 CAT8 CA- BLE

The Nasa N1 CAT8 Ethernet cable takes my experience with network products to a whole new level. It's far and away beyond anything I've tried out to date.

Admittedly, I've used cables from the most basic, cheap, bundled cat5 type, to better quality products from the likes of Audioquest (which I regard highly) and have had a couple of other pretty good ones on loan. I didn't perform any kind of A/B approach with any other ethernet cable for this review but the best way I can express the fundamental improvement from previous ones I've had in my system is the

DMconnect NASA N1 CAT8 ethernet cable is an aftermarket "audiophile" ethernet cable costing around £500. Musician and HiFi PiG reviewer Michael Fairbairn plays some of his own bands' creations to assess what this cable does – if anything.

Reviewed by
Michael Fairbairn





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amazing realisation of a light being switched on in a pitch-black room. Yes, it is that good.

From the moment I opened the delivery packaging to find inside what looked like a very nice, white gift box, with an embossed gold logo, I was drawn into the 'glamour' and 'exquisite' world of the company. You could say it was love at first sight, and that was even before I revealed the further layers of intrigue and excitement within.

Branded tissue paper wrapping, a cloth drawstring bag and then the bling-like (but classy, not at all tacky) cable itself. I say that largely due to the 18K gold-plated connectors and the gold badge of authenticity. The former is said to, "...effectively prevent oxidation, ensuring long-lasting and reliable connections." The latter is just a nice-to-have, attention to detail. Sometimes, it is just the little things that can make a difference and certainly with first impressions. On that point, there is even a delightful little book that details the company, its ethos, and the full range of DM series products. There is even a card showing the model and serial number of the specific cable.

Hang on. Let's pause here for a moment. This *is* just a cable I'm talking about here, right? This isn't a beautiful pair of new shoes, a hatter or milliner-made piece of headgear, or an ornate ornament. No, it isn't. Why should the cable be reduced to being considered anything less than one of those items though? Is it beneath them? No. Is it something one would place on a shelf to gaze at and enjoy, or to feel proud to be seen with, showing off to friends and family? Well, that's subjective, I suppose. Don't be daft, Michael! You wouldn't go wandering about the streets with this cable around your neck like some status symbol? You wouldn't, would you? Ok, of course not... (well, maybe just one time?)

I would, however, wax lyrical and show it off to like-minded enthusiasts, or even those with just a passing interest. The latter may consider me to have lost my marbles a little. That wouldn't worry me in the slightest because I've got this ultra sexy cable in my possession. Ok, ahem, now you've taken that a little too far...!

Let's get sensible and on to the more serious but



still fun specs, design, and manufacturing process of the Nasa N1 Cat8 Ethernet Cable.

“DM has specifically redesigned a series of cable products tailored to the characteristics of high-definition streaming music, aiming to optimize sound quality and reduce noise interference.” To achieve this goal, they have combined stainless raw copper and rubber in the same cable. Apparently, this is a first in the industry.

That design philosophy has resulted in a very durable cable. It just looks and feels like high quality. There is enough give and flexibility in the cable itself without it being too limp or rigid. The aforementioned gold-plated connectors are very pleasing to the eye. Eye candy, you might even say. There is even an embossed DM logo on these. Again, little elements with attention to detail are nice to see. The outer cable material is an Antifriction Nylon Net Mesh Fabric. I like the orange; it is a nice change to black or grey. Also, it is very tactile and feels good to touch.

“The cable supports CAT 8 standards, with high-speed transmission, providing bandwidth support up to 2000MHz and capable of providing up to 40Gbps transmission speed,” which is exactly what you would want and expect when transferring data. You want it fast, reliable and delivered with stability/no jitter or interruptions.

In addition to ensuring no loss of signal, the use of oxygen-free copper conductors with very high levels of purity also means you have little to no interference. The copper is “drawn through precision dies to the precise dimensions.” Each conductor goes through a separate and complex process of spooling, then being recombined to “cover them with the low dielectric low loss jacketing material.”

Further wrapping takes place with the inner shielding of an aluminium-magnesium. Of course, DMconnect has also made sure that standards of CAT8 network transmission have been adhered to, so there is no issue in terms of performance or compatibility with a variety of devices you may incorporate in your network. In other words, no stone was left unturned in the meticulous end-to-end process. That’s an admirable approach and one that speaks volumes to me (pun intended) about the great care and pride in their work applied by the company.

A recent gig I went to had a real anticipation about it. Some gigs are just another gig, but this one felt like it was going to be a real event, something truly special. That’s how I feel about the Nasa N1. It’s no run-of-the-mill product – if appearances are to be believed.

The event in question was the first night of the UK tour to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Blackout in the Red Room by Love/Hate. The songs from the record were played in their entirety, and the show was a sellout. The debut album by the L.A. band has still got a hardcore following, mostly in the UK, and it’s one I have thoroughly enjoyed over the years.

I also had the good fortune to be part of lead singer, Jizzy Pearl’s band for the 25th anniversary back in November 2015 (The original band members are no longer involved, while he continues to carry the torch). For me, that was quite the experience. To say I listened to that album more than 100 times, even during the process of learning the complex and intricate guitar parts, would be a massive understatement. Suffice it to say, I know the record and songs like the back of my hand.

Why Do You Think They Call It Dope is considered a classic, alongside the title track itself. The band was touted, perhaps unfairly, at the time as, ‘The next Guns N’ Roses’. In reality, their style was more akin to a crossover of Jane’s Addiction and Red Hot Chili Peppers in their prime. Throw in a hefty dose of hard rock and you get the picture. The distinctive slap bass from Skid Rose sounds absolutely spot-on here. Every pluck and slap so defined, full and impactful.

In the middle eight section I knew there was a cello/string part, but I had never heard it so clearly and audible as with the Nasa cable in place. To experience such a familiar piece of music in a different way for the first time after 35 years is really quite astounding. Top marks to DMconnect for that.

Overall, I have never heard these songs sound so vibrant, fresh and full of life. I am actually blown away by the results. The sound is full but never bloated. I hear a smooth tone across the track, and I mean that as a very positive. It’s a true cohesiveness. There is no harshness, but it’s not a neutered quality. More so, it’s just very well-balanced. Guitars have

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got attack with just the right amount of bite, as do the raspy vocals of Mr. Pearl. What a joy to hear!

The world just lost not one, but two seminal punk/rock n' roll/glam figures. First it was David Johansen, best known as the lead singer/frontman of proto-punks New York Dolls. If that wasn't sad enough, Brian James, founder and guitarist of The Damned has now departed. They both made music I absolutely love.

Having covered the former in my recent review of the FiiO SR11 Streamer (published soon) it is the turn of the latter to get a notable mention. As much as I am very fond of The Damned, it's The Lords of the New Church that I have listened to more over the years. James' guitar style on their albums was so tasteful and exciting. Combined with the snotty/sneer of Stiv Bators on vocals, it was a winning combination. Russian Roulette is so exciting to hear. The arpeggiated and melodic guitar parts are delightfully open, shimmering and almost floating in the air. I've heard these recordings sound a bit lacking on lesser systems, both via streaming and on CD, but that is not the case here in the slightest. Dave Tregunna's rumbling/rattling bass lines are very well supported and more prominent than I've ever heard them. His parts and style are critical to these songs and I've often felt they were poorly represented, not coming across clearly, and with something just not there. Finally, in this setup, along with the Nasa N1, you get to hear that Fender Precision in all its glory. What a relief!

My reference system now comprises of a pair of Merrill Audio Thor Monoblocks and a valve-driven Lab12 Pre1. My speakers are a wonderful pair of Blumenhofer Fun13 Mk2 floorstanders. Also, still in my system (and very likely to stay) is the aforementioned FiiO streamer and its accompanying K11 DAC. The key, missing component for my HiFi has been a quality cable for streaming audio. I use Qobuz via Roon for High-Res audio, but it was being done a disservice without that essential digital source connection. As mentioned above, incorporating the DMconnect Cat8 cable has brought all of these together perfectly. A true missing link, if ever there was one!

Many moons ago, I was a member of the band Telecom in New York. We promised so much but life had different plans for us and we disbanded. Fast forward to a few years ago, we regrouped to record some songs. The ones that got away, shall we say.

One of these, Selfless should be seeing the light of day before too long.

The production is still in the works, and I have listened to countless mixes and masters of the track along the way. What I have found with the latest version is that it has some brittle quality to the upper mids, largely from the guitars, and the lower frequencies could benefit from some further definition – losing a bit of the mud. I was pleasantly surprised to hear that the majority of these 'issues' are all but gone when streaming with the Nasa N1 in the mix. It's almost as if the cable itself is some kind of audio engineer analysing what's needed for the final version. Well, almost. I like the analogy anyway.

This is the best I've heard the track sound, and believe me when I say I've listened to this more times now than I care to remember. Transients and dynamics come across impeccably, while the general atmosphere and ambience has never felt so tangible, and the spine-tingling vocals of my good friend, Constantine Georgiadis, take on an even more ethereal, other-worldly quality. Watch this space for the finished result, sometime soon, in a galaxy not too far away.

QUIBBLES

Not one! I cannot fault this product in the slightest.

CONCLUSION

Simply put, there is no way I can unhear what I have experienced with the addition of the Nasa N1 in my reference system. I can never go back again and absolutely must have this as a key component, ongoing. It has been that much of an improvement for my listening experience that I cannot say enough positive things about it.

AT A GLANCE

Build Quality And Features:

Second to none. DMconnect have pulled out all the stops to produce a superior quality cable





Materials are of the best standard, and the finished article has been assembled with the utmost of care and meticulous attention to detail

Careful consideration has been employed in the selection and implementation of the core elements within each layer

Sound Quality:

Sublime, is one way I would put it. Effortless is another. No interference or noise either. Recordings I have listened to countless times have never sounded better to me. There is a true cohesion to the full range of frequencies, instrumentation, dynamics and transients

Value For Money:

You get what you pay for, as that old saying/cliche goes. At £500 it's not inexpensive. It's also not cheap, in the true, quality-specific sense of that word. I was on the fence about cables before, but, for me at least, it's now a no-brainer to allow your beloved system to shine and be the best it can be with a superb product such as this

We Loved:

Becoming a true convert to the belief that cables do make a difference in your system

Hearing my favourite music sounding better than I ever thought it could

Everything about the exquisite packaging

The tactile feel of the outer nylon mesh fabric

The bling-tastic (but not at all tacky), very high quality 18k gold-plated connectors

We Didn't Love So Much:

Nothing. It was love at first sight and sound.

Elevator Pitch Review: I have to admit, I have been one of those sceptics (not a full-on doubter, mind you) when it comes to cables and such like. How can one product be better than another? Surely, it's just all wire at the end of the day. Snake oil, some may say. Well, I am a complete convert now having witnessed the huge leap in digital audio quality once this cable was in place.

DMconnect say, "Our cables exemplify meticulous craftsmanship and design, reflecting unparalleled quality and sophistication." That, indeed they do. Another company strapline is, "Elevate your auditory experience with dmconnect," Oh. Believe you me, I have done just that. I will be buying this cable, no question. This DMconnect product is without a doubt what is referred to as, 'a keeper'. I simply cannot go back to anything less now having heard such amazing results.

Price: 1.1M, GBP £498, Priced at €599.