

Cable Family HMS Gran Finale 50

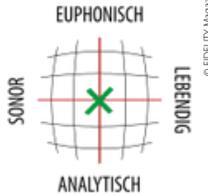
THE LAST METER

By Boris Fust. Photography: Manufacturer

To mark its 50th anniversary, HMS presents a new edition of the Gran Finale series and returns to the big stage in a thoroughly revised form. I had the opportunity to test the cable family in my listening room.



Around three decades after its introduction, the **Gran Finale series** has been fundamentally revised with new materials and modern shielding.



HERAUSFORDERND =  A component is 100% intuitive when you can immediately unlock its full potential.
INTUITIV = 



The power cable comes with Furutech connectors and the characteristic “barrel.”

— It may sound strange, but it’s true: you need a bit of patience. Anyone who has ever tried to explain to an interested audience that high-quality music reproduction depends not only — but indeed also — on the quality of the power cable knows how much time it takes to address objections. The idea that, in certain setups, it may be necessary to invest a four-figure sum in something like a network cable will likely be difficult for many people to understand. Time and patience are also required to fully experience the benefits of such high-end cabling. While loudspeakers may only need a few hours of break-in overnight, this is far from sufficient for the HMS Gran Finale 50: a break-in period of 100 hours — preferably 150 — is recommended. And the anticipation is high: the Gran Finale 50 is essentially a revival of the Gran Finale series from the 1990s, which was last updated with the Jubilee Edition over 20 years ago. But the world has changed in many ways since then. Household power supply has become more complex, and the electricity delivered from the socket today is different due to increasingly decentralized energy generation.

And the hi-fi world? It has become significantly digitalized — even the most refined systems now sometimes include switching power supplies and even Bluetooth connections. This creates new demands for cables, particularly in terms of shielding. Of course, this was not always the case — neither in 1975, when founder Hans M. Strassner began working with measurement amplifiers and testing technology, nor in the 1990s, when HMS entered the audiophile market. And since last year, everything at HMS has changed: the Leverkusen-based company is now part of International Audio Holding, with manufacturing and distribution based in Elst, the Netherlands. This was not simply about expanding a product or brand portfolio, as is often the case with competitors: “Hans Strassner is not only an engineer and developer, but also a physicist. And Edwin Rynveld, the mastermind behind IAH, is a specialist in metallurgy. Both are visionaries in their fields, and with their combined expertise, we wanted to create something truly exceptional.” In contrast to the former workshop-style operation



The Gran Finale 50 cable series covers all requirements, even for larger setups — including network cables.

Highly specialized simulation software is now available for development, along with a partially in-house developed machinery park for production.

Not just individual representatives were used for the test, but almost the entire cable series — eight padded cases with handwritten serial numbers. First impression: naturally impressive — heavy, thick, and extremely high quality. The cables stand out, not least due to the characteristic HMS wooden housings, the so-called “barrels.” The speaker cables run through the living room like pipelines, and connecting them becomes a somewhat hands-on process — making you appreciate generous equipment layouts. The HMS cables require some space and demand a fairly large bending radius. The Furutech connectors on the power cables are also quite substantial. When fully equipped across the entire signal chain — from power cables to Ethernet, phono cables, interconnects, and speaker cables — the result is nothing short of a monumental installation. Immediately noticeable are typical HMS features such as the aforementioned “barrels,” which — depending on the cable type — include switchable 1-kilohm impedance matching or a Zobel network. However,

their internal construction has been simplified — as partially monocrystalline copper is now used, reducing the need for filtering. New materials have also been introduced, similar to those used by the affiliated IAH brand Siltech. These include PTFE and olefin thermoplastics used for insulation.

When it comes to shielding, HMS now relies on carbon: interconnects, phono, network, and USB cables use carbon foils, while digital cables feature dual-braided SPC shielding. Carbon replaces the previously used ferrite cores, which do provide damping but can also act like a Faraday cage and potentially restrict the sound. Carbon is intended to effectively eliminate EMI and RFI interference, better dissipate static charges, and at the same time enable a more open and transparent sound.

Two types of copper are used as conductors. The interconnects (RCA/XLR), phono cables, and speaker cables use monocrystalline copper conductors: three single-core wires for RCA and XLR, four for the phono cable, and eight per conductor for the speaker cable. Power, digital, network, and USB cables, on the other hand, are made of oxygen-free copper: 26 individual strands in the power cable, and six braided conductors in each ►



The cable series clearly forms a coherent family. At the same time, the cables feature different internal constructions, ranging from carbon shielding to monocrystalline copper.

Digital cables use twisted conductors, as do network and USB versions with two sets of four twisted wires. Their insulation ranges from polyolefin and TPU to Teflon, foamed PTFE, and polyolefins, up to highly compressed polymers – depending on the signal type. The speaker cables, however, operate without any shielding at all – the combination of monocrystalline copper, insulation, and twisting already provides sufficient resistance to magnetic interference while ensuring an unrestrained sound performance.

So what do the Gran Finale 50 actually do? Clearly, they conduct power and signals. How this translates sonically depends heavily on the system. Naturally, cables are infrastructure, not sources or transducers. As expected, speaker cables, interconnects, and power cables made the most noticeable difference: they provide a black background against which the sound unfolds with clarity – whether in bass reproduction, midrange resolution, treble clarity, or microdynamics.

Anyone interested in the key noises of a saxophone and how just nine musicians can emulate a massive swing orchestra sound can turn to “Junior’s Tune” by Cannonball Adderley: with the Gran Finale 50, you don’t just hear the breath attack, but also the airflow beneath the tone. Even more complex questions in rock music can be explored.

What on earth is Billy Wyman playing on Emotional Rescue with those peculiar glissandi? Cables, after all, are taste-neutral and independent of musical style – and the Gran Finale reveal everything: from the explosive force of Karajan to the finer lines of Furtwängler, as well as the smartphone-oriented (and truly enjoyable only there) mix of Zahide’s new track “Rede.”

Of course, such a level of transparency comes at a price – copper is not getting any cheaper, and one may want to build a system where cable costs form part of the overall investment. With the Gran Finale 50, it’s all about achieving that final meter of excellence.

Kabelfamilie | HMS Gran Finale 50 | Konzept: Kabelserie mit sauerstofffreiem bzw. monokristallinem Kupfer | **Garantiezeit:** 2 Jahre (verlängerbar auf 5 Jahre) | **Preise:** 1 Paar RCA (1 m) um 2400 €, 1 Paar XLR (1 m) um 2400 €, 1 Paar LS (3 m, Bananenstecker) um 5820 €, Stromkabel (1,5 m) um 1800 €, Digitalkabel (XLR, BNC oder RCA, je 1 m) um 1500 €, Netzwerkkabel (1 m) um 1680 €

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Cable family | HMS Gran Finale 50 | Concept: cable series using oxygen-free and monocrystalline copper | **Warranty:** 2 years (extendable to 5 years) | **Prices:** 1 pair RCA (1 m) approx. €2400, 1 pair XLR (1 m) approx. €2400, 1 pair speaker cables (3 m, banana connectors) approx. €5820, power cable (1.5 m) approx. €1800, digital cable (XLR, BNC or RCA, 1 m each) approx. €1500, network cable (1 m) approx. €1680

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