

*A powercharged racing car*

### Furutech Daytona 303E AC power filter

*Have you ever seen a power filter with an XLR output on its rear panel? What is it for? And why is there only a single one? Do I need two Daytonas to be fully ‘balanced’? To learn more, please join me in this review of the brand new power filtering device from Furutech.*



“Many [audio & video] enthusiasts go to great lengths to carefully set up major system components, but pay little attention to the source, the AC power” ; this is what I read in the press release that accompanied Furutech’s new launch for 2009, the Daytona 303E. They are completely right. Maybe audiophiles should get organized in a sort of trade union to lobby electricity suppliers for cleaner power supply for our beloved equipment. Maybe we should try to convince people to stop using cell phones, computers, air conditioning, fluorescent lightning, wireless internet and home appliances and retreat back into caves, each with just a single *absolutely clean* power socket that will be solely used for our audio only. Maybe there is no escape - fires in our caves will be burning, cracking and smoking (noise again!) and the cave-dwelling yields other issues with reverberation control, for example. In such a case a good power foundation is the only way out of the current AC supply mess.

Quite recently we have reviewed two units - Nordost Thor and Accuphase PS-510. Each of them, in my opinion, represents a benchmark in its respective category. The philosophy of the [Thor](#) is the purest possible *distribution* of AC energy. This very rationally designed device turned out to be amazing in how it could breathe a new life into a whole home audio set-up (with the help of the built-in QRT module) without subtracting the slightest bit of information coded on CDs (and it does the same with vinyl too). On the contrary, the [PS-510](#) used an active approach towards the AC energy issue with the capability to reconstruct a perfect sinewave to feed our equipment. Along with striking improvements it brings only a few minor concerns. This is not to say these two are the best power conditioning units that money can buy today, not speaking of tomorrow, but still they have managed to get ahead of most competitors to date.

The Furutech Daytona 303E is more in the vein of what comes on my mind when someone mentions a ‘power filter’. It is a passive

device that provides comprehensive protection and filtering for your high-end A/V home installation.

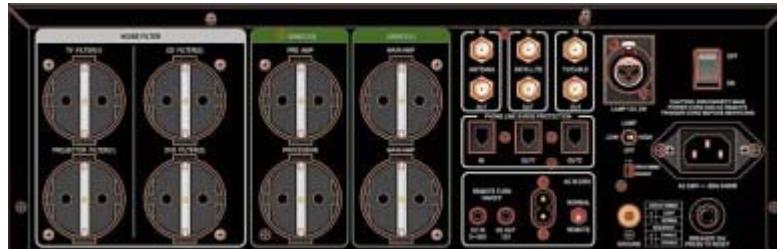
### Full metal jacket

The Daytona inherits its name from a Daytona GT racing car so you can expect a lot of horsepower under its hood. And it is, indeed. The internal circuitry of the unit provides a user with generous surge protection and advanced multi-stage filtering for analog, digital and high current devices for effective noise rejection and zero cross-talk between the connected components. On top of that, its sturdy steel chassis is further reinforced by a layer of EMI absorbing material (a granular substance) that is attached from inside to its bottom plate and which helps to keep the unit impenetrable for any possible external source of interferences.

The inner layout of the Daytona is very neat and logical. It comes as no surprise that its internal wiring employs Furutech's proprietary alpha-cryogenically and demagnetized conductors with anti-resonant treatment to dampen the last possible source of vibrations and that the unit sports ultimate non-magnetic rhodium-plated Schuko receptacles (the famous FI-E30R type with nylon and fibreglass body).

I do not want to speculate to what extent the Daytona shares filtering stages topology with reputable Monster Power devices but I bet there *is* at least some inspiration as the resemblance of both is striking, especially from a rear view.

The unit's outlets are grouped in several zones; there are 4 unfiltered outlets for amplifiers and analog devices, 4 filtered ones for digital and video (DVD, CD, projector, video display) and a variety of coaxial terminals that you may need to protect your cable TV, phone lines or even your satellite. The Daytona is here to protect the connected equipment 24 hours a day and that's why the on-off switch is located on the rear plate - just simply leave the unit on all the time. A customer is free to choose between 120V/60Hz and 230V/50Hz versions so there is nothing to prevent the unit to conquer the world.



Finally, there is the above mentioned XLR output with a small toggle switch saying 'low - high - off'. Furutech supplies a convenient LED lamp with the Daytona that is powered via the XLR - it is a very nice finishing touch indeed. I found the lamp very useful not only when re-shuffling the connections behind a rack but it also came in handy to shed its light on CDs at night. The fact that the Daytona is rack-mountable is another not so usual feature that supports my conspiracy theory about the Monster Power inspiration.

The front panel of the Daytona (comes in silver or black) is an austere yet beautiful looking piece of aluminum that is dominated by a large and informative display. Oversized red digits monitor current voltage and amperage and disconnect the unit when abnormal values appear, other controls inform about the status of the unit.

Overall, it seems that your money would buy you a very solid piece of equipment. Let's move now from an exercise ground to a combat action.

### With or without it

The Daytona 303E was auditioned in a par-excellence system consisting of a pair of Dynaudio Confidence C1 speakers, Plinius Tautoro pre-amp and Plinius SA-Reference power amp and Bryston BCD-1 CD player. The wiring we used was provided by Silver

Audio (Appassionata interconnect and Silver Symphony speaker cable) plus there were an assortment of power cords from Furutech and T+A.

After some experimentation I decided to progress the same way most listeners would: that is I replaced an ordinary power extension strip with the Daytona. As usual, an improvement is better heard in the instance of downgrading, when you have to re-accommodate to an inferior sound character, rather than in the instance of upgrading when changes are less obvious. For the final part of listening tests I did the very same - after auditioning the system powered by the Daytona the filter was replaced again by the standard extension strip to see what I would miss.

To sum it up, I missed a lot. That much that the system virtually got 'unlistenable'. Which is already a pretty strong statement considering the quality of the audio gear that was used.

I started with Slayer and their latest release (Slayer, *World Painted Blood*, American 88697599962). Not a usual material to start an audio review with, however, I took the opportunity of having the release on hand fresh from a shelf. After a decade Araya & Co. came with very decent compositions reminiscing the glory of unbeatable *Reign in Blood* and *South of Heaven* albums. I was looking forward to an improvement in the sound quality for which the band is *not* really reputable; unfortunately, it did not happen. The *World Painted Blood* is recorded the same way as 99% of rock music output today - it is heavily compressed (with hardly 5-6dB of dynamic range) with clipping appearing all the way. The album is closely miked and a right-in-your-face mix technique was used throughout so the whole musical event basically happens in your room and if we should discuss soundstaging then we will have to measure rather in decimeters than in meters.

When I listened to *American* (track #8) through the Daytona, all the above mentioned drawbacks were readily apparent, however, the energy emanating from the furious performance made up for them easily and the listening was pretty enjoyable. Once the Furutech had been removed the soundstage collapsed into a two-dimensional picture - imagine a canvas stretched between your loudspeakers with no depth at all. The sound also obviously suffered from certain boxiness and general fuzziness. Similar effects were heard with all the other stuff I had used throughout the rest of this review.

I do not actually prefer the sound of Chuck Mangione's *Children of Sanchez* the way it is presented on Stereoplay sampler (Die Audiophile Hoertest-CD, GEMA, 2008). Though I admit that this version is sonically impeccable (and it really is), I still think that it is too much polished to be realistically sounding. You will probably not be able to hear such flawless sonics from any stage anywhere in the world, not even in the studio where the recording was made. However, it is a showcase of excellent dynamics, bass punch and texturally wonderful acoustic instruments of a big band so it is ideal for testing purposes.

I am not going to describe what I heard with the Furutech in place - instead I will tell you what I heard when it was removed from the power path. *Without* the Daytona it seemed that the music acquired better punch, as if macrodynamics would increase. Apparently, it was the one and only positive thing I could say about the system without the filter. It showed, that behind this seemingly better punch, the bass became thinner, it lost its rounded quality and plasticity and got blurred a bit. The mix sounded a bit more attractive as to a high frequency content, however, the highs were unnatural and suffered from textural malnutrition - they were excessively sizzling without any definition and became steely (as the opposite of being brassy). The same was projected into the sound of guitar at 3' 20 mark that became too artificial and almost unpleasant. The mids were the area where I desperately missed the Daytona the most; it was like someone had vacuum-cleaned all the information in this bandwidth, the music lost its inner drive and tension and got quite boring, indeed.

Based on my aforementioned observations it became clear very soon that it would make the listening to a classical piece of music

waste of time. However, I gave it a try.

Percy Grainger's *Warriors* can be found as a kind of introduction to Holstian *Planets* on the Deutsche Grammophone's excellent disc (SACD 471 634-2). The score has it all: a vibrant piano, brilliant horns and trumpets, complex orchestrations and tons of ambient clues and stage noise. It is *always* an indulgent listening experience. However, when the Daytona was removed from the system, it was as if someone had erased all the life and colours from the music, it was like moving back in time to a black-and-white TV set. While with the Furutech I received broad orchestrations, without it the score rushed towards its finale as if musicians wanted to be out of the stage as soon as possible. The depth of the symphonic orchestra got shrunk significantly and the soundstage became disorganized. Well, the sound I was listening to would be still an audio heaven for many, so please do not mistake my comments for criticizing the gear I used - I just wanted to describe how I felt without the support of the Daytona and if you got the idea it was misery you were right.

#### A conundrum

Unlike the puristic power blocks (the Nordost) the Furutech Daytona is much more versatile beast that comes to become a foundation of any serious home entertainment set-up. It is a pity that I could not compare the Daytona with the Thor in the very same system. I could make such a comparison from what I remember from sessions with the Thor but it would have no value here - a different place means a different electricity supply and different interferences to fight with.

It is not for free (it lists ca 2,600 euro), however, from a practical point of view, it offers definitely better flexibility than Accuphase's PS-510 at a half of its price. Still, there was no direct comparison possible at the time of this review to cross-check both devices. So I would leave those options open for you and would be happy to hear any reports on that.

<http://www.audiodrom.cz/FurutechDaytonaEN.html>