

Summer 2008



## Capacitor Musings Part 1

Article By [Jon L.](#)

Page 2



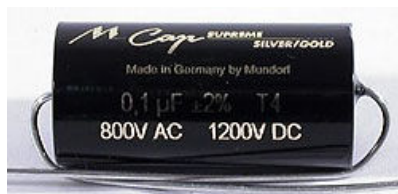
### MorMundorf Silver-In-Oil

I really did not know what to expect from these. Some people's reports mention things like "liquidity" and "smoothness," which led me to believe these would share a rather pleasant but not kick-you-in-the-groin resolution or power. Boy, was I wrong. If push comes to shove, words like liquid and smooth \*are\* applicable, but there is so much more. The calling card of Mundorf SIO seems to be infinite shades of resolution riding on the oh-so-smooth sonic flow. There is enough detail for even detail freaks like me, and those who value life-like dynamic range and punch would love these as well.

Compared to other metalized poly caps, Mundorf SIO seems to be at least 2-3dB louder(!) at the same volume setting with punch that slams harder and truer. This cap makes me very curious about the top-of-the-line Mundorf Gold/silver cap, which I happen to have sitting in front of me :)

### More

I must say these are probably the caps that most keeps me *wanting* to listen to music instead of rolling more caps. Musical enjoyment is obtained without short-changing detail or speed; what more can you ask for? The silver/oil is now 3rd in the Mundorf price scheme, and for many, that's all one needs/wants to spend on a cap.



### Mundorf Silver/Gold Capacitor

Mostly I have been comparing the Mundorf Silver/Gold with VCap Teflons, and this has been a tough one to get a handle on. This may be a good time to concede that above a certain level, various great capacitors are not particularly "better," but rather akin to looking at the same object under subtly different lighting conditions and vantage points. VCap Teflons and Mundorf Silver/Gold share many sound qualities, especially jet-black, noise-free background from which subtlest details seem to naturally emerge. Presentation of both are so natural and non-attention-seeking that both may come across as bland or boring when compared to certain capacitors with stronger personalities.

Long-term living with the caps, however, confirms the greatness of both caps because music remains inviting, refined, and eminently enjoyable, as opposed to fatiguing, wearing thin, and distracting. Since audiophiles tend to obsess over the last 5-10% of differences, I will mention that Silver/Gold has a bit richer presentation from top-to-bottom with a bit creamier textures and a bit closer imaging. As one can imagine from this description, Silver/Gold doesn't *quite* seem to be as Nth-degree clean as VCaps but renders more proportion of recordings more tasty.

I do not believe detail resolution is any less than VCaps, but a tiny bit more harmonic "bloom" over the notes makes music both sexier and less pellucid at the same time. Some people will absolutely love this quality and call Silver/Gold much "better" than VCaps while others will absolutely declare VCaps to be the better cap for the same

reasons. To throw more wrench into the equation, the optimal tube set for one cap is *not* the best set for the other cap and vice versa. Such is life.

I am also unable to directly compare Mundorf Silver/Gold to Mundorf Silver/Oil at this time due to my system configuration, but my preliminary sense is that the two are not all that different sounding, though the small amount of gold compound mixed with silver does seem to add just a wee bit extra harmonic richness and warmth.

### Parting Thoughts

After listening more to the "neutral" camp of caps like Mundorf Zn and Relcap RTX, the calling card of Mundorf silver/gold has to be the come-hither midrange that is colorful without being colored, full of rich textures, and just bristling with life and vividness. I may respect some other caps more, but I love the Mundorf silver/gold like family.



### Mundorf Zn Capacitor

After a long love affair with Mundorf Silver/Oil, circumstances forced my hand to try the Mundorf Zn Tin Foil capacitor. Some well-respected modders recommend the Mundorf Zn as one of the "most neutral" cap out there, regardless of cost, including Allen Wright of VSE (Vacuum State Electronics) fame. Considering the Mundorf Zn costs less than 1/6th of their top-of-range silver/gold & oil, I was hoping this cap would turn out to be the giant-killer that saves our day and pocketbooks.

The good news. This cap has incredible "low-loss" sound. One gets the impression every little detail comes through and that musical speed does not get impeded. Bass is taught, punchy, and treble extension soars; midrange seems linear. Its sound signature is what many audiophiles would think of when words like "neutral, detailed, honest, etc" are used, and they would be right, uh... sort of.

The bad news. Compared to an exquisite cap like Mundorf silver/oil, what is not coming through as well is the harmonic beauty of the music, the "soul" if you will: overtones upon overtones gently bubbling to the surface as the singer sings the words and the trumpet makes those aching notes. In addition, each instrument/voice does not seem as developed 3-D wise. Through Zn, they seem more 2-dimensional and "flat." Combined with its more dry (less bloomy) presentation, there is less involvement.

So I have mixed feelings about Mundorf Zn. Its sound is technically superior and "uncolored," an order of magnitude better than pretty much any other "cheap" cap you can buy. If I were designing/building a transparent preamp, I can see using the Zn in many places, judiciously mixing them with tube magic elsewhere to come out with supreme results. If you have a preamp/amp that's more dry and matter-of-fact to begin with, I would advise against the Zn.

Actually, I think the Zn may lend itself incredibly well as bypass caps in speaker crossovers due to its qualities. I'll get to that eventually.

### More Illuminations

Upon reading back my own words, I realized they were too harsh for these wonderful caps. After your ears get used to their Teutonic charm, everything sounds just-so and perfectly musical, not wanting for anything obvious. Still highly recommended, and the price is a bonus.



### Sonicap Platinum Teflon Capacitor

In order to prepare for the Sonicap Platinum, I actually reinstalled the VCap Teflon in

place of Mundorf Zn in order to get used to the VCap again for awhile before popping in the Sonicap, which was running on the Cap break-in apparatus at the same time. In short, the Sonic Craft website's description of its sound is pretty accurate: "It is very fast, but full and rich. The presentation is ultra smooth without loss of detail, focus, or dynamics."

In direct comparison to VCap Teflons, SP (Sonicap Platinum) *was* a bit richer and a smidge creamier. We're talking about somewhat subtle differences, but SP was definitely a bit denser, darker, therefore subjectively a wee bit smoother through the midranges. Some will almost recognize a bit of this as found in a good paper-in-oil cap, minus the treble roll-off or bass slowness, of course.

The VCap still does come across as a teeny bit more transparent and lit-up, and what's somewhat special about the VCap is the fact it sounds *\*consistently\** transparent/lit-up throughout its ranges, especially in the critical upper-midrange to low-treble transition; there's no peaks or bumps here even though the whole range is better lit-up.

With SP, even though everything else seems a bit smoother and richer, there seems to my ears a very narrow band, somewhere at the highest end of female vocal sibilance to top-hats, that appears to have the tiniest bit more "sparkle" than the rest of the range. I only mention it b/c it is a difference.

Overall, SP is a nice alternative to the VCap Teflons and costs less. Just like anything in audio, some systems will synergize better with one or the other. For those who have listened and think VCap is a bit too literal or "sterile" (I don't personally) in their systems, Sonicap Platinum is a viable choice.

[Click here for next page.](#)

[ShareThis](#)

[Add Us To Your Favorites](#)

[Link Your Website To Us](#)

[Make Us Your Homepage](#)

[Get Our Audiophile Internet Browser V10](#)

**Our free content is greatly helped with your kind support.**

All contents copyright© 1995 - 2011 Enjoy the Music.com®  
May not be copied or reproduced without permission. All rights reserved.

[Sitemap](#) | [Industry News](#) | [Press Releases](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Manufacturer Links](#) | [RSS Feed](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)