

PEARL SENSITONE PREMIUM WOOD SNARES



From £419 Two updated popular maple snares plus a rare 15" diameter African mahogany addition to the relaunched Sensi Tone range

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We reviewed three of Pearl's 13 revamped Sensi Tone Classic and Premium snares in the July issue. Those all had metal shells and now we reveal the only three wood shellers, which all boast the Premium specification with new ARL arched bridge lugs. Two have maple shells - a 14"x5" and a 14"x6½" - and the third has a rather more unusual 15"x5" shell made from African mahogany.

Build

Let's start with the atypical 15" diameter shell which consists of four plies of African mahogany just 5mm thick, strengthened top and bottom with reinforcing glue rings of four-ply maple. The bearing edges are cut at 45° rising to the outermost mahogany ply where there is an immaculate edge, slightly sanded over for a silky smooth peak. It's gorgeously done to a top-class standard while the outer rich red-brown mahogany is rubbed to a smooth natural finish. With the contrasting chrome and brass metal work this is one handsome drum.

The two Satin Maple finish drums are also lookers, though maybe not quite as show-stopping. They have typical Pearl Superior Shell Technology (SSL) six-ply American maple shells, still pretty thin at 5.4mm. Inner and outer plies are laid horizontally with no inner obstructing re-rings.

As we saw with the Premium metal drums, the new ARL Arch-Tube lugs replace the previous, less striking square bridge lugs. They have a three-part construction incorporating two separate brass tubes held in place by a chromed, minimal-shell-contact, cast arch. Since the two tubes are separated in the middle they are essentially self-aligning, reducing the possibility of cross-threading.

Also new is the impressive SR-150 strainer/throw-off which Pearl calls

Also try...



1 TAMA STARCLASSIC MAPLE

We say: "Warm maple shell with Linear Drive strainer and die-cast hoops in black nickel or chrome makes this beauty a top choice."



2 TIKI DRUMS MAKORE AND MAHOGANY SNARE

We say: "Yet another winner from the UK drum scene, as VK delivers a cracking from-scratch snare."

Click-Lock, with a Gladstone-style action. As the lever is engaged, a 'C'-shaped clip hugs the tension knob preventing both the lever and the snare tension from slipping under heavy playing. The polymer bearing action is commendably smooth and quiet. This is aided by the way both the strainer and butt ends have block clamps set at 45° to the shell for attaching the snare cords (or alternative tapes).

Finishing off the design are Pearl's engraved SuperHoop IIs and a new oval 'Made in Taiwan' badge. You pay a bit more for the premium range but they do have cool looks and distinctive hardware.

SHELLS

Drums have Superior Shell Technology (SSL) six-ply American maple shells



Hands On

The really interesting drum here is the 15" mahogany which is reminiscent of the old WFL drums from the 1940s and 1950s. And with the overlapped scarf joints and re-rings it looks like a vintage drum on the inside too, more so than other big manufacturers' recent forays into revisiting vintage styles.

Back in the early days - from the 1920s on - 15" snares were not uncommon. Whoever would have thought that an inch would make such a difference? But just as many have found a 13" snare behaves quite

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differently from a 14", so too does a 15". Pearl describes it as a 'baritone' snare drum, which seems reasonable. It has a big, rich, slooshy backbeat, not so much fat as deep and foreboding. Even at high tuning it has a dark timbre. That extra inch width gives it a bit more ring too, especially at lower tunings where the drum sounds big and echoey. Loosen the snares a little and let the drum breathe. Perfect for those Herlin Riley or Stanton Moore-style New Orleans loose press rolls. This is a different, more

expansive drum, and good on Pearl for coming up with it. Be warned though that you need a snare basket that will accommodate a 15" drum. Oh, and it does push you back from the small tom more than you'd imagine.

As for the maple drums, well these are more familiar fare though no less worthy and probably more

suited to being all-round workhorses. Maple is brighter and a little broader toned possibly, more cavernous sounding, with good sustain. You can't go much wrong with a well-constructed 14"x5" maple snare and this will be the more versatile drum for most. The 6½" is both fatter and clonkier - a bigger sound, but more ponderous. Even at higher tunings it retains that reassuring warm depth helped by the thin, resonant shell. **R**

VERDICT: Pearl's long established professional standard Sensi Tone range has been extensively overhauled to include these two maple stalwarts and an excitingly different 15"-diameter African Mahogany shell beauty.

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
PLAYABILITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
RHYTHM RATING ★★★★★

DIAMETER

Sensitone mahogany snare has an atypical 15" diameter shell consisting of four plies of African Mahogany

STRAINER

Snares have Pearl's new 'Click Lock' SR-150 strainer/throw-off

Essential spec



PRICE

14"x5", Premium Maple, £419;
14"x6½" Premium Maple, £455;
15"x5" Premium African Mahogany, £467

SHELL MATERIAL

Plywood

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Pearl SST shell technology

NUMBER OF PLYS

Mahogany: 4-ply 5mm African mahogany with maple reinforcing rings. Maple: 6 ply, 5.4mm maple

BEARING EDGES

45° to outer round-over

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Satin Mahogany and Satin Maple (both as pictured)

HOOPS

Pearl Super-Hoop II, 2.3mm triple-flanged chrome over steel, engraved

SHELL AVAILABILITY

14"x5" and 14"x6½" maple; 15"x5" mahogany

SUPPLIED HEADS

Remo Coated Ambassador batter and Clear Ambassador snare side

LUGS PER DRUM

10 Premium ARL Arch-Tube lugs

SNARE STRAINER

SR-150 ClickLock strainer

SNARE WIRES

Ultra-Sound 20 strand Graduated Tension SN-1420I and SN-1520I steel wires with low mass end-plates. Options for straps or cords

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