

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE

THE FAST-SIZED

toms share the same proportions as models in much higher price brackets

THE RACK TOMS

come complete with DW's RIMS-type mounts - a sign of the great build quality



I moved on to that cascade of toms and found myself wearing a grin for the rest of the day



PDP X7 DRUM KIT

£799 Pacific aims to crack the quantity Vs quality conundrum with its new X7 kit. Adam Jones adds it all up

Pacific Drums and Percussion, or PDP as it is more snappily known, is an offshoot company of Californian drum wizards DW. Since its inception at the turn of the millennium, PDP has established a solid reputation for producing reasonably priced drums that incorporate DW's expertise and flair.

This X7 kit finds PDP attempting to have the last word in the 'how big a kit of quality can you find on a budget?' debate. The kit boasts seven drums - three toms, two floor toms, a snare and a bass drum - comes with a complete hardware pack and is available in a choice of six sparkle lacquers, yet retails at little more than a mid-range five-piece kit. On paper, it's an impressive feat.

Build

Seven is a number that crops up all over the place - did I mention days of the week or James Bond? - and there is something oddly familiar about the prospect of a seven-piece kit, even to those of us who have never actually owned that many drums. The X7 kit consists of a 22"x18" bass drum and 14"x5" snare, along with 8"x7", 10"x8" and 12"x9" toms, and 14"x12" and 16"x14" floor toms. The drums are manufactured almost entirely from poplar, with only a single outer layer of birch ply on each drum preventing complete poplar homogeneity. Poplar is an abundant hardwood that is relatively inexpensive. It has been used

widely in the past as a part of composite wood shells, but it is only fairly recently that drum makers have begun using poplar as a primary ingredient for shells. The affordability of poplar doubtless influenced PDP's choice as this kit was, from the off, intended to be ultra-competitive. The decision to outsource the construction of the kit to PDP's Chinese partnership was reached via the same criteria and, again, it has ensured that the kit has come in on-price.

The drums themselves are of the usual Pacific standard, with only the country of manufacture (which is, inevitably, stamped on the boxes) giving any hint of their origin. Particularly impressive is the fact that all the toms, including the floor toms, are FAST-sized ('Fundamentally Accurate Sized Toms', so shorter in depth than regular drums), so they share the same proportions as toms costing many times more. The three rack toms are also equipped with STM mounts - DW's RIMS-type non-penetrative tom mounts, again a pro feature that is a sign of a welcome emphasis on quality. The lugs are PDP's now familiar oval models, which echo the round turrets found on DW drums.

With a set of drums this big occupying the price point it does, you'd be forgiven for expecting the finish to take the form of a wrap or plain lacquer at most. Instead, PDP has somehow managed to offer a variety of dazzling look-at-me sparkle lacquers. PDP's

THE 22"x18" bass drum's fat dimensions ensure that it produces a deep, powerful note

From the Horse's Mouth!

Brandon Pierce, Media and Promotions Co-ordinator, DW/ PDP

The X7 kit is a bold move that looks likely to be very popular. Who or what inspired it?

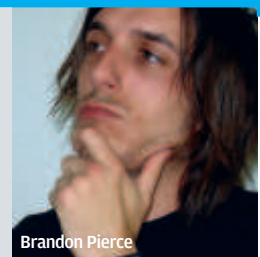
Developing the X7 was a response to the popularity of our all-maple Pacific line; CX, MX, LX, LXE. It was the FAST toms that made them popular. The response, attack and resonance are key components associated with FAST sizes. The 8"x7" and 16"x14" toms were [also] becoming increasingly popular amongst the PDP customers.

Were you determined to make a seven-piece kit from the outset?

Absolutely. We wanted to construct a seven-piece kit on a budget, with a lacquer finish and high-grade components. I see a lot of drummers play less at a gig but desire more at home for practice.

Was it easy to balance quality with budgetary requirements?

Conceptually, we knew it would be difficult to offer a large kit



Brandon Pierce

under £1,000. Fortunately, we found a happy medium in production costs.

Any plans for versions of the X7 with more regular woods?

We tried a birch version. The other Pacific Series offer birch and maple, so it's nice to have some variety!

PDP X7 DRUM KIT



THREE FAST-SIZED TOMS

and two floor toms give the X7 a vast tonal spectrum



SPARKLE LACQUERS

ensure the kit's looks are up there with any contemporary kit



THE LUGS ARE PDP'S

oval models, echoing the round turrets on DW drums

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICE

PDP X7 Kit £799

SHELL MATERIAL

Poplar/birch

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLYS

Six

BEARING EDGES

45 degrees with a slight back cut, perfectly cut

FINISHES

Orange Sparkle, Silver to Black Sparkle Fade, Gold to Black Sparkle Fade (as pictured), Metallic White, Red to Black Sparkle Burst, Regal to Royal Sparkle Fade

HOOPS/RIMS

Triple-flanged

SHELL AVAILABILITY

8"x7", 10"x8" and 12"x9" toms; 14"x12" and 16"x14" floor toms; 22"x18" bass drum and 14"x5" snare drum

LUGS PER DRUM

8", 10" and 12" toms: six; 14" and 16" floor toms, bass drum and snare: eight

SNARE STRAINER

Chromed steel throw off

SNARE WIRES

20

CONTACT

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Hoddesdon
Herts EN11 8HF
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01992 461 089
Website
www.pacificdrums.com

UK distributor, Morico, holds two of the lacquer choices in stock (Orange Sparkle and Silver to Black Sparkle Fade), but all four other options can be ordered directly by your PDP dealer. The example on the review kit - Gold to Black Sparkle Fade - is impressive, giving the kit an arresting appearance. The alternative finishes look equally striking.

True-Pitch tuning rods are fitted across the kit. Another drop-down feature from DW, the fine threads they possess offer sensitive and hold-steady tuning possibilities. The bass drum claws, meanwhile, are another great detail, being thoroughly lined with rubber to prevent them damaging the wooden bass drum hoops.

A hardware pack made up of 800-series stands ('medium duty' according to PDP) is included in the price. Featuring a snare stand, hi-hat stand, two cymbal stands (one upright, one boom-arm) and a bass drum pedal, their build quality suggests that they will be around for as long as you're still playing.

Hands On

As the X7 kit has been devised as a complete package, at this moment in time no individual drums are available separately. This isn't a problem where the toms are concerned, but if you wanted to turn your X7 into an X8 by adding another bass drum, for instance, it could be a little frustrating.

With all the toms to rattle around on, I began sensibly with the snare and bass drum. First impressions of the snare drum were

positive. Snares can be the weakest drums in a package and, as this snare is one of seven drums, my expectations weren't exactly stratospheric. However, the snare punched above its weight, giving a surprisingly consummate performance. Of particular note was the absence of buzzes and tics that so often afflict cheaper snares. Instead, the drum delivered a bright, clean crack that carried well. The stick response and general level of sensitivity were superb, with grace notes being reproduced with enthusiasm. Inevitably for a 5" deep drum, higher tunings were where its forte

The snare punched above its weight, with an absence of buzzes and tics that often afflict cheaper models

lay, but towards medium tension it still possessed a strong voice.

The bass drum's vast dimensions ensured that it pushed out a deep, powerful note. PDP includes a properly sized bass drum pillow, complete with Velcro fixings. Once installed, the ends of the pillow just touch both bass drum heads, nipping back overtones and rumbles without completely killing the natural resonance of the drum. Why so many other manufacturers seem unable to offer such a

useful component is anybody's guess. The bass drum gave a tight, warm response and had a slightly fuzzy feel to it that was pleasing.

And so I moved on to that cascade of toms and found myself wearing a grin for the rest of the day. The FAST sizes made the toms deceptively easy to tune, as did the fact that each step up in diameter was an even two inches. They were wonderfully quick to respond and sang clearly. Poplar is closer to birch in sonic characteristics, and the toms didn't have the same degree of warmth that you would find in a set of maple drums. However, the fitted Remo heads are all single ply and could easily be swapped for a set of pinstripes to fatten things up. As they are - punchy, resonant and harmonious - they represent a blank canvas.

Verdict

PDP seem to have struck a balance between quality, affordability and quantity with the X7 kit. There is no question that a seven-piece kit offers many options in terms of tonal variety and kit set-ups. The individual components sit well together and perform at a similar standard, with no glaring weak links. The use of poplar rather than a more 'regular' wood for the shells might give some pause for thought, but there is more to a kit than its type of wood. Sonically and visually this kit is a complete, thought-through package. It's very well put together and offers great value. **R**

Rating ★★★★★

TRY IT WITH...



REMO PINSTRIPE
Heads on the toms for their fattening properties



ISTANBUL AGOP
cymbals, which are inexpensive but high quality



PROTECTION RACKET
cases - but you'll need rather a lot of them

