

NEW GEAR

EXCLUSIVE

ESSENTIAL SPEC



PRICE

£637

SHELL MATERIAL

Mahogany

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLYS

9

BEARING EDGES

30°

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Silver Sparkle over Silver or Black Lacquer

HOOPS/RIMS

Triple-flanged steel

SHELL AVAILABILITY

24" or 26" bass drum, 13", 16", 18" toms, 14"x6½" snare

SUPPLIED HEADS

Evans G1

TOM MOUNTS

Gretsch mini-GTS system

SNARE STRAINER

Generic

SNARE WIRES

20-strand

CONTACT

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www.fender.co.uk
www.gretschdrums.com

GRETSCH CATALINA CLUB ROCK KIT



£637 If you like a lot of rock with your drum kit, join Gretsch's Club! Jake Stacey bites off more than he can chew

There's something deeply evocative about the 'one up, two down' set-up - it just screams "authentic rock" in a way that few other configurations

can match. Of course, before Bonham et al, it was the favoured set up of Buddy Rich, albeit with two identical floor toms - although Buddy famously used his second 16" as a stand for his towel and spare sticks!

Gretsch's Catalina Club range has been around in its various forms for a while, but the one that always got the most attention was the Club Rock kit with its ginormous 26" bass drum. Perhaps realising that not everyone can buy a new car to cart their kit around, Gretsch now offers the Club Rock with a marginally-more sensible 24" bass drum and two new finishes. Fancy joining Page, Plant and Jones at their next reunion gig? Look no further...

Build

When this most recent iteration of the Catalina name was introduced, it was positioned one step above Gretsch's entry-level Blackhawk drums, but the Catalina Club line quickly gained a good reputation amongst working drummers for the quality construction and wide choice of sizes.

The Club Rock shell pack features nine-ply mahogany shells that are finished with a unique lacquer, shot through with sparkly metallic flakes, giving a 'galaxy sparkle' effect that's reminiscent of the very rare Gretsch Anniversary Sparkle kits of the '60s.

The 24"x18" bass drum is undrilled and features matching wood hoops. The drums are fitted with Gretsch's 'mini lug' take on its USA Custom lug and sport dapper black and silver 'Catalina' badges. The shells are generally well-finished inside and out and the rounded bearing edges smooth and even, though there was evidence of some glue spillage on the shell at the seam of the bass drum. The toms and snare are all fitted with premium Evans G1 coated single-ply heads, while the bass drum has a pre-damped clear batter and a coated display head. The snare

features a generic but functional throw-off and 20-strand steel snare wires. The 13" tom is fitted with Gretsch's Mini GTS tom suspension system.

Hands On

Straight out of the box, the Club Rock displayed a wide tuning range that we attributed to the single-ply heads and well-finished bearing edges. Despite this, there was only one place it really wanted to be - low-down and dirty! With the tom heads at a medium tension, the 13" tom was warm and strident, the 16" growled like a large-capacity V8 and the 18" rumbled like an avalanche. The real seismic stuff, though, was left to the bass drum - with the heads just one turn above slack there was more of a trouser-flapping 'whoompf!' than a defined bass drum note. A couple of half-turns with a drum key brought out the fundamental tone, a low, throaty thump that cried out for triplets from a squeaking Speed King and a fast foot.

Unmiked, the bass drum carried throughout the venue well and the bright attack and sustain of the single-ply heads meant they cut through the mix too, although I have mild concerns about the durability of the G1s under non-stop heavy-hitting. The snare preferred a middling tuning, choking when the tension was taken right up, but offering a woody, rounded rimshot when loosened off.

The black sparkle lacquer finish glittered under the stage lights, which when taken with the sheer size of the kit made for a very prominent stage presence indeed - even the bass player commented it looked good!

The only real negative was the supplied generic tom holder - we were unable to get it to hold the 13" tom in place, and eventually resorted to half-balancing the tom on top of a beer mat taped to the bass drum to try to stabilise it. I'd recommend trying it in the shop, as I've used similar tom holders in the past that worked fine, so this could've been a one-off.

SINGLE-PLY HEADS
give a wide tuning range



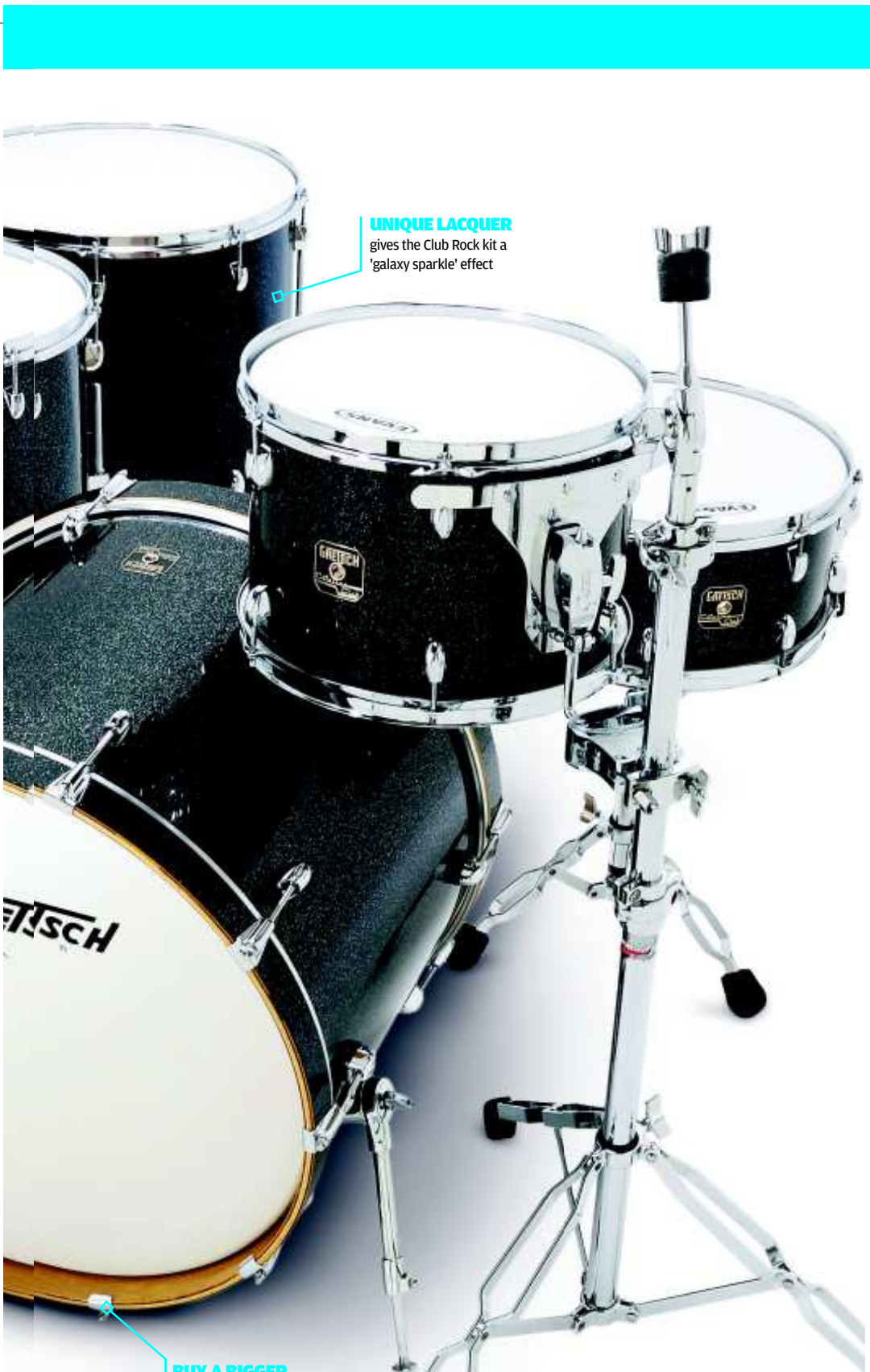
GET LOW-DOWN
and dirty with the throaty thump of the undrilled bass

Verdict

Gretsch's Catalina Club range was one of the original mid-market trailblazers, offering a variety of sizes, good looks and decent quality. The revised range builds on that solid foundation with the very fetching sparkle lacquers, classic rock sizes and great sound. When you factor in the discounted street price that some shops are selling this kit for - the lowest I saw was £549 - a great value package becomes almost irresistible; just make sure to test the tom holder beforehand.

The Catalina Club Rock brings out a little Bonham in everyone, although perhaps Mini owners should still think twice before buying one... **R**

Rating ★★★★★



UNIQUE LACQUER
gives the Club Rock kit a
'galaxy sparkle' effect

BUY A BIGGER
car to fit in the 24" bass and
matching wood hoops

TRY IT WITH...

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and strident, the 16"
growled like a
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an avalanche!**



LUDWIG 402
snare drum for the extra
Bonham factor



REMO COATED
Emperor heads for
double-ply durability



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Crafted from lightweight Maple
and with hand-designed artwork,
Ronnie's Artist Series Model
features big dimensions that are
perfect for the player who wants
something to hold on to.



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