

# SONOR MARTINI SPECIAL EDITION (SE) KIT

**£398** Budget compact kits are all the rage, but does Sonor's Martini take miniaturisation too far?

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**E**asily portable, undersized kits are increasingly popular and in 2014 Sonor introduced three options in its Special Edition (SE) series. There's the Safari (a budget counterpart to the Select Force Jungle) and Bop with 16"x16" and 18"x16" bass drums respectively, and this tiny Martini with a 14"x12" bass drum. Then just this year Sonor has added the Players kit with a 20"x12" kick.

Although starting as Special Editions, the popularity of these kits has led Sonor to keep them as ongoing product lines.

## Build

The Martini comes packed into a single box, 83cm x 41cm x 45cm. There's the diminutive bass drum with tom mount and pedal lifter, 8"x8" mounted tom, 13"x10" floor tom and 12"x5" steel snare drum. All drums except the bass drum have their heads already mounted, so setting up is straightforward.

Shells are the same as those found in Sonor's cheapest series, the Smart Force: nine-ply poplar, 7.2mm thick. Bass drum hoops are maple veneer, which is a classy touch. The glaringly white poplar wood is pretty well finished - the insides have a slightly rough nap, yet follow Sonor's inner vertical ply tradition. But at such a bargain price don't expect this to be the best quality wood. It won't take hard knocks kindly. Edges are 45°, again good for the price, being accurately level, while the shells are pleasingly round.

Although extremely low priced for a Sonor, the Martini doesn't look it on the outside. The Red, Gold or Turquoise Galaxy

Sparkle wrap finishes are eye grabbing, the chrome is smoothly polished and the hardware is particularly rugged. The mallet logo lugs have Sonor's Tune-Safe feature which grips the tension bolts to ensure tuning stability.

## Hands On

At 14"x12" the bass drum is so small it comes with a bass pedal riser, a simple but strong steel bracket that slots in underneath the shell and lifts the drum off the floor. Your bass pedal can then clamp to it (sparing those tasty wood hoops) and strike the drum roundabouts the centre. The drum is stabilised by the splendidly heavy duty spurs with huge rubber feet. Ditto the floor tom giraffe legs and excellent bracket clamps all round. Equally impressive, the small tom's bass drum mount has no less than three memory-locks making the whole thing wobble-free.

Now Sonor's blurb for the Martini asks, "Small car? Small stage? Small apartment?" Evidently the idea is that this is a super-compact kit which a grown-up player can use. The length and strength of the tom holder and floor tom legs means that an adult can indeed adjust the kit to a comfortably normal elevation. The inference is that this could be a secondary practice, or small gigging kit for a player who already has snare and cymbal stands, plus pedals, since none of these is included in the shell pack. But a kit this small would also be ideal for a pre-teen youngster.

What about the sound though? The joker in the pack is the 14"x12" bass drum. Inevitably it goes 'boink'. You can fiddle about, apply the supplied felt strip damper,

## Also try...



### 1 GRETSCH CATALINA CLUB MOD

**We say:** "It's destined to appeal to younger drummers with punk-metal heroes who are mostly not awash with dosh. The snazzy finishes, staggered lugs and black hardware all add to the feeling you're getting something a bit different and exclusive."



### 2 LUDWIG QUESTLOVE BREAKBEATS

**We say:** "An affordable kit that lives up to its design, this kit will suit any style of 'groove' player and is even a great quality set for kids."

adjust tensions back and front, but it is what it is. There is no way you're going to get the sort of depth associated with a more standard bass drum. But there are situations such as world music, folk, light jazz, street performance, drum'n'bass, etc, where this hard knock sound might be just the ticket. And if not, there are always the Bop, Safari or Players kit alternatives.

The six-lug steel shell snare has a basic but good-sized generic throw-off, the one obviously non-Sonor fitting. This is the cheapest looking Sonor drum I have ever seen, but no matter, it's crisp and voluble with a fat tone. Fun to play.

As for the toms, a 50-50 verdict for me. The 13"x10" is surprisingly gutsy and versatile, but the 8"x8" has the narrowest of tuning ranges. The square size seems out of place, jarring a bit with the other three drums. Half a turn up or down from the sweet spot (once you've found it) and the drum either flaps, choked (low tuning) or blimps (high tuning). For consistency why not, for example, have an 8"x6"? **R**

**VERDICT:** In a world where space is premium the mini kit is king. With its tiny bass drum, the good looking Martini will appeal to drummers looking for a particularly compact kit.

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

ALTHOUGH EXTREMELY LOW PRICED FOR A SONOR, THE MARTINI DOESN'T LOOK IT ON THE OUTSIDE

### TOM MOUNT

Sturdy tom mount reaches a good height for adult players and has three memory locks for secure positioning



### HARDWARE

Sonor's well designed hardware - brackets, lugs and legs - is particularly impressive as always

### BASS DRUM HOOPS

Tiny 14"x12" bass drum has natural maple wood veneer hoops which adds a touch of class and warms the sound

### Essential spec



#### PRICE

£398

#### SHELL MATERIAL

Bass and toms: poplar wood; snare: steel

#### NUMBER OF PLIES

Bass and toms: nine plies, 7.2 mm thick.

#### BEARING EDGES

45° with 45° outer round over. Accurately level

#### FINISHES AVAILABLE

Red (as pictured), Turquoise or Gold Galaxy Sparkle wrap

#### HOOPS

Bass drum: natural finish maple veneer wood hoops; toms and snare: triple flanged steel

#### SHELL AVAILABILITY

14"x12" bass drum, 8"x8" tom, 13"x10" floor tom, 12"x5" snare drum

#### SUPPLIED HEADS

Remo (China) UX Coated Batters and Clear Resonants.

#### LUGS PER DRUMS

Bass drum: 12 single-ended; small tom: 10 single-ended; floor tom: 12 single-ended; snare: six, double-ended

#### SNARE STRAINER

Generic, side-lever throw off

#### CONTACT

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