

DW COLLECTOR'S SERIES PURE OAK

£5,993 *The Collector's Series goes from strength to strength with the addition of the Pure Oak*

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY

Originally founded as a drum school by Don Lombardi in 1972, the Drum Workshop brand has grown to become one of the best recognised in the drumming world today.

Now playing host to a plethora of product ranges including the Performance Series, Design Series, Classics Series and Jazz series, it's the fabled Collector's Series that still holds the title as DW's flagship line. The Collector's kits are made only to order in the USA workshop in Oxnard, California. Starting out with all-maple shells, the line has expanded over the years to include all-birch, all-cherry and maple/mahogany shells. With the exception of the limited edition Romanian Oak (part of the Timeless Timber range), the Pure Oak will be the first all-oak

Series Cherry and Design Series drums. The Pure Oak toms (8"-13") use seven plies while floor toms (14"-18") and all bass drums are eight-ply. Snare drums though are a monster 11-ply. No reinforcement hoops are used on any of the shells due to their thickness and density. The veneers used in the HVLT oak shells are a slightly thicker 1/32" as opposed to 1/36", which is DW standard.

The kit we have received for review comprises 10"x8" and 12"x9" rack toms, 14"x12" and 16"x14" floor toms, 22"x18" kick and 14"x6½" snare drum. To further explore the theme of DW's custom options, it is worth mentioning at this point that all Collector's Series kits are available in five different hardware options: chrome, nickel, gold, satin chrome and black nickel. This applies to hoops, lugs, bass drum spurs,

THE HEFTY SNARE IS BALANCED AND MUSICAL; RIM-SHOTS ARE A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH THANKS TO THE BEEFY TRUE HOOPS AND 11-PLY SHELL

shells that DW has produced. We're eager to take a closer look...

Build

As with all Collector's Series drums, kits can be customised right the way from shell configurations through to finishes and hardware. It is even possible to choose the specific grain orientation of every veneer within each drum. This Specialised Shell Configuration (SSC) can be chosen from DW's VLT, HVLT, X-Shell and VLX technologies. As standard, each Pure Oak shell is configured using HVLT (Horizontal/Vertical Low Timbre). This method uses a mixture of horizontal and vertical woodgrain to create a unique tonality in the shell. Specifically, HVLT employs a horizontal grain on the outer shell while the majority of plies (including the inner layer) are of a vertical orientation. This method is designed to "offer slightly more low to mid-range frequencies". HVLT can also be found as standard on Collector's

tom mounts, floor tom legs and snare throw-off/butt-plate. The shell finish is of course optional also, although our review kit has come in the rather special 'Hard Satin' which shows off the stunning natural oak woodgrain admirably.

The kit also features a wealth of standard DW features including Suspension Tom Mounts (STM), True-Pitch 50 tension rods, True Hoops, DW signature Turret Lugs, Remo USA heads and resonant floor tom legs. The snare is also supplied with 20-strand TrueTone snare wires along with the new Mag Throw-off and 3P butt-plate. The bass drum is completed with natural oak hoops to match the finish of the kit seamlessly.

New and noteworthy for this review kit are the AA smooth white heads. Developed by John Good and Scott Donnell, these are the first double-ply stock heads to be offered by DW. Designed to complement its drums whilst being "almost indestructible", they are intended also



AA SMOOTH WHITE HEADS

The "almost indestructible" AA double-ply heads are designed to complement the drums while increasing low-end response

HVLT SHELLS

HVLT employs a horizontal grain on the outer-shell while the majority of plies (including the inner layer) are of a vertical orientation

Essential spec



PRICES

10"x8", £737; 12"x9", £784; 14"x12", £932; 16"x14", £1,085; 14"x6½" snare, £702; 22"x18" Kick £1,753 (prices include 10% extra for nickel hardware, as review kit)

SHELL MATERIAL

Oak

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply - HVLT

NUMBER OF PLYS

8"-13" toms, 7-ply; 14"-18" toms, 8-ply; all bass drums, 8-ply; snare drums, 11-ply

BEARING EDGES

45°, smooth

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Any DW custom finish (pictured: Hard Satin)

HOOPS

DW True Hoops - available in chrome, nickel (as pictured), gold, satin chrome and black nickel

SUPPLIED HEADS

Toms: Remo/DW AA smooth batter, Remo/DW clear reso; snare: Remo/DW AA coated snare batter; Remo/DW clear snare bottom; bass: Remo/DW AA coated smooth batter; Remo/DW gloss black vented reso

LUGS PER DRUM

Bass: 20; snare: 10 (dual); rack toms: 12; floor toms: 16

TOM MOUNTS

Stand mounted - STM

SNARE STRAINER AND WIRES

DW Mag Throw-off and 3P butt-plate; DW TrueTone wires.

CONTACT

DW Drums
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GEAR REVIEW

They say...

Scott Donnell Vice President of Marketing for DW



Tell us about the new AA heads.

"For years drummers had asked if they could get a two-ply head factory-installed on their custom kit and we simply didn't have one available. It's funny that Remo uses for marching snares and other coated heads. It's extremely durable and warm sounding. We offer a smooth and coated version for different applications. We're really happy with these heads and the artist response has been overwhelmingly positive."

What would you say are the sonic qualities of the Pure Oak?

"Oak is obviously a hardwood like maple, so it's loud and punchy. With the factory-installed AA smooth heads there's lots of attack, but it's also a warmer attack. There's also a perfect amount of resonance, and projection. We can't wait for more of our players to record with these and tell us their stories."

Is the Pure Oak custom order only?

"Like all Collector's Series drums, Pure Oak is made to order. If an authorized dealer wants to stock a certain configuration or finish, that's still a custom order for that particular dealer. We love it when dealers get creative and put something on the floor that they think their customers will appreciate."



3P BUTT-PLATE

The 3P butt-plate allows extremely quick and pronounced tonal changes

DW FEATURES

Kit has many standard DW features such as True-Pitch tension rods, True Hoops and Turret Lugs

to increase low-end response (hear more from Scott himself above).

Also worth a mention in the head department is the vented resonant head on the bass drum. The gloss-black branded head features six half-inch holes around the edge to allow it to breathe. John Good claims that these Micro-vents can replace the need for a sound port and will give the drum more low-end resonance. This makes sense, although in our experience,

is noticeably weighty, particularly the snare. For some, this will give assurance that the drums are well made and sturdy; others will already be dreading the thought of lugging them up and down flights of stairs night after night. Either way, it is safe to expect thick oak shells to be on the heavy side.

The kit arrived remarkably well-tuned considering its voyage across the pond. With the six-piece kit set up in the studio, barely a tweak is needed to get the shells singing in

WITH THE SIX-PIECE KIT SET UP IN THE STUDIO, BARELY A TWEAK IS NEEDED TO GET THE SHELLS SINGING IN PERFECT HARMONY

heads of this nature do tend to dry the sound slightly.

Hands On

The striking natural oak woodgrain of the kit exhibits a lighter, more pale colour than one may expect from oak - the horizontal outer-grain swirls endlessly and erratically around the shell of each drum, protected by its Hard Satin finish. This is complemented excellently by the nickel hardware. Be aware though, any hardware choice except for the standard chrome will come with an extra 10 percent on the asking price of each drum.

Each Pure Oak shell, decorated with the typically chunky DW lugs and counter hoops,

perfect harmony. DW's Timbre Matching process has ensured that a natural descent in pitch occurs from the highly-tuned snare, down evenly through the toms, finishing with a fierce punch from the bass drum. The hefty snare is balanced and musical yet has the ability to create an almighty roar when coaxed. Rim-shots are a force to be reckoned with thanks to the beefy True Hoops and dense 11-ply shell. The 3P butt-plate allows extremely quick and pronounced tonal changes, which can come in handy mid-tune or set. Super-tight funk tones are instantly interchangeable for loose New-Orleans style notes at the flick of a switch.

Despite being initially dubious of the

Also try...



1 TAMA STARCLASSIC BUBINGA

We say: "This kit bears all of Tama's hallmarks - solid build, quality components and careful detailing. It is blessed with amazing sounds."



2 SONOR SQ2

We say: "If money is no object why not build your kit from scratch with Sonor's stunning SQ2 range?"

new AA Smooth white heads (which look like the cheap plastic heads you might find on a beginner's kit), after some adjustment I manage to shake my pre-conceptions and eventually warm to them. There is no disputing that these heads work wonders for the Pure Oak, especially when considering the two thunderous floor toms. The heads are also extremely rugged in practice and show little sign of wear after enduring an afternoon's shedding. Dynamically, they are surprisingly sensitive and help to provide an explosive attack to the oak shells, including the 22" bass drum. Still, it would be interesting to hear the kit with some regular clear or coated double-ply heads for reference.

As a whole, the kit has an explosive attack and a generous low-end. The dynamic range is excellent and the tuning range is reasonable. As a result, the Pure Oak promises to be a reasonably versatile set of drums but would definitely be right at home in a rock setting. **R**

VERDICT: Like the majority of DW gear, we find the Pure Oak difficult to fault. This is a heavy kit in more ways than one. It has volume in abundance but also shows a wide dynamic range.

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