

# NEW GEAR

## EXCLUSIVE



**DARK GREEN**  
HN9LCYM22 model can house up to nine cymbals

**20" BASS DRUM**  
case has a nifty set of wheels set into the bottom

ESSENTIAL SPEC



#### PRICES

10" tom case, £43  
12" tom case, £45  
14" tom case, £47  
14" snare case, £45  
Hardware case with wheels, £73  
Hardware case, £96  
Entry-level cymbal case, £43  
Cymbal case, £72  
Large utility case, £85

#### SIZES:

8"-18" toms, 18"-26" bass drum, plus multitudinous other cases!

#### CASE MATERIAL

High-impact polyethylene plastic

#### COLOURS

Dark Green, Light Green, Light Blue, Dark Blue, Red, Black

#### EXTRA FEATURES

Integral stacking system, ID discs, internal foam grip pads

#### CONTACT

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# HARDCASE DRUM CASES



From £43 At school, Jake Stacey used to run when someone mentioned 'hardcases' for fear of being beaten up. So does he have the nerve to review these?

Once upon a time, if you were a drummer and had the dubious pleasure of carting your own gear from gig to gig, you used reinforced Spaulding Russell fibre cases or similar. The buckle straps were fiddly and the cases themselves tended to fall apart if they got wet. Nowadays, you generally fit into one of two camps - either you're a 'softie' or a 'rigid'. I am, of course, referring to the choice of case - soft padded gig bags or rigid plastic cases. By far the best known brand of the latter is the eponymous Hardcase. Formerly avid users of the Henry Ford palette (any colour as long as it's black), of late they've expanded into glorious technicolour, as well as endlessly adding new products to let you move your odds and sods in cleverer ways.

## Build

We've been sent a selection of new Hardcase products to test: 10", 12" and 14" coloured tom cases, a 14" lime green snare case, a wheeled 20" bass drum case, two hardware cases and two cymbal cases.

All cases share the same Hardcase basic features - rotary-moulded waterproof high-impact polyethylene shells, high-tensile

polypropylene webbing straps with quick lock clips and plastic comfort handles riveted to the case for extra strength.

The HN20B bass drum case is in Hardcase traditional black with yellow fixings, but includes a nifty set of wheels set into the bottom to make manoeuvring your bass drum easier over long distances. The tom cases are in a selection of baby blue, dark blue and red colours, and instead of yellow fixings feature black straps and handles. There's also a snare case in searing lime green with the same fittings. The HN40W is a small/medium wheeled hardware case, and the HNUTIL3 is a square old-style 'traps' case, both are again in standard black/yellow. The HN6CYM22 entry-level cymbal case now includes five foam dividers to accommodate six 'standard' cymbals. The more upmarket HN9LCYM22 comes in dark green and can house nine cymbals, including inverted bell chinas.

## Hands On

Entrusting my vintage Gretsch to the Hardcases' tender embrace proved to be a wise move as, after a gig, one of the toms - stashed in the baby blue 10" case - was inadvertently kicked by one of the tech crew

and rolled off the edge of the stage, bounced down some steps, and clonked hard onto the floor! Thankfully the rigid plastic shell and foam internal padding worked as designed to prevent any damage.

The tom and snare cases utilise three quick-lock clips to secure the drums, the straps of which can be adjusted to fit the depth of your tom, although specific standard/fusion/power tom depth cases are available. The new bright colours mean you're less likely to miss your kit on a dark stage, though if you had a full set of lime green cases you may need to wear sunglasses!

The addition of wheels to the 20" bass drum case worked perfectly, allowing easy transportation from the car which was parked some way away. Similarly the HN40W hardware case swallowed all my stands and glided across the car park into the venue - although it was less effortless when it had to be lifted onto the stage! The HNUTIL3 lacks wheels, and might be better suited for ancillaries such as stool, music stand, sticks and possibly a snare drum.

Both cymbal cases use the same basic clamshell design, although the cheaper HN6CYM22 joins both halves together with a



ALL CASES HAVE waterproof, high-impact polyethylene shells

## Now those of us without roadies don't need to worry about herniating every time we load in and out of the car

single central handscrew, whereas the HN9LCYM22 has an internal version to secure the cymbals, and three external clips. These cases can take a beating - I used one on a budget airline flight with my cymbals in the hold (they insisted!) and they made it through the ordeal unscathed.

### Verdict

Hardcase follow the Ronseal school of product design - it quite literally does what it says on the tin. If you're entrusting your pride and joy to anyone else, flight cases aside, Hardcase cases are the only realistic alternative. Capable of being slung in the back of a van and thrown around between gigs, they're strong, relatively lightweight given their rigid nature, and there's a case for almost any application.

The new colours mean even hardcore fashion victims can now tailor their cases to their aesthetics, and that your cases aren't likely to get mixed up with others at gigs where there's more than one kit on stage.

The new refinements, and the wheels on

the bass drum case in particular, mean that the traditional Achilles heel of these cases - their potential unwieldiness - has been minimised to a greater extent so those of us without roadies (ie: 99 percent of us) don't have to worry about herniating every time we load in and out of the car. **R**

Rating **★★★★☆**

TRY IT WITH...



**GRETSCH CATALINA**  
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