

Sabian

New Cymbal Additions

From £212 | Sabian unveils its newest creative concepts. Adam Jones listens up.

ESSENTIALS



PRICES

Sabian Additions	
14" Vault hi-hats	£430
20" Vault ride	£325
16" AAX El Sabor Picante Hand crash	£212
18" AAX El Sabor Picante hand crash	£247
21" AA Raw-Bell Dry ride	£316

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Since their introduction last year, Sabian's Vault crashes and Artisan rides have won much deserved praise. With two new cymbals joining the ranks, the Vault collection is gradually expanding into something resembling a range. Sabian is keen to stress however, that the Vault cymbals do not make up a range in the conventional sense, more of a concept (or collection of concepts) developed without restraints. Vault models can be created from any metal, have any appearance, any sound and be any price (though so far have been consistently expensive). Inspiration is often derived from contemporary music and musicians, and innovative designs and techniques are deployed.

Your own vault

The two new Vault models are a 20" ride and a pair of 14" hi-hats. The ride is a very different beast to the Vault Artisan rides reviewed last year. It's a more forward-looking concept, designed specifically for modern applications. It is available in brilliant finish only and, for the time being, is only being made in the 20" size (other sizes can be requested as special orders).

The AA Dry Raw-Bell ride has been introduced in response to requests from rock drummers for an AA version of Sabian's top-selling HH Dry Raw-Bell model.



The cymbal is cast from Sabian's B20 bronze and is hammered with small-peen AA precision-automatic hits. The resulting barely visible indentations contribute to the integrity, shape and tension of the metal, and therefore the sound. The top of the cymbal is covered in narrow, pin-point lathing and is buffed to a mirror-like shine. With all of the techniques described so far, you might expect the ride to produce glassy-bright tones. Well, it certainly is a bright cymbal, but wait... flip it over, and the underneath has been left completely raw. This untreated bottom focuses the cymbal, tightening up its response and keeping wash to a minimum. Obviously some wash is generated, but the stick sound seems to float above it, on a cushion of silvery sweetness. The cymbal works through all levels of volume, slicing through, while still sounding clean, controlled and inherently smooth.

The 14" Vault hi-hats are cut from a similar cloth to the 20" Vault ride. Featuring the same tight lathing and reflective finish, the cymbals are paired as a medium top and heavy bottom. The word that best describes the hi-hats' sound capabilities is 'clarity'. Again, silvery top-end is a prominent feature, but not at the expense of warmth and musicality. Played with the tip of the stick they are precise and delicate. Upping the dynamics brings a gradual increase in volume without the high frequencies

taking over. At full tilt, a meaty note sits beneath the roaring wash. A thoroughly sophisticated and versatile pair of hats.

Latin with a twist

The new AAX El Sabor Picante hand crashes are related to the existing AA El Sabor cymbals, but while the AA models are Latin-infused crossover cymbals, the AAX Picante hand crashes are specifically aimed at percussionists. Each cymbal (16" or 18") sports three playing areas. The heavy, raw bell and centre area are suitable for clave stickings and ride patterns respectively, and the lathed, extra thin bow is hand crashable. It's quite a concept, and takes expert cymbalsmithery to take such a hefty slice of metal down to paper thin at the outer edge.

So, are they jacks of all trades and masters of none? Not at all. The 18" is proficient in all three disciplines. The deftest tap is enough to open the cymbal for crashing. It does so with a dark warmth that has more than a hint of trashiness, and a sweet decay follows. Attacking the central band with sticks brings out very different characteristics. The unlathed shoulder is very dry and gives excellent stick definition over a smouldering wash and the bell is strident and penetrating – perfect for clanging out fiery patterns.

The 16" Picante is a little higher in pitch across all the surfaces and so doesn't

KEY FEATURES



While being highly polished on top, the new Vault ride is left completely raw beneath to focus its sound and reduce wash.



The two El Sabor Picante hand crashes have been road tested for a year by Karl Perrazo and Richie 'Gajate' Garcia and received a definite thumbs-up.

The Vault hi-hats deliver the trademark Vault 'sound of silver' in spades.

quite have the same authority as its bigger brother, but is still an intriguing and very convincing cymbal.

AA OK

The 21" AA Raw-Bell ride is an AA variant of the popular HH Raw-Bell Dry ride. The AA version has been devised to address the demand from rock players for the same model, but with a brighter, more cutting edge. With the exception of its raw bell, the ride is heavily lathed, making for a lively response. The cymbal has the sort of brightness you would associate with the AA range, but is also on the dry side. Sticking is clear and well defined, while the bell is solid and commanding. It's a powerful cymbal that generates enough volume to deal with all but the most extreme of musical situations. **R**

RHYTHM VERDICT

As they are drawn from various ranges, these cymbals are a diverse bunch. The Vault ride, with its raw bottom, is a logical extension of the old pro's trick of putting strips of gaffer tape underneath a cymbal to control overtones. Both the Vault ride and hi-hats deliver the Vault signature 'sound of silver'. The AAX El Sabor Picante hand crashes are quite fabulous, combining such disparate elements so harmoniously in one cymbal. The AA 21" Dry Raw Bell ride is a textbook example of a cymbal making a successful transition from one range to another.

+ An inspired selection of cymbals that are, in the grand scheme of things, reasonably priced.

- No Vault chinas and splashes as yet.

RATING ★★★★★

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Great Tone



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