

PEARL MASTERS MAPLE COMPLETE

£1,415 Pearl sticks to tradition with its reworked, all-maple Masters

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY



Celebrating 25 years of the famous Pearl Masters, the company has decided to combine the best of all previous incarnations into the new Maple Complete.

Build

The Maple Complete is currently available in four kit configurations with a choice of five super-high gloss and matte lacquer finishes. These are Inferno Red Sparkle, Burnished Bronze Sparkle, Satin Natural Burst and Black Caviar Matte (as pictured). The fifth, available only on special order, is Matte Natural.

In terms of configuration, there are three snare-less four-piece shell packs available, and one three-piece. Price-wise, each of the four-pieces are £1,415 and the three-piece is £1,211. All of the larger setups use 10"x7" and 12"x8" rack toms with either a 14"x12" or 16"x14" floor tom. Kicks include 20"x14" and 22"x18". The smaller kit features the biggest available diameters with a 13"x9" rack, 16"x14" floor tom and 24"x14" bass drum. Despite the lack of included snare drum, there are two 14" models available separately in the Maple Complete family - one is 5½" deep and the other 6½" (£263 and £275 respectively). For review, we have been sent a four-piece kit, made up of a 22"x18" bass drum, 10"x7" and 12"x8" rack toms and 16"x14" floor tom. If none of these configurations quite tickle your fancy a generous range of individual add-on sizes are also available. The rack toms (all complete with Pearl's Omni-Mount suspension system) start at 8"x7" and continue to a mighty 16"x14". Floor toms go up to 18"x16" and the bass drum selection ranges from 18"x14" to 24"x18". It is worth pointing out that both drilled and un-drilled bass drums are available when ordering individual shells.

The 'EvenPLY' shells are constructed from reduced-thickness (5.4mm), cross-laminated six-ply North American maple, and are apparently 28 percent thinner than any previous Masters specification. They also sport a 45° bearing edge and are designed to produce "the tonal purity and increased resonance of Pearl's legendary Masters MMX,

MAPLE

As the name suggests, the shells are made from 100 percent maple

SHELLS

The new 6-ply shells are designed to be super resonant

Also try...



1 PEARL SESSION STUDIO CLASSIC

We say: "Pearl offers a decent amount of bang for your buck with the SSC. With a highly versatile tuning range and a crisp attack, this kit promises to be a strong contender in the mid-range market."



2 GRETSCH RENOWN MAPLE 2016

We say: "The 2016 Gretsch Renown hits its target market bang-on. An absolute triumph. A tonal chameleon with stunning looks, at a great price although some may prefer an un-drilled bass drum."

THE KIT IS TUNED LOW OUT OF THE BOX WHICH COMPLEMENTS THE TONE OF THE SUPPLIED CLEAR PINSTRIPE HEADS ON THE TOMS, PRODUCING A FAT, POWERFUL TONE

while projecting with the vibrant power of the thicker MRX series".

The new shells are finished with 2.3mm triple-flanged SuperHoop II hoops and chrome bridge-style CL lugs, which offer reduced shell contact and aim to provide improved shell performance. Aesthetically, in a break from the norm, the small section of the lug that receives the tuning-rod is finished in gold rather than chrome. This is a subtle but sharp touch. It works particularly well with the matte black of our review kit.

The bass drum boasts heavy duty SP30 spurs and insulated die-cast claws, while the floor tom uses the heavily cushioned LB40

legs, complete with lightweight memory locks. The kit is supplied with Chinese-made Remo UT Clear Pinstripes on the tom batters and Ambassador equivalents on the bottoms. The bass drum, which also comes with an included mini-muffler pillow, uses a UT Powerstroke 3 batter and a pre-ported, white textured reso.

Hands On

Removing the first drum from the box and peeling away the wrapping, it's clear to see that the finish is a thing of beauty. On one hand, it's a kind of no-frills affair, but on the other it's a sleek and simple matte black that is enhanced by the sparkling chrome of the



FINISHES

The kit is available in five new finishes, including Black Caviar Matte (pictured)

HARDWARE

The shells are supplied with SuperHoop IIs and chrome CL lugs

individual bridge-style lugs and SuperHoop rims. It is, however, the kind of finish that quickly ends up caked in grubby fingerprints, as I soon discover!

Setting up is a doddle and everything feels securely in place, with no give or wobble from the sturdy Omni-Mount tom suspension system, despite the lighter weight of the shells. The heavy-duty SP30 spurs are a particular joy to use, slotting straight into place with minimal fuss and anchoring the kit firmly. The kit is tuned low out of the box, which complements the tone of the supplied Pinstripes on the toms, producing a fat, powerful tone that would be equally at home

in rock or metal as it would in gospel or r'n'b. With a small amount of tuning adjustment, the toms are singing wonderfully together; ranging from the purer hum of the 10" rack tom to the mid-range thump of the 12", down to the low grumble of the 16" floor tom. Tuning the toms up further also yields pleasing results, sounding equally at home in more tuneful funk territories. The floor tom especially finds its sweet spot at this point and gives off a more sustained yet clean note.

Thanks to the enhanced resonance, the bass drum sounds very open and the small muffler pillow seems to do very little. The bass drum is able to deliver a wide range of

tones, but most importantly, a brilliantly deep boom which I am able to control by adding a slightly larger dampening pillow. **R**

VERDICT: The new Pearl Masters Maple Complete lives up to expectation and succeeds in offering enhanced resonance in its new shells, combined with a powerful tone; all wrapped up in a sleek choice of lacquer finishes.

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

Essential spec

Pearl

PRICE

Four-piece: £1,415;
 Three-piece: £1,211

SHELL MATERIAL

100 percent North American Maple

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply

NUMBER OF PLIES

6-ply (5.4mm)

BEARING EDGES

45°

FINISHES AVAILABLE

Inferno Red Sparkle; Burnished Bronze Sparkle; Matte Caviar Black; Satin Natural Burst; Matte Natural (special order only)

HOOPS

SuperHoop II

SHELL AVAILABILITY

Shell packs: 20"x14", 10"x7", 12"x8", 14"x12", 22"x18", 10"x7", 12"x8", 16"x14", 22"x18", 10"x7", 12"x8", 14"x12", 20"x14", 13"x9", 16"x14"; many individual sizes also available

SUPPLIED HEADS

Tom batters: Remo UT Pinstripe; tom resos: Remo UT Ambassador; bass drum batter: Remo UT Powerstroke 3; bass drum reso: Remo UT textured with port

NUMBER OF LUGS PER DRUM

Bass drum: 10; toms: 12; floor tom: 16

TOM MOUNTS

Not included

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