

# DRUM WORKSHOP COLLECTOR'S SERIES PURPLEHEART KIT

**£5,450** *Drum Workshop doesn't miss a beat with its newest Collector's kit*

WORDS: TOM BRADLEY



**D**espite its position as one of the biggest drum manufacturers in the world, Drum Workshop still places the utmost importance on representing itself as a custom drum shop. The American company's flagship Collector's Series embodies this perfectly, with every kit being made to order via a mind-boggling choice of options, from sizes and finishes to shell material and even, if you so choose, specific grain orientation.

European distributor GEWA takes some of the hard work (and cost) out of this process by bulk ordering popular configurations for its customers, whilst also still dealing with more individual requirements.

*Rhythm* was recently invited to GEWA's German headquarters to check out a selection of DW's latest wares, which includes the brand new Collector's Series Purpleheart kit you see here.

### Build

Following on from the success of the stand-alone Purpleheart series snare drums, DW has added a complete Purpleheart kit to

transform into a rich purple hue - hence the name Purpleheart. It is ranked as one of the hardest woods in the world and has "sonic properties that lie somewhere between those of hickory and bubinga".

On the DW shells the wood appears to be more of a burgundy colour, although in the right light they do give off more of a bright purple appearance. The natural gloss finish shows off not only the unique purple hue, but also the beautiful wood grain. At a glance, one might assume the drums have been treated with a light stain, but looking under the hood at the un-lacquered inner shells it's clear to see this unusual and exotic material in all its natural glory.

The shells have been constructed using DW's 'HVL'T' grain orientation. This stands for Horizontal/Vertical Low Timbre which, by using a mixture of horizontal and vertical woodgrain, creates a specific timbre for each shell. This method is designed to "offer slightly more low-mid range frequencies". HVL'T can also be found as standard on DW's Pure Cherry, Pure Oak and Design Series drums.

LOOKING UNDER THE HOOD AT THE UN-LACQUERED INNER SHELLS, IT IS CLEAR TO SEE THIS UNUSUAL AND EXOTIC MATERIAL IN ALL ITS NATURAL GLORY

its Pure range of Collector's Series shells, which also includes Pure Oak, Cherry, Maple and Birch.

Purpleheart derives from the Amaranth tree, which is sourced from the rainforests of South America. The heartwood is favoured due to its colour changing properties. When first cut the wood is a light brown colour, but after exposure to ultraviolet light it begins to

Our five-piece review kit is made up of a 22"x18" bass drum, 10"x8" and 12"x9" rack toms and a 16"x14" floor tom. We also have a matching 14"x5½" snare drum, which can be purchased separately. All shells are 8-ply, except for the snare, which is 13-ply. As explained above, any of these shells can be made to order both in terms of configuration and grain orientation.



## HEARTWOOD

During manufacturing the light brown heartwood begins to turn purple when exposed to UV light

## HARDWARE

The kit features Suspension Tom Mounts, True-Pitch 50 tension rods and True Hoops



## Essential spec

**drums**  
**dw**

### PRICES

Review kit: £5,450;  
Snare: £878

### SHELL MATERIAL

Pure purpleheart wood

### CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Ply - HVL

### NUMBER OF PLIES

8-ply toms and bass drum, 13-ply snare

### BEARING EDGES

45°

### FINISH

High-gloss clear lacquer

### HOOPS

DW True Hoops. Available in chrome (as pictured), nickel, gold, satin chrome and black nickel

### SHELL AVAILABILITY

Custom order: 8" to 24" shells

### SUPPLIED HEADS

Toms: Remo/DW Double A smooth batter, Remo/DW clear reso; Snare: Remo/DW coated snare batter; Remo/DW clear snare bottom; Bass: Remo/DW clear batter; Remo/DW gloss black reso

### NUMBER OF LUGS PER DRUM

Rack toms: 12 single turret; Floor tom: 16 single turret; Bass drum: 20 single turret; Snare drum: 10 dual turret

### TOM MOUNT

Suspension Tom Mounts

### CONTACT

info@gewamusic.com  
+49 (0) 37423 7780  
www.dwdrums.com

## COLLECTOR'S OPTIONS

Like any Collector's Series kit, the Purpleheart is available as a custom order with a host of options



# GEAR REVIEW

## They say...

**Stefan Weiler**  
GEWA Drum Specialist



**Why was purpleheart wood chosen and what are its tonal characteristics?**

"Purpleheart was suggested by one of DW's wood suppliers. These drums give you an excellent attack, projection and sensitivity; a

sound unlike traditional drum-making woods, such as maple or birch."

**How are the shells naturally purple?**

"When you cut purpleheart it has a light brown finish, then once exposed to UV light it starts to turn purple."

**Are the kits available from you in any chosen configuration?**

"Purpleheart drums can be ordered in any DW Custom Shop size or shell configuration. The same goes for the snares."

**What kind of styles do you think the kit suits?**

"These shells are very big sounding, so you could use it for everything from funk to rock or metal. It has a lot of warmth and tone, as well as a lot of low-end."

Hardware includes DW's proprietary large turret lugs, True Hoops (1.6mm for the 10", 2.3mm for 12" & 16" and 3mm for the snare), True-Pitch 50 tension rods and Suspension Tom Mounts (STM). The snare drum features 20-strand TrueTone snare wires, plus Mag throw-off and 3P butt-plate. All hardware on our review kit is finished in classic chrome but it's also available in nickel, black nickel, gold and satin chrome (although these come with a 10 percent price increase).

The supplied Remo heads are the newer AA Smooth variety, which are DW's first stock double-ply heads. Designed to increase low-end, the film heads are also described by DW as "extremely durable and warm sounding". The bass drum has a clear batter head with tone control inlay rings and an un-ported, gloss black DW branded resonant head. A small cushion is positioned to apply subtle dampening to the batter head.

IN TERMS OF SOUND, THE PURPLEHEART DOES NOT DISAPPOINT. THE REASONABLY THICK 8-PLY TOM AND BASS DRUM SHELLS (WHICH ARE REPORTEDLY MORE DENSE THAN OAK), PRODUCE A WARM TONE WITH PLENTY OF ATTACK AND PROJECTION



### TOM MOUNT

*The Suspension Tom Mounts (STM) come in chrome, nickel, black nickel, gold and satin chrome*



### TURRET LUGS

*DW's iconic, chrome, large turret lugs sit over black rubber gaskets, which are mirrored by the large discs found on the STM*

As with any Collector's Series kit, the shells have been lovingly timbre matched in the factory, likely by John Good himself. This process involves first batching together shells of similar tonality and resonance, then grouping them into specific kit configurations with naturally descending tones. The resonant

### Also try...



#### 1 DW PURE CHERRY

**We say:** "This is the cherry on the cake of drum craftsmanship with extraordinary attention to detail. At a price..."

pitch of each shell is then determined and printed on the inside.

### Hands On

Getting up close with the kit, it's hard to believe that this is the natural colour of the wood. The rich reddish purple is captivating to the eye and is enhanced by the plainly visible, ribbon-like grain. Despite an obvious seam on the inside, the outer surface appears completely uniform. The 45° bearing edges are cut to perfection and offer a precise surface to seat the AA Smooth heads. The iconic chrome turret lugs sit atop black rubber gaskets, which are mirrored somewhat by the larger rubber discs found on the Suspension Tom Mount. This mounting style comes in particularly handy when removing the head as, unlike many other designs, it is not



## HEADS

Supplied heads include the new double-ply Remo AA Smooth

## CUSTOM OPTIONS

Collector's Series hardware is available in five different colour options

## CLEAR LACQUER

The shells are finished with a high gloss clear lacquer, which shows off the exotic wood

attached to the hoop and so stays in position. One aspect that did hinder head removal slightly was the True-Pitch 50 tension rods. With an outrageous 50 threads per inch, the rods take considerably more turns to completely unscrew - although this is a minor drawback considering their purpose is to enable more precise tuning. The good news is that the system really does work. With True-Pitch, True-Pitch 50 and regular rods tested side-by-side, the difference in just a quarter turn is significant, although the True-Pitch 50 rods are so fine we'd advise a little extra caution so as not to risk any cross-threading.

In terms of sound, the Purpleheart does not disappoint. The reasonably thick 8-ply tom and bass drum shells (which are reportedly more dense than oak), produce a

## Also try...



### 2 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."

warm tone with plenty of attack and projection - reminiscent of bubinga shells, but less dark with complex natural overtones.

The un-drilled bass drum is quick and punchy and loves being tuned super low. The sound is complemented by the in-built tone control inlay ring on the batter head and the clicky beater on my attached pedal.

The toms are focussed and also lend themselves well to lower tunings. With more of a slap in the initial attack at the lower ranges, the drums still manage to hold plenty of tone - fantastic for playing rock styles. The drums tune up well and sound amazing in a funk setting too, demonstrating their impressive versatility. This is helped along considerably by the warm and responsive crack of the matching Purpleheart snare. Individually, the toms sing and, regardless of

tuning, always sound in harmony with each other - a DW characteristic that's no doubt a result of the meticulous timbre matching.

Despite the typically high DW price tag, this uniquely stunning kit is one to see and hear for yourself. It is unlikely to disappoint. **R**

**VERDICT:** The Purpleheart is an impressive kit both visually and sonically. Drummers are rewarded with a generous low-end, providing the foundation for a full-bodied, versatile drum kit.

**PATHFINDER**  
**BUILD QUALITY**  
**PLAYABILITY**  
**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
**RHYTHM RATING**

