

Latin Percussion Drum Kit Add-Ons

From £14 | Bored with conventional kit sounds?
Geoff Nicholls discovers LP's new accessories.

ESSENTIALS



PRICES

Rock Ridge Rider	£43
Gajate Bracket	£42
Joey Castillo Pack	£60
Mini Rack	£50
Bass Cowbell	
Bracket	£14
Stealth Jam Block	£40
Black Beauty	£26
Green Blast Block	£18

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LP's new range of add-ons is extensive to say the least. There's a pretty pile of items here, so let's skip the chit-chat and dive straight in. First up is the Stealth Jam Block. The jam block is the modern equivalent of the woodblock, the difference being that it's made from a fantastically tough plastic called Jenigor. The block itself is conveniently designed so that it can be mounted centrally or from either side. It is secured via a threaded steel bolt with a mini-clamp which has two small spikes to prevent it from swivelling.

Jam blocks produce a shrill and penetrating 'clock' sound, similar to that of a real wood block, but with the advantage that you can smack the jam block as hard as you like and the only thing that will shatter is your stick. Jam blocks can double as claves, or for snare drum cross-sticks, depending on the musical context and where and how you strike them. The Stealth Block is a funky black version which comes with a co-ordinated black powder-coated mounting rod and multi-clamp.

Queens of the tone age

Endorsed by the hard-hitting QOTSA sticksman himself, the Joey Castillo Drum Kit Pack is a two-in-one set pairing a mounted Cyclops tambourine with a red, relatively low-pitched jam block. The two items clamp one above the other on a vertical rod that can be fastened to any convenient stand using the included Gibraltar accessory mount multi-clamp. Temptingly, it comes with a free Queens' CD single ('Little Sister'), on which you can hear Joey belting out fours on his jam block.

The tambourine's elliptical shape means you can slot it in next to or above your hi-hats to add a tambourine back beat along with your snare, play 16th notes, etc. The Cyclops also has rounded edges for stick comfort.

There is one concern though. Because the two instruments are clamped to the same bracket, when you strike the jam block the tambourine jingles inevitably join in via sympathetic vibration. I don't think there's any solution to this, and it may not trouble you, but you have been warned.

Cowbells and mounts

The Black Beauty is the classic cowbell for all-round pop or rock use. In fact, LP claims this 5" (12.5cm) bell is the most recorded cowbell in history. It has a high-pitched note and the rounded edges make it easy to get a decent sound whichever way you strike it.

All LP mounted cowbells have a forged eye-bolt clamp assembly welded to the back of the bell at an angle. When used on a bass drum with two top toms, I found the angled bracket meant the wingnut was out of the way of the second tom, and you can pull the second tom in closer than you would be able to with a straight mount.

The eye-bolt clamp slots onto a $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter mounting rod, and the large wing nut is easy to grasp. The bracket is also equipped with rubberised pads in the clamp jaws so that it won't gouge notches out of your beautiful bass drum hoops.



Like the Black Beauty, the Rock Ridge Rider Cowbell is made from black painted steel, but it's bigger (8", or 20cm), heavier and has a deeper tone. It also has a ridge of red Jenigor plastic riveted onto its top lip. The Jenigor dampens the resonance of the bell a little and also reduces the likelihood of denting the bell's mouth with constant playing.

Inbetween the cowbell and the jam block (in both looks and sound) we have the Green Blast Block. This has a 'D' cross section offering both curved and flat striking surfaces. It's made from another plastic formulation which LP calls Bellastic. The sound is sharp and biting with an explosive, almost rim shot-style punch.

Gajate's new gizmo

The Gajate bracket is an ingenious gizmo, designed in collaboration with percussionist Richie Gajate-Garcia. It is a floor bracket designed for mounting cowbells, jam blocks, or what-have-you, for playing with a foot pedal in the manner first made famous by Horacio Hernandez. The bracket comes in four sections, including an 'L' shaped steel mounting rod.

It took me a few minutes to figure out how to erect the thing from the pictures on the box, but once I did I could see the logic in the construction. The four

KEY FEATURES

LP's Stealth Jam Block, made from super tough Jenigor plastic, is one of the company's great achievements.



Joey Castillo pairs Cyclops tambourine and red jam block on this easily mounted and adaptable double unit.

LP Cowbells are handmade in the USA from premium quality steel using the same specifications developed by LP founder Martin Cohen more than 40 years ago.

The Gajate bracket is in four parts, which disassemble for ease of transport. Note the serious anti-creep spurs.

sections fold away for ease of transport or storage. LP has redesigned the front anchor section which consists of a pair of scary looking reversible spurs. You can mount various percussion instruments on the 'L' rod and there is scope for a fair amount of vertical adjustment so you will be able to accommodate a variety of differently sized bells.

Finally we have the Mini Everything Rack, a cut-down version of the sort of mount a percussionist often uses – a horizontal steel bar with vertical rods for all your toys. The strong 'U' channel bar

is just 7½" (19cm) long so it's easy to tuck away somewhere around your kit. It is designed to be close clamped to a convenient stand and it has two vertical rods which can be rotated through 360° for maximum flexibility. Each of the rods has a 7" (18cm) vertical reach so you can mount two or three toys on each of them. What's more, you can mount them either above or below the horizontal bar, which makes it even more adaptable. **R**

RHYTHM VERDICT

One way to spice up your playing is by learning new grooves, but an equally valid method is to vary your sounds. Since percussion tracks appear on just about every record made these days, more and more kit drummers are working on their four-way co-ordination and adding colour to their core beats. These LP add-ons are no longer just the province of Latin players, they can find a place in any style of music, as evidenced by Joey Castillo's endorsement and Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy appearing on the Stealth Jam Block box. LP's bulletproof toys are the way to go.

+ Spice up tired grooves with these supremely sturdy and colourful add-ons.

- Hit the Joey Castillo jam block and the tambourine will sound in sympathy.

RATING

