

DE GREGORIO MAESTRAL CAJON

£250 De Gregorio's new cajon is something truly special

WORDS: CHARLIE PRICE



FRONT PLATE

An extra, slightly thicker front panel is included, which gives you two distinct sound options

CONSTRUCTION

Cajon is made from 9mm Birch Plywood and has a 6mm rear panel

Essential spec



PRICE

£249.99

MATERIAL

Birch

FRONT PLATE

Birch plywood (2mm and 2.5mm)

SNARE WIRES

Double guitar strings

CONTACT

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Revered Italian cajon maker Paolo De Gregorio has brought something truly special to the table with his latest creation, the Maestral cajon. It is a thing of beauty, and like the rest of De Gregorio's cajons, in terms of construction, you really can't get much better.

Build

Made in Spain, the body of the Maestral is formed from 9mm Birch Plywood and has a 6mm Birch rear panel. The Tapa (front plate) is 2mm birch plywood with a veneer stamped on top, and it's available in two versions: Makassar (black and brown) and the rainbow-coloured Iris, which is the one we're examining. Uniquely, DG include an extra front panel which is a slightly thicker 2.5mm birch plywood and features a stained black finish. The changeover of front plates takes only five or so minutes and gives you two distinct sound options within the same high quality surround. You are also able to select additional front plates from DG that'll fit the Maestral so you'll certainly have one versatile cajon.

The back of the cajon is a 6mm birch panel with a 'standard' rear sound hole and all aspects are of the highest quality and finished flawlessly. All the inner reinforcements are birch and the snare is a twin double guitar-string system with bottom tensioning and a high-resistance six-strip Velcro muffling system to control string resonance. The snare sets are independently adjustable via a hex key underneath. All the wood is FSC certified and the finish is a double lacquer of water-based varnish, eco friendly and complying to the Kyoto protocol no less. Another bonus is the inclusion of a fascinating complimentary DVD produced by DG entitled *The Ways Of The Cajón*.

Hands On

As soon as you make the first few explorative strokes on the Maestral, you realise that you're in for something special. Considering that the dimensions are pretty conservative (49cm x 29cm x 30cm) you'll be surprised with not only the achievable volume but the full range of tones at your disposal. The Maestral really is a beauty, with a myriad of highly musical

tones that blend together wonderfully and is just so satisfying to play. Bass tones sound fabulously rich and present even at low volume levels and the mid to high register is warm and super articulate. The snare system is highly adjustable and complements the 'natural' sound of the cajon really well. The level of snare snap can be adjusted effortlessly by repositioning or removing the Velcro strips and there is a hex key as well as a tool to aid changeover of the front plate inside the cajon. **R**

VERDICT De Gregorio has carved out a formidable reputation over the last few years and their creations are beautifully made and sound incredible, as well as possessing real character. The Maestral is a stunning addition to DG's catalogue.

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