

PAISTE MASTERS ADDITIONS



From £442.80 Big but far from brash, Paiste Masters new models are smooth and super-sized

WORDS: ADAM JONES

Paiste's Masters series was first introduced in 2011 and initially consisted of 12 rides that were, in the words of the company, "laboriously hand-manufactured to achieve superior sound ideal in various musical genres". In 2014 the dozen rides were joined by three crashes (since expanded to five) and two pairs of hi-hats. Now, after what Paiste candidly describes as an "exceptionally long development phase of three years", seven new models have joined the Masters series.

Build

Responding to requests from drummers seeking "lightweight, low-pitched cymbals for use in lower volume surroundings" Paiste has unveiled three pairs of Light hi-hats in 14", 15" and 16" diameters and three new multifunction models designated Thin in 20", 22" and 24". The final new cymbal is a 22" Swish, made to the specifications of session legend and Paiste endorsee Jim Keltner.

As with all Masters cymbals, the new models are completely handmade from start to finish, individually cast from CuSn20 (B20) bronze and then hand-hammered and hand-lathed. Only Paiste's most experienced cymbalsmiths get to work on Masters models, though Paiste points out that a fair chunk of its Swiss workforce has been at the company long enough to fall into this category. The cymbals share similarly shallow profiles, fine lathing and a profusion of delicate hammer marks (with the exception of the Swish, which is pocked with deeper hammering). The bells rise to a reasonable height but do not distract from the gentle curvature on show.

Though the 20"-24" Thins are capable of being both crashed and ridden, Paiste deliberately chose not to label them as crash/rides. The theory goes that naming the cymbals by weight rather than function is more neutral and lets the drummer decide how he or she wants to use them. The only

Also try...



1 SABIAN ARTISAN ELITE HI-HATS AND RIDES

We say: "At the pinnacle of Sabian's craft, but such exquisite cymbals do not come cheap."



2 ZILDJIAN K KEROPE HI-HATS AND RIDES

We say: "Dark and mysterious, malleable and full of complex, bittersweet character."



AS IF BY MAGIC

The stunning 22" Swish was developed at the request of Paiste endorsee Jim Keltner

other cymbals designated Thins in Paiste's stable are found in its Giant Beat range where, coincidentally, you'll find the only other 16" Paiste hi-hats. Jim Keltner's involvement with the development of the 22" Swish appears to have been substantial, with Paiste describing the finished product as his concept of a Swish.

Hands On

The hats are paired with a thin top cymbal and a medium thin bottom and all three diameters will pitch bend when closed by

applying pressure to the hi-hat pedal. Starting with the 14" pair, I'm struck by just how mellow they sound; it's as though a sound engineer has smoothed off any top-end spikiness. There is some brightness present in the note but it's of the most refined character - like the product of an exclusive Swiss finishing school. Such credentials don't prevent them from responding instantly to the lightest of prompts, though. Played gently with stick tips the sound is as close to woody as you'll

THERE IS SOME BRIGHTNESS PRESENT IN THE NOTE BUT IT'S OF THE MOST REFINED CHARACTER - LIKE THE PRODUCT OF AN EXCLUSIVE SWISS FINISHING SCHOOL



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Thins are so called in order to ward off any preconceptions of their use

GENTLE GIANTS

The generous dimensions of the larger models guarantee expansive tonality and stage presence

ever get from a pair of hi-hats, while shouldering delivers a warm, broad note. Pushing further up the dynamic scale they tip into a lush wash.

Moving onto the 15" pair finds the same qualities in abundance albeit with a lowering of pitch and an increase in volume. The mellowness is still evident, as is the quickness of response, and all dynamic variations are catered for with poise. The richness of the note, particularly when opening and closing, begs for a big band to appear and join in. Stepping brings a clear 'chick' that is reminiscent of the indicator sound in a really expensive car - there is unmistakable quality in this detail alone.

Trading up to the 16" finds the depth of note at its most expansive. Superbly warm, rich and fuzzy, the hats are almost addictively playable. Despite their go-large-with-that size they remain wonderfully controllable - it's

clear why a fair few pocket players are making such diameter hats their go-to.

After a brief (but necessary) lie down I turn to the trio of Thins. First impressions reveal how easily they all open to crash. And what a crash... wide, deep and fizzing with warmth and musicality. The same liveliness is apparent when riding, as any sticking is soon chased by a busy wash. Playing with particular care keeps the wash under control; once a certain velocity is reached, each of the Thins happily breaks into a rolling crash that adds an alluring blend of looseness and excitement to the proceedings (especially with the 24"). Moving onto the bell brings a sharpening of tone, but these cymbals are far too civilised to be mere clangers. They're full of subtleties and are begging for the scrutiny of a recording studio.

The 22" Swish is soft, dark and spiced with delicate trashiness, responding to anything

that is waved in its direction. It's an ideal alt-ride or even main ride, giving a smoky stick sound over a gentle wash.

Crashing brings forth a drenching of sweet attack and complex tonality while experimenting with mallets and brushes reveals a different characteristic with each pass. Without question, this is a truly exceptional cymbal. **R**

VERDICT: These are big, beautiful and sophisticated cymbals capable of nuance and expression, best suited for players (particularly those studio-bound) who seek such attributes. This sort of quality comes at a price, but you probably knew that already.

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

Essential spec



PRICE

14" Masters Thin hats: £498;
 15" Masters Thin hats, £546;
 16" Masters Thin hats, £622.80;
 20" Masters Thin, £442.80;
 22" Masters Thin, £526.80;
 24" Masters Thin, £562.80;
 22" Masters Swish, £526.80

CAST OR PRESSED

Cast

ALLOY USED

CuSn20 (B20) bronze

HAND HAMMERED

Yes

FINISH

Natural/buffed

COUNTRY OF MANUFACTURE

Switzerland

DIAMETERS AVAILABLE

14", 15", 16", 20", 22", 24"

MODELS AVAILABLE

Hi-hats, Thins, Swish

SUITABLE FOR

Jazz, blues, funk, pop and anything acoustic

CONTACT

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