



**TRIED
AND
TESTED**



Sabian's new Vault crashes and Vault Artisan rides are Brilliant! (They come in Normal finish too.)



ESSENTIALS

PRICES:

Sabian Vault cymbals:	
16" Vault crash	£236
17" Vault crash	£253
18" Vault crash	£273
19" Vault crash	£293
20" Vault crash	£325
20" Artisan	
Light ride	£495
20" Artisan	
Medium ride	£495
22" Artisan	
Light ride	£575
22" Artisan	
Medium ride	£575
22" Artisan Medium	
Brilliant ride	£575

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Sabian Vault Crashes & Vault Artisan Rides

First came Vault crashes, then Vault Artisan rides – Sabian's most expensive, labour-intensive cymbals. **Geoff Nicholls** is impressed...

Vault is the name Sabian has chosen for its latest cymbal collection – the Vault crashes and Vault Artisan rides. The choice of titles is interesting – the word 'Vault' conjures up an image of a cache of vintage cymbals that Sabian has kept shored up in its cellars for decades, while 'Artisan' hints at experience and craftsmanship. These are popular themes in recent years, with every cymbal company working to produce that perfect, old-school, dark, slightly trashy ride. But while the Artisan rides have an undeniably traditional vibe,

the Vault crashes have an altogether more modern appearance and sound.

Diversity seems to be the key to the Vault banner. Sabian says there will be "no limitations in terms of looks or sounds" to the Vault collection. Sabian recently took a load of prototype Vault cymbals out on tour to garner feedback from its customers. The conclusion was that "because player needs are diverse and always changing, the Vault collection will be ongoing and open-ended in terms of model additions."

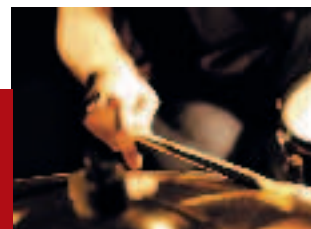
In other words, Vault cymbals are designed to reflect the wishes and needs

of Sabian's customers and endorsees. And they draw on the ability of Sabian's craftsmen to fashion cymbals relevant to what players want to play, now and in the future. I'm not sure how this differs much from the market research any smart company normally does – but I think we get the picture.

The sound of silver

Vault cymbals are crafted from Sabian's finest B20 bronze. This alloy is always described as containing a trace of silver. I had always assumed that the silver was

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UP CLOSE

Sabian Vault Crashes & Artisan Vault Rides



The Vault crashes have Brilliant finishes, while the fine lathing and large bells provide extra volume for slicing through all styles of music.



With its understated Artisan and 'V' for Vault logos on soft-gold surfaces, Sabian has surpassed itself with the classy look of the Artisan rides.



Each Artisan ride is given a special serial number, complete with certificate of authenticity and a single-cymbal protective bag.

the 'magic' added ingredient. Apparently not. Silver is present in unrefined copper, and most companies actually extract it by electrolysis. Sabian, however, uses the older method of 'fire refining' which leaves the silver embedded in the copper. Needless to say, Sabian reckons that the silver improves the sound. And the Vault cymbals are somehow crafted to make a particular feature of the silver, the ingredient that emphasises the 'tsss' sibilance.

Vault crashes

There is a range of five crashes from 16" to 20", all in Brilliant finish, with fine lathing top and bottom. They bear the usual Sabian logo, plus the big 'V' for Vault logo. They are quite thin, with slightly enlarged bells for added volume.

Vault cymbals are somehow crafted to make a particular feature of the silver, the ingredient that emphasises the 'tsss' sibilance.

What generally happens with crashes is that you get a high-pitched initial 'tssh' that quickly dies and is followed by a deeper after-tone. With the Vault crashes, it's noticeable that the initial 'tssh' is bright, smooth and silvery, with a rising pitch, but the after-tone is not as deep as usual. This makes the cymbals very clean and toppy, although luckily there's still plenty of body. The fine pin lathing increases the top end so that, although the cymbals are quite lightweight, they nevertheless have a pitch that's higher than usual. They are very bright, shimmering and punchy, without being brash. They also have good sustain following the initial fast crash. And being thin, they respond well at low volumes, as well as high. So they are capable of being both sensitive and powerful.

There is good consistency across the range, so whichever size(s) you choose, you shouldn't be disappointed. I personally loved the 16", which is lightning fast and super clean, almost like a splash cymbal, while the 18" and 19" appealed because they are large without being too deep.

Vault Artisan rides

The Artisan rides come as either a Light or Medium 20" or 22" in normal or Brilliant finishes. For review we were sent 20" and 22" Light and

Medium cymbals in normal finish, plus a single 22" Medium in the Brilliant finish.

If the Vault crashes are toppy and transparent, the Artisan rides are dark and mysterious. They are also the most expensive cymbals Sabian makes and will be offered in limited, serial-numbered quantities. This is all because they require oodles of labour and skill, undergoing extensive, traditional 'high-density' hammering, not to mention 'jumbo' hammering (which apparently boosts the low end response). The extra hammering results in the cymbal being hyper responsive across its entire surface – no dull spots. This is certainly true – the

of a light stick. To summarise, the two Light cymbals have a softer sound and more spread as a result of being thinner. They also have less constricted bell tones for the same reason.

As for the single Brilliant finish 22" Medium, I'm not usually so keen on Brilliant rides but, funnily enough, this was my favourite of the three 22"s. The reason is that it seems to have marginally more initial impact and definition. It's more concise and lower in pitch than the normal finish Medium. It's really a matter of personal taste though, since all these cymbals are very classy indeed. **B**



20" Light ride, the first cymbal I went for, felt electric. It was buzzing over the entire surface, brimming with life. The sound was soft and deep, and a little bit trashy, with great spread – and yet the stick clarity was exceptional. There was a real 'tick' to every ride stroke that seemed to be amplified above the background wash.

What also impressed was the continuity of response from the shoulder of the cymbal through to the bell. With most cymbals, the bell feels like a separate instrument from the rest of the cymbal. But with this cymbal there is a gradation from the shoulder through the bell, getting tingier and fruitier as you approach the centre. I felt this more with the two Light cymbals – the 20" and 22" – than with the other three Mediums. It gives you a great musical feel, and lends the cymbals versatility.

While the 20" Light remained my favourite, the 22" Light has the same properties, but in greater degrees. As a result, it takes some controlling, and you'll either revel in it or find it a handful. Near the edge, it reverberates and wobbles, and you can easily crash it with the tip

VERDICT: The Vault crashes are exceptionally clean, bright and transparent, and will surely have a broad appeal. At the same time, they're sensitive and will work in loud or soft situations. In terms of where they fit in, I'd suggest they're not as abrasive as the HHXplosion crashes (reviewed in *Rhythm* 110, April 2005) while being slightly less warm than the traditional HH crashes.

As for the Vault Artisan rides, these are very special. I found the 20" Light ride to be a wonderful cymbal – it has so much sound, with a spectacular, tone-rich bell that seems to glide out of the shoulder of the cymbal rather than sit on top.

Finally, the stick response is extremely articulated, standing clear of the deep, searingly broad 'tahhh', which you only ever hear on a very expensive cymbal – hot and steamy like dragon's breath.

PLUS: Glassy, shimmering crashes and deep, articulate rides that you'll find very hard to better.

MINUS: The Artisan rides are the dearest cymbals that Sabian – and probably anyone else – has ever made.

RATING:

