

PROVENANCE SNARE DRUMS



From £1,050 From the cockpit to the drum kit – a brace of snares from a UK company building drums from fighter jets and classic cars

WORDS: RICH CHAMBERLAIN

When it comes to snare shell materials, us drummers are spoilt for choice. You've got maple, birch, bubinga, oak, steel, bronze, acrylic, concrete, all sorts. You name it, it's probably already been lovingly fashioned into a drum. Provenance Drums offer something genuinely a little bit different – snare drums made from parts of classic cars and fighter jets.

Build

Here we have a 14"x3¼" piccolo made from a 1990 Bentley Mulsanne V8 cylinder head and a 14"x5½" snare created from an F4 Phantom fighter jet. Both drums are sand cast aluminium with 2.3mm triple-flanged hoops and rounded bearing edges. Both also feature lathed shells, chrome tube lugs – eight for the piccolo and 10 for the 14"x5½". Provenance has also made drums from a 1966 Jaguar MKII, a 1962 Bentley S2, a 1962

right out of the box. On placing the deliciously diminutive drum as a side snare (with the 14"x5½" as the main snare) we get to work and quickly find that even the slightest of hits results in a satisfying ping. Its placement as the side snare allows some interesting accents to be peppered in alongside the main snare sound. Rim-shots are where this piccolo really shines, a measured whack of the drum's rim powers out an ear-piercing 'pow' – clear as a bell and twice as loud. It's also at a perfect pitch, any higher and only canines would be able to hear it and any lower and you'd lose a huge chunk of the drum's 'wow' appeal. The snare functions perfectly as a side snare for the rock set that this reviewer is playing, and would be just as at home as a main snare in a pop or funk gig.

One blemish on the drum's otherwise crystal clear copybook is the strainer. While the larger drum uses a sturdy Dunnett R

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Rolls Royce, to name just a few examples.

Owner Tim Broughton explains that he sources such materials from dealers, collectors and fellow enthusiasts. On the company's origins, he tells us: "I have a fascination with history, historical artifacts and classic design, as well as a passion for music, drums and drumming. In particular I love British aviation, automobile and maritime objects. After visiting an aviation museum, I thought it would be a cool thing to make a snare from a Spitfire. The idea grew from that to what Provenance is today."

Hands on

But is it all a gimmick? Style over substance, perhaps? The answer is a resounding 'no'. It doesn't take long for us to realise how special these drums really are.

The piccolo sounds absolutely gorgeous

Class, the piccolo carries a slightly less impressive Gibraltar strainer. A mild disappointment, especially when you're paying north of £1,000 for a single drum.

The 14"x5½" snare is an entirely different proposition, despite the numerous visual similarities between the two. One area in which there is no comparison, though, is weight. While the piccolo can be carried under one arm with ease, the larger drum is something more of a muscle stretcher. Well, they don't make those fighter jets out of any old material, you know.

A sturdy 5B to the middle of the drum draws somewhat surprising results. Where the piccolo sends out a sweet ping, the larger snare sounds somewhat dead on first impression, bellowing out an ungodly, boomy thud, like a cricket bat to the side of the head. A few turns of the drum key and it soon bursts into life with an explosion of

sound, as we find more of a deep growl with a hint of metallic overtone. Cranking the snare to its limits brings a whip-like crack that gets a big thumbs-up from the rest of the band.

Sonically, it's not a million miles away from the Echo Custom Drums aluminium snares that we reviewed back in our April 2012 issue. The drum's tonal capabilities aren't quite as wide-ranging as those found with the piccolo, but the 14"x5½" remains a solid performer which also packs plenty of body – you can get a satisfyingly full, fat sound jam-packed with resonance.

The larger snare also falls just behind the piccolo when it comes to note articulation, with the former showing breathtaking crispness, while the latter is a little more sluggish, but again this is to be expected when comparing two such differing drums and is no slight on the larger snare's performance. While both drums are metal, there's not a single hint of clang to their sound, instead both are more than capable of a beautifully clear tone, and both kick out a hell of a racket when required.

Of course, both drums are eye-wateringly expensive. £1,000-plus for a snare drum is monumentally pricey, but then we must remember that something being expensive doesn't necessarily equate to poor value for money. These drums require wads of cash, but they are genuine works of one-off art as well as fantastic drums. **R**

Also try...



1 ECHO CUSTOM DRUMS

We say: "It's hard to see how Echo can improve on this first collection of metal shell snares, which are superb in every department."



2 LUDWIG ACROLITE

We say: "The lightweight seamless aluminium shell is the ace in the hole of the distinctive bright tone of the Acrolite. A go-to, all-round drum – hard to fault."

VERDICT: A pair of stunning drums that not only offer up amazing sounds, but also show just what you can do with an old motor. We wonder if they can whisk something up from our old Ford Escort...

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



HOOPS

Both drums are sand-cast aluminium with 2.3mm triple-flanged hoops

PICCOLO SNARE

Drum is made from a 1990 Bentley Mulsanne V8 cylinder head

14"X5 1/2" SNARE

Drum is made from an F4 Phantom fighter jet

LUGS

Both drums feature lathed shells and chrome tube lugs

Essential spec



PRICE

£1,050 (14x3 1/4"); £1,199 (14"x5 1/2")

SHELL MATERIAL

Aluminium

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Sand Cast

NUMBER OF PLYS

7mm

BEARING EDGES

Rounded

HOOPS / RIMS

2.3mm triple flanged

SHELL AVAILABILITY

As reviewed: 14x3 1/4" and 14x5 1/2"

SUPPLIED HEADS

Aquarian Textured Coated and Classic Clear

LUGS PER DRUM

Eight Chrome Tube (piccolo) and 10 Chrome Tube (14"x5 1/2")

SNARE STRAINER

Gibraltar (piccolo) and Dunnett 'R' Class (14"x5 1/2")

SNARE WIRES

Puresound 16-strand

CONTACT

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