

DW COLLECTORS SERIES – SOLID STAVE OAK SNARE DRUM

Drum Workshop has manufactured high quality drums for decades now, and have usually been the choice of drummers and ultimate drum kit dreamers for years. Hell, even I still want one. In light of so many new products bursting onto the scene in 2010 DW has responded with a series of custom super snares, so to speak, to give drummers even more personalisation and creativity, depending on the desired sound. Just to give you more of an idea why DW are at the forefront of drum kit production, the guys are taking it a step further with the introduction of systems like Specialised Shell Construction (SSC) where the drummer can literally choose shell construction to fully customise the drums to sound however they want. Everything from sustain, tonal character and preference of shell pitch is possible; combining different plywoods with different running grains achieves this. With regard to snare drums, this technology paves the way for many possibilities. These days, it's hip to make snares differently. DW offer drums made from ply, drums out of a solid piece of wood (Super Solid), drums that mix metal and wood (Edge) and our drum in review: Solid Stave.

Solid Stave

One of the latest releases from these recent snare drum creations is the Collectors Series Solid Stave series. Essentially, the shell for this drum is constructed in much the same way as a conga drum, with solid measured strips of wood called staves joined together to form the shell. It also features reinforcement hoops on the inside of the shell near the bearing edge, which is said to brighten the pitch slightly. This particular snare is made from lovely oak, and is only available in a 14" x 5.5" configuration, which as I found out, is no bad thing. It features four air holes, a slightly deeper snare bed and natural stain, comes lacquered on the inside and outside of the shell and boasts chrome hardware. Drum Workshop also offer this drum with five different types of hardware — chrome, satin chrome, black chrome, black nickel and 24 karat gold — to match any existing drums you have. The Solid Stave is also available in other woods like ash and asian para wood.

The oak Solid Stave is heavy and extremely well-made. Every inch of this drum screams quality. It actually looks hideously expensive, and I honestly felt like just spending time with it, even if I didn't play it. It made my jaw drop when I saw it. All of the chrome fittings and hoops look gorgeous, the DW drumheads are gig-worthy out of the box and the oak with a natural stain makes you appreciate a really nice wood in all its glory. However, of everything on the drum, the one thing that blew my mind was the snare throw-off.

Never before have I seen something like this. Drum Workshop now offer two snare throw-offs. The first is called the Delta, and is based on the same throw-off we're all used to seeing



on a snare drum. And although I'm sure DW have ensured durability, the standard throw-off is usually the first thing to go on a snare. They may have just eliminated that problem with the new MAG throw-off.

Sound Baby!

I tend to lean towards deeper drums these days for, not surprisingly, more depth. I also crave a drum that behaves at a variety of tensions. The Solid Stave, although only available in 5.5-inch depth, is fantastic. I found it to be supremely easy to tune. Crank the head and you get a winning crack that really cuts. De-tune and you get enough depth to make you happy; maybe not as much as a 7-inch drum, but still very reasonable. It does make a fairly audible note at lower tunings and I had to add some dampening. Although, I dampen as a rule because I prefer a dry sound, The Solid Stave never produced that nasty honk you can get with some snares. The Solid Stave gives just enough of the wires and is much more manageable. I can see this drum being versatile enough to play a multitude of styles. I reckon a heavier head will yield even more depth with ease since the drum won't annoy the hell out of you with massive, out-of-control, overtones. Overall, I really, really liked this drum. If the looks don't win you over, the sound will. Some players will want more top end and a slightly brighter sound, but I tended to like the darker sound. I would love to have a drum like this in my arsenal. It could easily be a workhorse or just a special thing for recording. Either way, it would please. The Solid Stave retails for \$2299.99, which indeed, is a high asking for any drum. The reason for this is its concept, the nature of its construction, the fittings used and the fact you are dealing with a high-quality brand that essentially delivers the Lamborghini of drums. It's an exotic snare and not your average run-of-the-mill. Worth it? It'll depend on your perspective, but there's no doubt the Solid Stave is something special.

By Adrian Violi

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