

Brady Custom Drums

Wonder From Down Under

HITS

ultra-resonant shells with minimal lug design

unique exotic look

outstanding craftsmanship and quality guarantee

by Mike Haid

Many "custom" or "boutique" drum companies offer comparable materials, manufacturing methods, and designs, making the job of choosing between them difficult. But Australia's Brady Drums stands out from the pack on many levels. Foremost of these is the unique exotic woods that Brady offers. Hand-selected jarrah, karri, and marri wood veneers are used for Brady's ply drum manufacturing. These species are found only in Western Australia, and are much harder than rock maple.

Our review kit is a seven-piece outfit (one more drum than the photo indicates) made from karri wood and finished in Brady's distinctive Blackheart satin veneer. Let's take a look.

Building The Perfect Beast

To create veneers to make their shells, Brady cuts each veneer from the same section of a tree, with all timber grain running in the same horizontal direction around the shell (not cross-laminated). The shells are created using a dry-mold system with special epoxy glue that excludes the use of water. The company feels that this method makes reinforcement hoops and other stability measures unnecessary. An air bag is used to apply extreme pressure to the shell for twenty-four hours. This unusual method allows the glue and non-cross-laminated sheets of veneer to morph into one solid mass, creating a shell that produces the unique Brady sound. A testament to Brady's confidence in their quality is their guarantee that Brady shells will never go out of round.



Looking Good

If you're going to dish out the big bucks for a custom drumkit, chances are you're going to want something that stands out from the crowd. You couldn't go wrong with this karri wood design. The Blackheart wood finish has a tiger-stripe look that may be the most distinctive of all Brady ply finishes. The various shades of brown and tan grains that encircle the shells make the Blackheart kit a visual stage centerpiece. Even the small, glossy, raised Brady badge (which features a drummer dressed in marching gear and carrying a parade drum) adds an individualistic flair to the design.

I was impressed with Brady's small, rounded lug. Its minimalistic design adds to the distinct look of the drum, but it also serves as a major component in maximum shell resonance. (More about that later.)

Let Freedom Ring

Speaking of resonance, Brady drums are designed to excel in that area, and they've got it down to a science. Our review drums were unquestionably the most resonant shells that I've had the pleasure of testing. Each size of shell was constructed with a different number of plies for optimum resonance. The smaller the shell, the fewer the plies—with the exception of the snare drum. (See the Numbers box for the size/ply breakdown.)

Each bearing edge was smooth, flawless, and consistent. Although the bass drum didn't feel perfectly round when running my hands around the shell, it was easily the most resonant of all the drums in this kit. The proof is in the pudding!

Hardware

Let's talk about that groovy lug design again. The Brady bass drum and tom lugs are machined out of solid brass and steel, and are about the size of a marble. The snare drum features classic tube-style lugs. (Even the vent hole grommets are chromed, machined brass.) The lugs are placed on the nodal points of the shells, and are isolated from them by special washers that are impervious to oil, moisture, heat, and UV lighting. (Can you say "attention to detail"?)

Brady insists that their drums sound best with triple-flanged rather than die-cast hoops, so their snare drums and toms are fitted with 2.3-mm triple-flanged models. The snare is fitted with a clear/chrome version of the Nickel Drumworks strainer. The snare wires are custom built using high-quality German wire.

The toms came equipped with a suspension mounting system using ball-joint tom mounts that clamp to a cymbal stand. There was no mounting hardware on the bass drum. The bass drum features easily adjustable and solidly constructed legs, and the hoops are held on with rubber-lined die-cast claws.

Heads Up

Hats off to Brady for their drumhead selection. The toms were fitted with clear Remo Emperor batters and clear Ambassadors on the resonant side. All the toms had a well-balanced sound and feel with a warm, wet tone and just enough sustain with no muting.

The bass drum featured Remo's clear PowerStroke 3 batter, with a non-vented Ebony PowerStroke 3 on the front and no internal muffling. The sheer power, bombastic low end, and solid punch of this bass drum turned heads when I used this kit on stage. In terms of overall volume, tone, and punch, this is the largest-sounding bass drum I've ever put my foot into.

I had never used a Remo coated reverse black dot head, but I was pleasantly surprised with its application as a snare drum batter. It seemed to help control unwanted overtones when the drum was struck in the black

dot area, but it allowed the drum to open up when struck off center.

I'm sure that these drums would sound great with any head configuration because of their overall quality construction. But I felt no need to try any other heads, because the original models produced the exact sound that I'd be looking for in a kit like this. We're talking fat, punchy, and resonant.

Conclusion

I had *no* problem getting a great sound out of the Brady karri kit, whether tuning it up or down. The look, feel, and sound more than meet the criteria for an outstanding custom drumset, making it well worth the investment. There was nothing that I felt was flawed or scrimped on in any aspect of the creation of this kit. If anything, Brady has gone out of its way to make sure that you receive a truly custom, 100% handcrafted, top-quality kit.

THE NUMBERS

7x8 5-ply tom\$ 690
(not shown in photo)	
8x10 6-ply tom\$ 800
9x12 7-ply tom\$ 890
11x14 8-ply tom\$1,120
13x16 9-ply tom\$1,160
6½x14 10-ply snare\$1,010
18x22 12-ply bass drum\$2,180
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