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PRODUCT CLOSE-UP

Doc Sweeney Drums Legend Series M22 Drumset

A divine steam-bent beech setup that'll make you want to retire your vintage kit for good.

By Michael Dawson

In case you haven't been paying attention, Doc Sweeney Drums is straight killing it with its creative, innovative, and inspiring approach to the solid-shell snare and drumset. We have reviewed many of their drums over the years, and we continue to be blown away by the craftsmanship and the massive-yet-musical sounds.

This month, we got our hands on one of the first Legend series drumsets. This new line consists of two different three-piece shell packs that expand the very popular Legends series snares modeled after coveted Slingerland and Leedy solid-shell drums of the 1920s to 1940s. While the Legend series snares come in maple, walnut, and myrtle, the kits come in maple, walnut, and European beech. (Matching beech snares now exist, too.)

The Specs

We received the M22 configuration, which comprises a 14x22 bass drum, a 9x13 tom, a 15x16 floor tom, and a matching 6.5x14 snare in European beech. Each drum features a sleek Dark Matter finish that gives the drums a striking and timeless look, while allowing the gorgeous woodgrain to peak through the black stain.

Hardware appointments include classic triple-flange hoops, heavy-duty spurs, easy-to-adjust floor-tom legs and brackets, and sturdy bass-drum claws. The rack tom comes without a mount, so you'll need to place it in a snare basket or add a suspension system later. (Spoiler: You won't need a suspension system to get the maximum tone from this bad boy.)

The matching beech snare has eight lugs and Doc Sweeney's proprietary DS1 rotary throw-off. We've talked about the DS1 in previous reviews, but to put it simply: It works...well.

Drumheads include Remo Ambassador Vintage Coated batters on the toms and snare, and Ambassador Clear and Hazy Snare Side on the bottoms. The bass drum features a Remo Powerstroke P4 batter and a Fiberskyn front.

Sweet Sounds

In the accompanying literature, Doc Sweeney states, "Our focus was to build a kit with a big, fat, warm sound." (Check, check, check!) To achieve that, they incorporated a special 30-degree round-over bearing edge that puts more of the drumhead in direct contact with the steam-bent shell. (For anyone wondering, steam-bent shells consist of a single plank of wood that's wetted and then softened in a steamer so it can be curved into a circle and glued into place at the joint.) In my experience, steam-bent drums often exhibit punchier and denser tones than their plywood counterparts, but they sometimes succumb to choking out and sounding boxy. That's not the case with the Legends series kit. These suckers sing!

My usual approach to testing a drumset involves balancing and seating the drumheads at a tight tension, and then settling the tuning at intervals that make the most sense for the provided sizes. To sort out resonance, I often tune the batter and resonant heads identically. This approach offers maximum sustain. Once the drums are balanced and singing harmoniously at a high tuning, I'll then

explore every possible tension, from cranked to slack. However, once I got this Legends series kit dialed at medium tight, I simply didn't want to change a thing. Even with the heads tensioned higher than usual, the drums put out a ton of beefy, thick, and musical tones that had me exploring classic rock beats for hours on end. The only tuning adjustment I ended up making involved backing off the batter heads a quarter turn, which fattened up the sound a bit without losing any response or resonance.

These Legend series drums produce a lot of sound, so you don't



have to wallop them to get the walls shaking. And microphones love them, whether you go for a sparse two- or three-mic setup, or a super-detailed multimic configuration. No muffling, no futzing, and no funky overtones are present—just big, juicy, beefy awesome sauce. Also, European beech rules.

The M22 shell pack retails for \$4,500. An M20 shell pack (8x12, 13x14, and 14x20) is available for \$4,350 retail.

docsweeneydrums.com

