

Drummer's World Nesting Drum Kit

Issues pertaining to portability continue to vex working drummers in the new millennium. And while some novel solutions are musical, such as variations on the frame drum (like the Arbiter Flats and those Remo PTS pre-tuned heads of some years back), and great fun to play, they're better as practice sets than as professional drum kits, which have the tonal power to move air and project beyond the bandstand.

Enter Barry Greenspon of New York City's Drummer's World on West 46th Street in midtown Manhattan (drummersworld.com) with some updated variations on an old idea: the Nesting Drum Kit. By allowing you to store your mounted tom inside your floor tom, and your floor tom inside of your bass drum,

drummers are thus afforded the option of reducing their cartage to as few as two cases. That is, if you employ a relatively shallow snare and old-fashioned, single-braced, scaled down stands, thrones and hardware; then you could conceivably pack all of this plus your stick bag and a set of cymbals inside a single trap case, with the remainder of your set nesting securely inside a single bass drum case.

I can remember drum maven Don Doehner making nesting kits some 30 years ago at the old Pro Percussion Center on

Eighth Avenue, while old-timers of my acquaintance recall nesting kits from the likes of Slingerland and ASBA (as employed by Mel Lewis and Jake Hanna). Yamaha currently markets some nesting Hippig kits, such as the Al Foster Signature set, but the drum dimensions, particularly those of the bass drum, are well off the beaten path, whereas Drummer's World offers its Nesting sets in more or less standard jazz dimensions: either a kit comprised of 18 x 14-inch, 10 x 8 and 14 x 12 drums, or a larger 20 x 14, 12 x 8 and 15 x 12 kit—with each weighing in at roughly 30 pounds.



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None of this would mean a damn thing if these drums didn't look, sound and feel terrific. Originally designed for Drummer's World by Mark Potras (and currently built by Matt Dow), the Nesting Kit begins with raw, all-maple shells from Keller, to which Dow fashions double 45-degree bearing edges. The batter side half of the bass drum and floor tom shells employ a dovetail, tongue-in-groove style lip, with a reinforcing maple glue ring to prevent air loss and maximize shell resonance. You then line up the two halves along the shell seam, and seal the deal with a set of locking-style latches—such as those you'd find on professional road cases (four latches on the bass drum, and three on the floor tom), with dense foam-rubber dividers provided to cushion the drums inside their nesting shells. With first-class Gibraltar rims, mounts, lugs and fittings, in a choice of natural satin finishes, the 18-inch kit is priced at \$1,100; with a 20-inch bass drum it's \$1,130. For a choice of pearl-style wrap finishes, add an additional \$200 (in ordering, be prepared to put down a 1/3 deposit, and allow 12 weeks for delivery).

As per my request, I was provided with a 20-inch evaluation kit decked out in white marine pearl and augmented by a crisp, responsive 14 x 5 Ludwig LB550K Hammered Bronze Snare Drum. As on my own drum kit, for all of the batter sides I employed Remo's FiberSkyn 3A, an Ambassador-weight head employing laminated synthetic fibers for a nice brush surface and something vaguely approximating the dark, warm sound of calf skin. Left to my own devices I would have employed clear Remo Diplomats as the resonating head, but in this case the drums were outfitted with clear Remo Ambassadors. Finally, for the front side of the bass drum, I employed the unique Evans EQ1 Resonant Head (with its dry-sounding Diplomat-weight black Mylar, internal tone ring and tiny air venting holes), which allowed me to achieve a full, focused jazz tuning without any internal muffling—as wide open as the bass drum was, it never took off on me. I was very pleased by how much tone and control I was able to elicit from this bass drum, and it put me in mind of how Papa Jo Jones used to tune his 20-inch bass drum. It was also very easy to dial up what Billy Higgins referred to as "the family sound" between the bass drum and toms, as these drums had beaucoup ring and projection, with a big, round, warm sound signature and a solid, penetrating attack. I would characterize that sound as vintage in nature, with lots of tone, character and control, especially when compared to the generic "me-too" sound of so many pricey modern drum sets—as such, it is a terrific value.

While the Drummer's World Nesting Kit might not qualify as someone's first or primary kit, it represents a soulful, sensible, eminently portable, no-compromise gigging kit for the busy jazz drummer about town. **CHIP STERN**

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