



ddrum Dios African Bubinga And North American Walnut Drumkits

>> Quality And Character In An Affordable Package

by Chap Ostrander

ddrum is taking the same approach to acoustic drums as they did to electronics: It's all about the sound.

KEY NOTES

- Beautiful wood-grain shells
- All drums sound huge
- Bubinga drums emphasize attack and clarity
- Walnut drums focus on depth and roundness

You may associate the ddrum name with the high-end electronic drums and triggers that many top touring and recording drummers have sworn by for years. Well, that legacy is well represented by ddrum's Dios line of acoustic drums. This high-quality professional series includes kits crafted out of African bubinga and North American walnut. Each wood type offers a distinctive acoustic character and a stunning appearance.

Construction Features

Dios snare and bass drum shells are 8-ply (8 mm), and tom shells are 6-ply (6 mm). The standard setup, which is what we reviewed, is called the Player configuration. It includes a deep-shelled (20x22) bass drum, a deep but small-diameter (7x13) snare drum, and relatively shallow rack (8x10, 8x12) and floor (13x16) toms. Optional 7x8 rack and 12x14 floor toms are available.

The drums all have brass tube-style lugs that make two-point contact with the shell. I've always liked this design because it doesn't transmit torque to the drum shell. The drums come fitted with die-



Dios shells feature alternating horizontal/vertical ply construction—and stunning looks. This kit features African bubinga shells.

ddrum®

To take advantage of each drum's sonic characteristics, Dios bass drums are extra-deep, toms are shallow, and snare drums are deep but smaller than most in diameter.



cast hoops, and the rack toms feature an isolation mounting system. The snare strainer is the type that pulls straight out and away from the shell.

An unusual feature of Dios shells is their horizontal/vertical ply construction. This means that the direction of each successive layer is alternated, which ddrum says makes the shell react like a single ply. The drums are finished with a high gloss that really shows off the grain pattern of each wood. A sealant coats the insides of the shells.

An interesting point is that the air vents on the tom and snare are not centered in the shells, but instead are closer to the resonant (bottom) heads. Conversely, the vent on the bass drum is near the batter head. The theory is that the air held within each drum supports the head that has the largest role in

providing the frequencies that make up that drum's voice.

Out Of Africa

The African bubinga kit is beautiful in appearance and sound. The shells have a deep-grained reddish cast, and the overall quality of the finish is first-class. Sonically, the drums are bright and piercing. The rack toms are clear and centered. The floor toms sound huge (belying their actual sizes), and they ring forever. Accents are clear at any volume level. Ddrum included the optional 8" and 14" toms with this set, and they fit in beautifully. Their voices fit right between the ranges of the other toms, allowing for greater musical expression.

The snare is crisp and clean, with gunshot-like rimshots. Its 7" shell depth provides

excellent body, while its 13" diameter keeps things clear and sharp. The bass drum sounds low and solid—as befits a 20"-deep drum. It also possesses lots of tone, giving it great presence. I found that I could tune the bubinga kit into a low range, but the drums seemed happier when tuned a bit higher.

Closer To Home

The North American walnut kit is equal to the bubinga in terms of having a stunning finish, with a dark, rich appearance. But I found a significant difference in its sound. While the bubinga is distinct, focused, and bright, the walnut is monstrous in its roundness. When I struck the toms and bass drum, the sound was very full, and it continued to build in depth as it rang. It just grew bigger and deeper.



Die-cast hoops on Dios toms and snare drums make tuning easier and keep their sounds focused. This is the North American walnut kit.

I played the walnut snare at various volumes, and though I tried hard to challenge it, it would not choke. It gave back whatever I put into it, with maximum power and great finesse.

About The Steel

The Agenda 400 series hardware supplied with the kits is of good quality, with some striking features. I liked the way the solid base for the hi-hat connects to the stand with a drumkey screw: secure for playing, but easy to set up and pack. The hi-hat's action is smooth, quiet, and very adjustable.

The bass drum pedal also offers independent adjustments, and it attaches to the hoop using a quick-release lever under the side of the pedal. Once I adjusted the tension of the hoop clamp underneath the footboard, I didn't have to touch it again.

All the stands (snare, hi-hat, cymbal, and double tom) have large-diameter tubing, double-braced legs, and memory locks at each joint. The legs can be widely spaced for stability. The design of these stands is clean and solid, without being massive and unduly heavy. There were also memory locks for the floor tom legs.

Conclusion

The Dios bubinga and walnut sets possess highly individualistic acoustic characters when compared with each other (or to kits of any other type, for that matter). The rack toms have clear and distinct voices, the floor toms have tremendous tone and ring, the snare drums have depth and crispness at the same time, and the bass drums...well, let's just say "big" is an understatement. While the bubinga kit might be the choice for someone favoring attack and volume, I personally favored the walnut for its depth and body.

Ddrum has put together two great packages, in terms of unusual but effective drum sizes and solid hardware. This is professional-quality equipment at modest prices. Ya gotta love that.

THE NUMBERS

Five-piece Player configuration shell pack, bubinga or walnut	\$3249.99
7x8 add-on rack tom, bubinga or walnut	\$390.99
12x14 add-on floor tom, bubinga or walnut	\$675.99
Agenda 400 series hardware pack	\$499.00

(813) 600-3920, www.ddrum.com