

Big Dog Hardware

Off The Leash In The US

by Russ Barbone

KEY NOTES

- Outstanding construction quality
- Affordable prices
- Excellent functionality
- Offset snare stand might annoy some players

The new Big Dog hardware line has a pretty international pedigree. It's designed by a team of UK-based engineers with some fairly impressive former drum-company credentials. It's manufactured in Taiwan, where the manufacturing facilities are turning out some pretty high-quality gear these days. And it's being distributed in the US by Big Bang (the folks who bring you Ahead drumsticks, Protection Racket bags, and Flix brushes, among other useful percussion items). The line is intended to compete with mid-line professional ranges from other manufacturers, at attractively lower prices.

Our review group included straight and boom cymbal stands, a throne, a snare stand, a hi-hat stand, and single and double bass drum pedals. All of the stands feature very heavy double-braced legs with substantial non-slip black rubber feet. All adjustment points use a pivoting-clamp design and are internally sleeved with plastic inserts for ease of adjustment and excellent holding power. The lockdown knobs are slightly larger than average, with a good grip zone. Another nice feature is the use of extended plastic-sleeved cymbal bases with thick felt washers to mount and protect your cymbals. All chrome plating is first rate, and a distinctive electric-blue winking "Big Dog" logo is on all the pieces.

The Pedals

The E001 single and E002 double pedals feature visually striking Big Dog blue footboards. The pedals are machined from aluminum, with large uprights for strength. They're very well made and should last a lifetime. They use side-mounted return springs with lockable tension adjusters, have beater angle and height adjustments, and use two Allen keys to vary the footboard angle. The double drive chains move through a felt-lined track for quiet operation. (Single-chain versions are also available.) Sealed ball bearings are used at the pivot points on the main shafts.

The bottoms of the baseplates are rubber-coated to prevent slipping (or the scratching of wood floors). Reversible beaters feature felt on one side and hard plas-



E004 Double

E003 Single

E001 Pro Single

E002 Pro Double

tic on the other, and there are memory clamps on the beater shafts. Hoop clamps use side-mounted adjusting screws with rubber-coated clamp points to avoid marring your bass drum hoops.

The Stands

The B003 straight cymbal stand extends to a maximum height of 63", with a micro-fine tilt adjuster. The opposite side of each of the lock-downs features a hex nut that's recessed into the stand. Easy adjustments are standard fare, with absolutely no rocking or swaying. The B004 boom cymbal stand mimics the straight stand in every way, with the addition of a stout knurled 18" boom arm to get over those toms that would be in the way of a straight stand. The boom arm also has a memory clamp for quick set-ups. Excellent!

The B002 hi-hat stand has the standard adjustments—spring tension, bottom hat tilter—as well as spring-loaded spurs to stop "creep," a very wide drive chain, and a beautiful blue footboard. The top extension uses a drumkey locking bolt instead of the wide Big Dog wingbolt, which I found a little annoying. The clutch has a pretty wide height adjustment range.

While I'm on the subject, I wish *all* manufacturers would decrease the inner clutch shaft diameter in order to allow for the installation of a plastic sleeve to protect your top hi-hat cymbal. Rocking into bare metal clutch shafts—and often their threaded areas—will shorten the cymbal's life expectancy.

The snare stand's height range is from 17" to 26". The snare basket arms are fitted with thick black rubber holders that use a series of raised serrations to hold your snare drum without marring it. The basket utilizes a cradle design that's mounted on a 5" sideways shaft, which

allows the snare basket to be positioned away from the stand's center point if needed.

Some players who have thick legs will probably appreciate this feature. Others may find the design irritating, because it prohibits centering the drum directly over the main shaft. Minimum offset is 2"; maximum is 5".

Again, the top shaft extension uses a drumkey bolt instead of the wide Big Dog knob. I would have preferred the larger knob.



The Throne

The F006 throne features height adjustment from 17" to 26" using a threaded shaft with a big locking collar. The seat is a large, contoured bicycle type with a black cloth center and elec-



tric blue vinyl sides with the logo on the back. The seat is 17" wide by 15" deep, and it proved very comfortable in extended sessions. The seat's locking collar is spring-loaded and recessed at the lock-down point for easy, ergonomic turning of the screw. Neat!

Summing Up

All of the Big Dog hardware functioned flawlessly under performance conditions. The cymbal stands proved solid and stable, and the seat was a joy to sit on. But my overall favorites were the pedals. They have a great range of adjustment and a silky-smooth feel, and they're visually appealing.

Just to nit-pick, Big Dog should switch the drumkey bolts used on the upper sections of the snare and hi-hat stands to their large lock-down knobs. And, as mentioned, the offset snare basket might not suit some players. Otherwise, this is a great debut for a new hardware line.

THE NUMBERS

B003 straight cymbal stand	.....	\$99.99
B004 boom cymbal stand	.....	\$117.99
F006 throne	.....	\$206.99
B002 hi-hat stand	.....	\$124.99
B001 snare stand	.....	\$99.99
E001 single pedal	.....	\$133.99
E002 double pedal	.....	\$349.99
(800) 547-6401, www.bigbangdist.com		