



UFIP Bell Crashes

The Italian Roto-Casters create big bell crashes

words: Ian Croft images: Eckie



FIP has a tradition of creating cast cymbals that can be traced back to the 15th century.

Unlike other cymbal manufacturers UFIP employs a completely different production process, utilizing a unique roto-casting method by which molten bell bronze is cast into a rotating mold.

The Experience series is a line that UFIP uses when producing limited edition and prototype cymbals, kind of like their custom shop where requests can be turned into special products for customers and endorsers when only a small quantity run is required. However, if the particular product proves successful, then often the prototype becomes a cymbal that is then absorbed into a main UFIP line. All Experience series cymbals are 80/20 bell bronze cymbals produced using the roto-casting method.

SECONDS OUT

What we have for review this month are three Bell crashes that fall within the Experience line in 18", 19" and 20" dimensions, though there is also a 17" Bell crash available. These models offer a hybrid mix of cymbal design with the large bell being quite thick, similar to that found on a ride cymbal, with the cymbal then featuring a taper and body profile

similar to that found on a crash cymbal. This demonstrates UFIP's ability to produce a hybrid mix due to their roto-casting method.

The large prominent bell is un-lathed on the topside and has a golden, earthy texture and look to it. Once the bell area meets with the cymbal's taper, a wide and heavy lathing process is then employed, producing a more traditional look to the cymbal. The bell area on the underside is fully lathed with random hand hammering completing the visuals. Each cymbal bears a handwritten number within the underside of the bell's cup and in this case the 18" is numbered 15, the 19" is 171 and the 20" is numbered 187. The full amount of how many UFIP actually produced is unclear but this does indicate the small availability of these cymbals.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

As with all things review-wise we begin at the beginning and strike the 18" Bell crash which renders a mid frequency explosion that is big and powerful, rich in colour and offering plenty of booty shaking body. The impact of the crash is fairly short with few lingering overtones, making it highly responsive and as stated explosive. Bringing the stick to the bell area and the note produced is also of a mid-to-high frequency that penetrates without becoming eye-wateringly painful, with enough cut and projection to satisfy the most ardent player.

The 19" model offers a modestly lower-pitched note from the bell area, but it is nonetheless as cutting as the 18" version, perhaps sounding a tad more mature rather than full of youthful exuberance. Sustain is a little longer and the note is richer in tone when the stick hits the bell. The slightly larger taper of this cymbal produces a crash that too is full-bodied, though the length of sustain is fairly short (again) but there is a roaring element to be discovered when multiple strokes are rapidly played upon the taper and I did find that those notes returned a level of clarity that allowed the sticking pattern to be evident without sounding too pinpoint or 'gated' making this model a cracking crash/ride cymbal.

The 20" cymbal exudes a near perfect church bell sound though as with the two previous models, you do have to strike the bell area fairly low, down towards the actual taper of the cymbal or the note can become thin and indistinct. Once you master the best angle for your stroke and area to strike, you are treated with a resonant note that projects with a lingering overtone that is highly musical. Crashes are big, monstrous even, and full-bodied and positively explode with joy when you hit the cymbal. Again, the 20" also works well as a crash/ride, though is probably not quite as dexterous as the 19" version. **D**

HEADS UP

PRICES:

UFIP - Bell crashes	
17"	£285
18"	£299
19"	£325
20"	£345

UPBEATS:

- ▲ Dexterity of all models
- ▲ Crash response
- ▲ Bell response

DOWNBEATS:

None

CONTACT:

The Cymbal Centre
Tel: 01738 445 100
www.UFIP.com
www.cymbalcentre.co.uk

CONCLUSION

The UFIP Bell Crashes are a medium weight cymbal with a fairly flexible taper and a reinforced bell area that allows each model to be agile enough to cover quite a few bases and cover them well. These are pretty unique cymbals that not only look interesting they also offer a variety of sounds for your pounds. I particularly liked the 19" model as it had a strong bell, offered up a very healthy and responsive crash sound and was able to work quite effectively as a crash/ride with notes remaining audible through the generated wash. UFIP might not be the name on everyone's lips, but if the company continues to produce highly-interesting items such as these Bell crashes, then it won't be long before UFIP find their profile ranked considerably higher.