

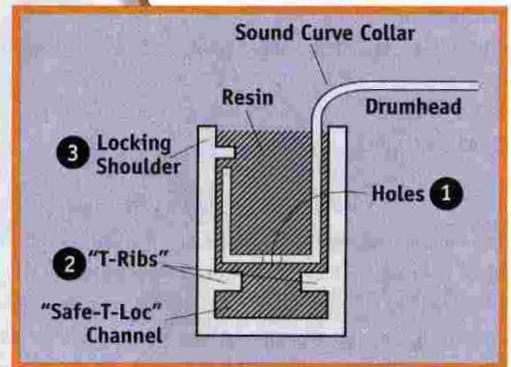


Aquarian Super-2 Heads

>>Living Up To The Hype

by Rick Van Horn

Aquarian makes some pretty lofty claims for their new Super-2 heads. Are the heads ready to back them up?



Super-2 heads feature Aquarian's Safe-T-Loc Hoop (designed to prevent pull-out) and Sound Curve Collar (said to provide "responsive tuning").

KEY NOTES

- Outstanding tunability
- Wide frequency range
- Studio-X Rings add focus and warmth

Aquarian bills their new Super-2 series as "a new kind of 2-ply head." The heads are designed to "sound louder, fuller, and more powerful than conventional 2-ply models, with great attack, rich mid-range, and powerful low end and depth." That's quite a claim.

I asked Aquarian's Roy Burns what it was, exactly, that made Super-2 heads different. He told me that while most 2-ply heads (including Aquarian's own Response 2 series) use two plies of matching thickness, Super-2 heads have a top ply that's 5 mils thick and a bottom ply that's 7 mils thick. Roy also explained that a high-tech molding process recently established in Aquarian's new Mexican factory produces heads that are level and even, with a consistent collar.

Super-2 heads also feature Aquarian's Safe-T-Loc hoops, which are designed to prevent the heads from pulling out, as well as their Sound Curve collar design. That collar contributes to what Aquarian calls "responsive tuning." With this feature, one small turn of the drumkey supposedly causes the heads to react, making them easier to tune than regular 2-ply heads. That's another ambitious claim.

The Super-2 series includes 6" through 18" sizes, in Clear, Texture Coated, Clear With Studio-X Ring, and Clear With Power Dot versions. We were sent a selection of Clear and Studio-X tom heads, as well as 13" and 14" Texture Coated models. (We were also sent Classic Clear single-ply heads and snare-side heads to use on the bottoms of our test drums.) Now let's see if Aquarian's claims bear out.

Easy Tuning

To begin with, the heads did, in fact, tune up quickly. It was easy to get them "in tune with themselves," after which only slight adjustments with a drumkey were required to fine-tune the pitch of each drum. Further, once the heads were tuned, they held that tuning well under some serious impact.

Clear With Studio-X Rings

Contrary to what their name might imply, Studio-X rings are not heavy muffling devices. They're made of thin vinyl, and (according to Roy Burns) they're intended to just take the edge off the high end, resulting in a

more focused sound that still has plenty of attack and resonance.

Roy pegged it right. The Super-2 Clear With Studio-X Ring batters gave the drums a warm, punchy, and comparatively mellow sound. But they also had a clear, penetrating attack and lots of sustain. (The floor tom rang for days.) The Studio-X rings definitely do *not* take the life out of the heads. In fact, I found myself adding muffling when it came time to mike the drums for a local show.

Clear Models

When we switched to the Clear batter models, the heads dropped the mellowness that had been provided by the Studio-X rings, and instead opened up with an even clearer, more powerful attack. (The sensitivity of the thinner top ply may have something to do with this.) But this didn't come at the expense of low-end response. There was plenty of that, along with even more sustain—and more overtones—than with the Studio-X versions. The tom sound was big and deep.

Texture Coated Models

Texture Coated heads are available in all sizes. But our selection of heads included only 13" and 14" models, which we tested as snare batters.

Two-ply snare batters are generally used in situations that call for durability. In exchange for that durability, they'll often sacrifice some sensitivity. But the Super-2 heads seemed to strike a nice compromise between the two. They weren't as sensitive at low volumes as a single-ply head would be, but their thinner top ply helped to provide more sensitivity than a standard 2-ply head would offer. The textured surface also worked well for brush playing.

Once we laid into the drums, the heads answered with a powerful

attack sound, and with good snare response. Their tuning range let them work well from a medium-tension "fatback" tonality right up into bleeding-ear territory.

Conclusion

Every so often, a manufacturer's promotional claims for a new product prove to be right on the money, and that's certainly the case with Super-2 heads. They're made well, they tune up in an instant, and they blend the fullness and depth of two-ply heads with the clarity and attack of single-ply models. It's a great combination.

THE NUMBERS

6" Clear	\$18.36
6" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$19.98
8" Clear	\$19.44
8" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$21.06
10" Clear	\$21.06
10" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$23.22
12" Clear	\$23.76
12" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$26.46
13" Clear	\$25.38
13" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$28.08
14" Clear	\$26.46
14" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$29.70
15" Clear	\$28.08
15" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$30.78
16" Clear	\$32.40
16" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$37.26
18" Clear	\$36.72
18" Texture Coated, Studio-X Ring, and Power Dot	\$41.58

A free tuning sheet is enclosed with each head.

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