

# bosphorus

## Master Vintage Rides And Smash Crashes

by Michael Dawson



The Bosphorus mission is “providing discriminating drummers with genuine hand-made Turkish cymbals.” In the past, this meant the company’s products were targeted mostly toward jazz players, especially those who covet the subtlety and nuance that can be coaxed from a single plate of bronze. But in recent years, Bosphorus has maintained that same discerning philosophy when creating cymbals that can also work in other genres, like the heavier Gold series, the Latin-flavored Versa series, and New Orleans funk star Stanton Moore’s signature line.

To get a better taste of exactly how Bosphorus is simultaneously exploring classic and modern cymbal sounds, we decided to check out two of the company’s latest offerings, Master Vintage series rides and Stanton Moore Smash crashes.

### MASTER VINTAGE RIDES

Bosphorus calls the new Master Vintage series “the embodiment of our philosophy and absolute finest work.” That’s a strong statement, no doubt. But as a drummer who’s spent years searching for the perfect jazz ride, I can honestly say that the Master Vintages are some of the most inspiring ride cymbals I’ve ever played. All

you get when you add a bit of tape to the underside of a washy ride. These smaller cymbals had me recalling the ride signature of post-bop masters Joe Chambers and Mickey Roker, as well as the modern vibe of Joey Baron.

The 21” and 22” Master Vintage rides, on the other hand, leaned much closer to the trashy-yet-deadly-precise sound that Tony Williams made legendary on Miles Davis’s *Seven Steps To Heaven*. For my personal taste, the 22” is about as perfect a jazz ride as I could ever want; it

drummer puts into every beat and fill. For his signature line of cymbals, Stanton needed something that was not only warm and complex but also edgy, cutting, and durable enough to handle a series of set-finishing whacks.

Since they’re called “smash” crashes, I expected these cymbals to be explosive, opening up with a full voice at any volume. What I discovered, however, was pretty much the exact opposite effect. Both crashes had a definite volume threshold. Once you reach that peak, they aren’t going to get any louder—no matter how hard you smack them. (I later found out from Bosphorus that this effect was intentional, with the wide underside lathing being the main reason for the shorter decay and controlled resonance.)

The 16” Smash crash had a more traditional voice, with a quick attack and full, sparkling resonance. But the decay time was short. The 18” also had a fast attack and a short decay time, but the resonance was noticeably more contained. You wouldn’t want to use this cymbal if you play a lot of crash/ride grooves. But if you play in smaller rooms, or if you need to be careful not to overpower your band when you start smashing accents during louder sections, these crashes would be a great choice.

### CONCLUSION

There’s a lot to be said about a cymbal company that’s as dedicated to producing the “perfect” jazz ride as it is to creating fresh sounds, with complexity and nuance, for more contemporary styles. The Master Vintage rides are very special instruments that rival the most coveted classic tones of Tony, Elvin, and Philly Joe, while the Smash crashes offer dark, rich, and controlled accents for drummers who like to ramp up the energy level but don’t want to crush everyone’s eardrums.

[www.bosphoruscymbals.com](http://www.bosphoruscymbals.com)

### smashing accents

The new 16” and 18” Smash crashes round out Stanton Moore’s signature series, which also includes 14” Fat Hats, a 20” Trash crash, 20” and 22” Wide rides, and a 20” Pang Thang. Like the rest of the line, the SM crashes have a traditionally lathed top side and a wide lathing on the bottom.

four rides (19”, 20”, 21”, and 22”) feature heavily hammered patina-looking surfaces on top and bottom, with about 1/2” of the outer top edge being lathed to a traditional bronze sheen. The cymbals are very thin—they can be bent easily with the hands—and their profile is quite flat. The small but deep bells are the same size on all four models.

Sonically, the Master Vintage rides shared basic qualities: They had a dark and dry fundamental tone with clear, precise, and noticeably “woody” stick response. The wash was prominent but never overpowering, creating a low rumble of smoldering overtones that was excited ever so slightly by each push accent or bell hit.

The 19” and 20” Master Vintage rides offered a bit more of a controlled sound than the 21” and 22”. They had a quicker decay and a slightly muted resonance that was similar to the effect

looks cool (especially when you lay into it to get the edges wobbling in ecstasy), and it has a great blend of dark wash and throaty articulation. As I played this large cymbal, I couldn’t help but be reminded of the super-clear, super-dry ride that modern jazz master Greg Hutchinson used when I saw him on tour with Joshua Redman in 2000.

I was a little hesitant to use any of the Master Vintage cymbals for more aggressive playing, for fear that they might crack with a single overzealous blow. But for die-hard jazzers—or even studio players who play lightly and use small sticks—these rides have that special quality that makes everything you play sound better.

### SMASH CRASHES

If you’ve ever watched Stanton Moore perform live with his band Galactic or any number of his other funky projects, you’ve witnessed the high level of energy and passion that the spirited