

GREAT LEATHER PERSONALIZED STICK BAG

by Michael Dawson

I've probably worn through nearly a dozen stick bags since taking up the drums in the late '80s. Sometimes a zipper broke or came off track, preventing me from ever closing the bag again. Other times the bottoms of the pockets tore (always at the most inopportune times), causing my sticks to spill all over the floor. Once I even went so far as to duct tape the bottom of a broken bag, just so I could make it through a couple sets without having to scramble to grab a 5A before it rolled off the stage. The tape didn't hold up, of course, and the bag looked pretty ridiculous, especially considering I was playing a formal "tuxedo" wedding gig.

Dena Hamilton of Great Leather—a company that also makes custom purses, pillows, guitar straps, and other leather accessories—heard similar stick-bag

woes from the notable drummer Gary Sullivan, so she and Gary decided to collaborate on a high-end version that's designed to last a lifetime. In our opinion, they've succeeded.

Each Great Leather stick bag is made from ten square feet of top-grain leather. This material is used on the inside and outside of the bag, with a light filler between the layers. The typical stress points—corners and joints—are reinforced with extra stitches of bonded nylon thread. The bag features two flapped pockets on the outside to hold drum keys, earplugs, jewelry, and other small items. The inside pocket is divided into

three sections: The two 4" side compartments can hold roughly six pairs of 5B sticks each (more if you use thinner models), and the 6" middle section is ideal for larger mallets, multirods, brushes, and other abnormally shaped implements. When stuffed to the gills, this bag will hold well over a dozen pairs of sticks. So unless you habitually hack through lumber every five minutes, you should have more than enough room to accommodate your needs.

The bag closes by way of two 1"-wide leather straps that are lined with fabric hook-and-loop fasteners. These are used instead of zippers. Throughout our two-month testing period, the straps showed no signs of wear and kept the bag closed tightly. The soft leather handle was very comfortable in the hand, which made it easy to lug the bag (along with my cymbals and pedal) a few city blocks from my car to my band's rehearsal studio. For reinforcement, the handle features a strong 5/8" cord on the inside.

All in all, this is an awesome bag that I feel any drummer would be proud to use. The leather is top notch, the construction is solid, and the look is very elegant. If you want to attach the bag to your floor tom so you can have access to your sticks during a gig, Great Leather supplies two thin leather straps and a pair of gold-plated S hooks that you can tie off through eyelets in the upper corners of the bag. Each bag also comes with two extra S hooks, which can be used to hang drum keys or brushes from the eyelets.

Great Leather stick bags are handmade to order and are currently available in black, red, and wine. Each bag costs \$219 and includes a personalized leather label.

greatleather.com



MADE FOR A PRO

Great Leather designed its first custom stick bag in 1990 for former Reba McEntire drummer Gary Sullivan. Gary had certain things that he wanted to see in his "ultimate" stick bag, and those specifications became the basic blueprint for what the company offers today.

To hear a selection of the products reviewed this month, go to the Multimedia page at moderndrummer.com.



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