

# Jack Lawton's Questions & Answers

**Q:** *What is the difference between Ludwig CLASSIC and SUPER CLASSIC shells?*

**A:** The difference is in the overall thickness of the shells, which is determined by the number of plies. The CLASSIC is a 6 ply shell that is 3/8" (.375" or 9.5mm) thick. The SUPER CLASSIC is a 4 ply shell that is 5/16" (.312" or 7.93mm) thick. Both shells were constructed using select rock maple and American white-wood laminations with cross-grain gluing and die mold construction.



*Classic 6-ply shells produce that deep, powerful, unmistakably Ludwig sound.*



*Super Classic 4-ply shells are lighter in weight, produce a clean, resonant sound that cuts through anything.*

**Q:** *What year were they first made and when did they first appear in the Ludwig catalog?*

**A:** Ludwig first started the transition from the traditional 3 ply shell to the 6 ply "die-mold" shells sometime in 1973, beginning first with smaller sizes (6", 8" & 10"). This was an expensive undertaking that took several years to phase in. During that time, some outfits were sent out with a mixture of three ply shells with glue rings and six ply shells without. The first catalog that mentions the new shells is from 1980, (Copyrighted in 1978). The third paragraph on page two states that "Ludwig's exclusive wood shell construction for most sizes consist of 6 plies of select wood veneer. Carefully butted at three different locations to avoid overlaps or humps, these plies are then joined to a near seamless configura-

tion in Ludwig's proven die-mold process. Shells are then perpendicularly cut on both sides simultaneously to prepare for Ludwig's famous Sound Edge which is hand sanded and finished to provide an accurate fit for Ludwig's own factory made plastic heads. The shell interior is carefully sanded and double lacquer coated to permanently seal against moisture for maximum resonance, showing the natural wood finish inside." The exception to the six ply construction was for the 6" and 8" single headed

melodic toms which were four ply.

The first mention of the SUPER CLASSIC shell was in the 1988 catalog.

**Q:** *How does Ludwig classify their top end line of drums today, CLASSIC OR SUPER CLASSIC?*

**A:** The top of the line today are the Ludwig Classic Maple Drums which feature nine ply die-mold constructed shells. These shells are similar to the SUPER CLASSIC, but are made with nine thin, all maple plies.

Questions submitted by Frank White/Tampa,FL

In future issues of *VINTAGE DRUMMER* Magazine, we'll answer more of these types of questions. If you have a particular restoration problem or inquiry that you would like addressed, please submit it to *Jack Lawton's Questions and Answers* Column, c/o Vintage Drummer, 770-438-0844, fax # 770-437-9044, email [billy@vintagedrummer.com](mailto:billy@vintagedrummer.com).