

Antigua Pro-One Saxophones *Redefined Horns For Modern Players*

Antigua enlisted the help of acclaimed saxophonist and veteran technician Peter Ponzol to create a new series of professional horns, the Pro-One. The line raises the bar of Taiwan-made saxophones to a whole new level, with numerous design innovations that improve tonal quality and enhance the overall playing experience.

The first two horns in the series are the Pro-One alto (AS6200VLQ) and tenor (TS6200VLQ). Sax-section mate Bruce Gibson and I tried them both out during a two-hour test session in my DownBeat office, and we found both models to be incredibly responsive, great-sounding and easy to manage.

Key to the high performance of the Pro-One is the Ponzol-designed P1 neck, the angle of which causes the player's throat to open more easily, resulting in freer blowing, quicker response, significantly improved altissimo, precise intonation (nice octaves!) and more subtle tonal control.

Another important component of the new design is the Pro-One's well-contoured keyboard layout, also the result of Ponzol's input, which provides a comfortable feel and promotes an economy of hand motion that makes everything lay nicely on the horn. The ergonomic positioning and placement of keys makes it easier for the saxophonist to play with speed, accuracy and finesse. You get a nice even resistance from top to bottom, resulting in a consistent feel and a graceful touch. The tenor model includes two strap hooks, so you can choose the one with the best angle to suit your height, posture or embouchure.

In developing the Pro-One, Antigua conducted extensive research on the chemical composition and grain structure of the metal in some of the best professional-model saxes ever made—specifically, post-World War II Selmers. The company's engineering team found a source for such an alloy (which it termed Vintage Reserve) and came up with a computer-controlled annealing process that makes the instrument respond more like a saxophone that's been broken in and played for a while. The Pro-One even features metal thumb rests that let the player feel the horn vibrate in his hands, unlike plastic thumb rests, which tend to isolate vibrations and force the player to rely entirely on his ears for feedback.

The Pro-One has a hybrid bell diameter—one that's slightly larger than a standard bell size, but not oversized like many of the step-up horns that have been introduced in recent years. Antigua and Ponzol settled on an in-between bell size and length to help the player achieve an even timbre and balanced resistance through all registers of the horn.

Also contributing to the Pro-One's consistency of tone are drawn tone holes. The holes are rolled on the bell keys (low C, B and B-flat) and straight in all other areas, resulting in a hybrid of sorts. The rolled tone holes provide a larger contact area for the pads to seal and add strength, providing faster, more nimble response from the low notes and a deep, rich tone. The straight holes are more appropriate for the middle and upper registers of the horn, where rolled holes could have a tendency to spread the sound too much. The horns also feature high-grade Italian-made Lucien Deluxe leather pads and stainless steel tone boosters.

One of the cooler features on the Pro-One is a Ponzol-designed lifter for the G-sharp mechanism that acts like a teeter-totter and gives extra leverage to prevent sticking. The mechanism never fails, so goodbye sticky G-sharp keys. Other keywork enhancements include a little bridge between



the F and F-sharp keys that facilitates faster action and response in the right-hand key section. Antigua's Trident adjustable key arms on the bell keys improve radial rigidity and feature two adjustment arms for better balance and increased strength.

The Pro-One is finished in a conservative vintage lacquer and features elaborate hand-engraving for an elegant look that suits the burnished tone of this classic-sounding instrument.

The alto carries a suggested retail price of \$3,599, and the tenor lists at \$3,999.

The Pro-One doesn't screw around. With its superior design and construction and a bare minimum of bling, this saxophone is aimed directly at the professional market. The horns exhibit an overall coherence and clarity, with a nicely colored core tone that's always present, from subtone quiet to blazing loud.

—Ed Enright

Ordering info: antiguapro-one.com