

# **BIGKICK**

Version 1.5

## Introduction

**BigKick** is designed to make kick drum design fast, easy and enjoyable. It has a carefully selected set of features to help you get results quickly. And, unlike many other tools, the controls are generally limited to values that produce useful kick drum samples.

It also lets you make the best possible use of existing sound libraries you have.

Key features include:

- Tuned kick drums
- Drag and drop sample creation
- Really fast sample browsing
- Auto-play

This is the user guide. You might also want to read:

- [Kick drum theory](#): an analysis of kick drum sounds
- [Technical Q&A](#): under the hood, tips and trouble shooting
- Updates in Version 1.2: a quick overview of the new features.

All of which are available [online \(click here\)](#).

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## Basics

**BigKick** is a instrument plugin not an effect. You need to load it into an instrument slot in your DAW. If you send it notes it plays kick drums. It doesn't matter which note you play, you get the same kick drum.

There are two sound generating sections to the plugin. These are the **sample** section which plays a sample and the **body** section which is a synthesiser.

To make a kick drum adjust the synthesiser to get the body (the low bit) of the kick right and choose a sample for the **sample** section that gives your kick drum the right character for your track.

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## Installation

The latest installer will always be available on your product page on the Plugin Boutique website.

You can install over previous versions. Your user preset will not be affected, but the factory presets will be updated and replaced.

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## Installation (Windows)

Download and run the installer.

The only thing to watch out for during installation is the location of your VST Plugins folder. The installer will try and guess the best location, but depending on your computer setup you may need to specify a different folder. However, the most common location is:

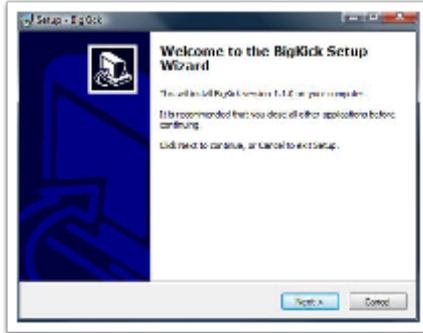
- C:\Program Files\Steinberg\Vstplugins\
- And for 32-bit plugins on a 64-bit version of windows: C:\Program Files (x86)\Steinberg\Vstplugins\

Follow the on-screen instructions. The *Information* page of the installer will show you the latest release notes. I recommend you read them. It will always have the latest information on new features, compatibility issues and so on.

The latest information will also be available here:

<http://www.credland.net/bigkickuserguide/>

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## Installation (Mac)

Installing on the Mac is usually straightforward. Find the installer you have downloaded and double click on it. Follow the on-screen instructions.

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## Running for the first time

BigKick is an instrument plugin for Digital Audio Workstations (DAW). You need to open your DAW software and then open the plugin on an **instrument** channel. The process for doing this varies and you should refer to your DAW documentation.

This is usually straightforward. If the plugin has not appeared ensure the DAW has rescanned the plugins (and that you let this process complete - it can take a while if you have a lot of plugins installed!).

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## Demo Mode

If you don't yet have a license BigKick will run in demo mode for 14 days. During demo mode it will play back a short piece of white noise every 90 seconds or so. After the 14 days are up it will no longer function and you'll need to buy a license.

If there's some reason after running the demo you decide the plugin isn't for you, we'd be really interested in your feedback. If you have any issues you'd like resolved contact Plugin Boutique support.

If you'd just like to provide feedback and don't need an immediate response e-mail [contact@credland.net](mailto:contact@credland.net).



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## Licensing

When you buy a copy of BigKick you will receive a license key. It'll look like this:

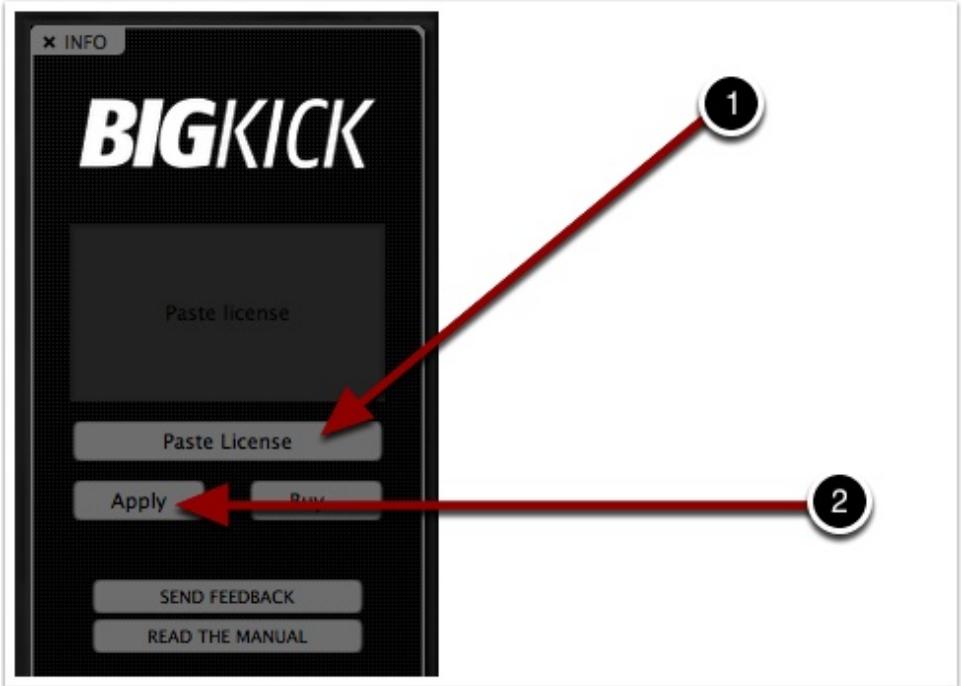
```
--START--  
32474818800000  
"Your Name"  
"you@example.com"  
012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789  
012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789  
012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789  
012345678901234567890123456789012345678901234567890123456789  
012345678901234567890  
--END--
```

Copy the license key into your clipboard, include the --START-- and --END-- lines, and open the plugin.

Click on the INFO button at the bottom of the plugin window, then in the screen that appears (see image) click Paste License (1) and then click Apply (2).

Your plugin should now be licensed.

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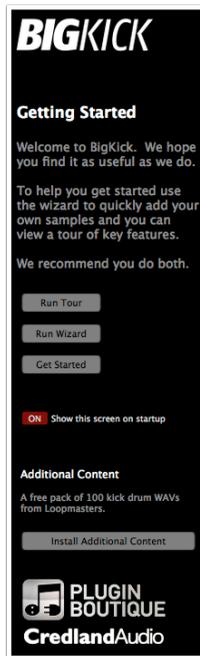
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## Getting Started

When you first load BigKick you will be presented with a start-up screen. From here you can:

- View a quick tour of the plugin
- Run a wizard which lets you quickly add your own sample folders

This wizard will appear whenever you open BigKick unless you disable it by clicking the red button. If you do this and what to re-enable it again you can do so in the INFO page.



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## Preset Manager

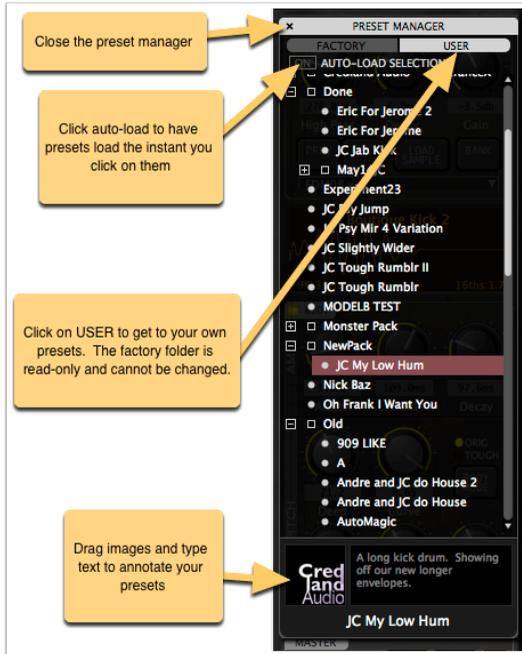
The user preset manager lets you organise, share and load presets.

In version 1.2 and later the presets are a single file on your hard disk which combines the plugin settings and any loaded sample file. You can easily move files around and share them with others if you want.

### Browsing Presets

Autoload is the quickest way to browse your preset library. When auto-load is enabled clicking on a preset automatically loads it.

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## Preset Manager: The Pop-Up Menu

Right clicking (or ctrl-click) on a preset brings up a pop-up menu. This lets you:

- Rename the preset
- Create a new folder
- Move a preset to your trash
- Expand or collapse the tree so all the presets are visible (useful in conjunction with auto-load)
- Show the current preset folder in finder: you can use this to easily export a preset

### Overwrite with Current

If you are fine tuning a preset this is a quick way of saving over an existing preset.

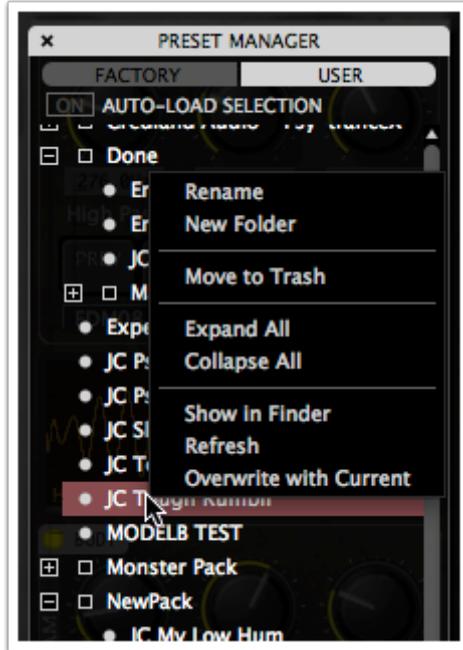
### Exporting

To share a preset file with someone else right click on the preset and select Show in Finder (or Explorer on the PC). It will open the folder containing the .preset file. The preset file will contain a copy of the audio file too and should be all you need to share a sound.

### Importing

You can import a .preset file from your hard disk by just dragging it into the USER preset browser. Some DAWs may hide the plugin when they are not the foreground application. So you may need to arrange the windows on your desktop so you can drag from your hard disk to the plugin with the DAW as the front application.

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## Drag and Drop



BigKick implements a number of features using drag and drop.

The most useful features are:

- Drag the Waveform display to get a WAV version of your kick drum. You can drag it straight into your sequencer, into an e-mail or your desktop.
- Drag a sample onto the load-sample button.

However you can also drag .preset files straight into the user preset manager, and if you have an add-on pack you want to install just drag it over the BIG-KICK logo.

### Tips

Some sequencers hide the plugin when they are not the foreground application. If you are having difficulty dragging samples from outside your DAW into BigKick follow these steps:

1. Move the DAW and plugin window so you can see the file you want to drag.

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2. With the DAW window selected so the plugin is still visible drag the file into BigKick.

## **File locations**

BigKick generates the exported file in a temporary location. Some sequencers automatically copy files added to a project into the project folder. Protocols for example will do this. Others (e.g. Ableton) leave the files in their original location on your hard disk.

If you use the drag-export feature, ensure you know whether the sequencer has automatically relocated the file. If it hasn't we recommend consolidating or collecting the files automatically into the project folder using the features provided by your DAW. In Ableton that feature is called **Collect And Save** in the file menu.

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## Master Section

The master section provides a volume control and access to various other menus. It also provides two easy controls for key features:

### Auto play

Turning on **autoplay** for an instant tempo-synced kick on every beat. Ideal for knocking up a quick dance groove. For an instant metronome turn off the body and set a short decay in the attack.

### One Shot

The **one shot** button controls the length of the kick. If it's turned on then the duration of the midi note doesn't affect the duration of the kick drum. If it's turned off then stopping the midi note before the kick has played will stop the note early. We suggest leaving it enabled unless you really want to make shorter kick drums for some beats in your track.

### Metering and Volume

Level is the master volume control. Adjust until it's loud enough.

**Tip:** When writing dance music start with the kick drum peaking at -6db. If you start at -6db with the kick then when you finish mixing the record the master level on your DAW should be in a nice sweet spot, not clipping nor too quiet. For break-beats you might need to lower this slightly and keep your snare at -6db instead.

All our presets are designed to output at -6db. This is a great reference level for kick drum based dance music and when starting a track we suggest leaving BigKick outputting at -6db and do not adjust your channel fader. However this means that if you are dropping BigKick in to an existing track you may need to turn **level** up to 0db.

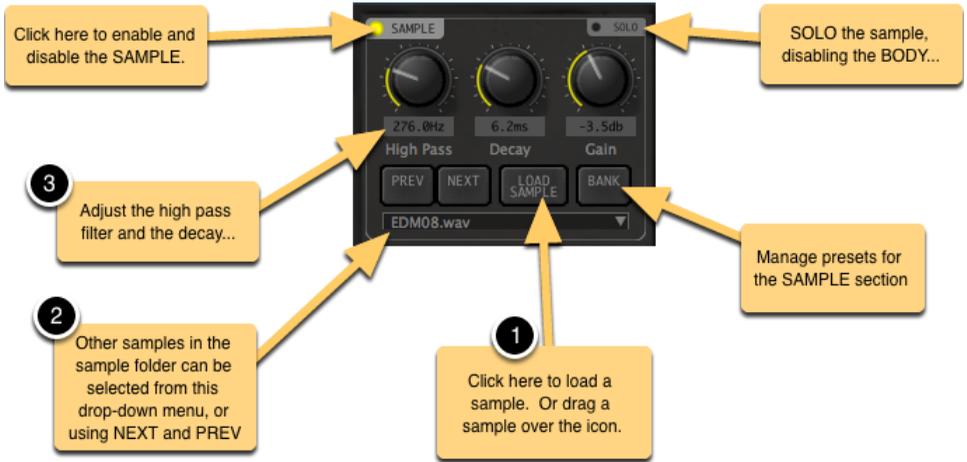
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Our meter turns bright yellow at -9db. So as an easy guide a couple of bright yellow lights should be flashing, but not many more for -6db.



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## Sample Section



Kick drums can be entirely synthesised. And, if that's what you want the Body section will do that for you. However to add character and bite it's really useful to layer your synthesised drum with a a sample.

The SAMPLE section lets you do just that.

### Loading a sample

Loading a sample is easy. Either click LOAD SAMP or drag a sample over the LOAD SAMP button. In some DAWs you can drag audio straight in from tracks in your DAW.

You can also access 100+ samples provided with BigKick from the bank menu.

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When you select or load a sample it is briefly displayed on the waveform display. ATTACK PREVIEW will be seen in the top right corner.

## **Managing banks of samples**

The BANK button lets you save presets for just the SAMPLE section and also browse the factory banks. It works just like the preset browser for the main presets described earlier.

## **Notes**

The sample you have selected will be saved with your DAW session.

You can adjust the pitch of the sample in the EDIT section.

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## Body Section



### Body

This section is a synthesiser designed especially to generate the body (that's the low thumping bit) of kick drums. It generates a tone which sweeps rapidly down in pitch, giving you that characteristic kick drum sound.

The controls here are:

- **Attack, Hold and Decay:** the amplitude envelope for the kick body. Note that these are entirely independent of the attack section, either section can

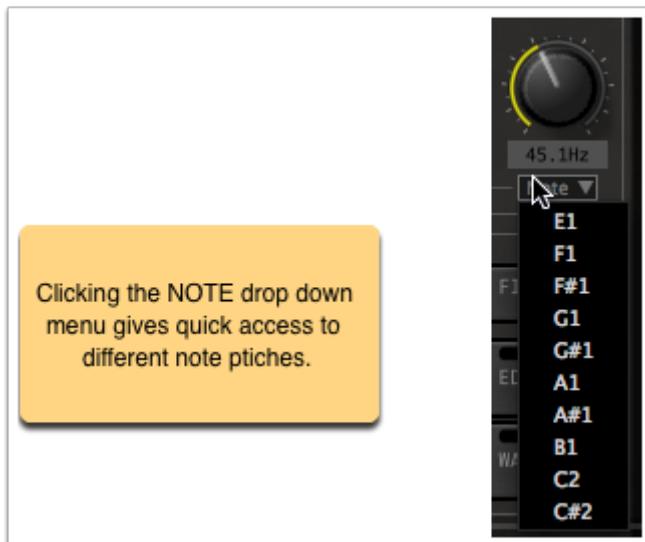
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play for longer than the other. A slow attack for the body may sound great used with a punchy sample in the ATTACK section.

- **Start** controls the frequency at the beginning of the sound. The frequency then decreases at a rate controlled by the **pitch decay** knob until it reaches the final pitch set by the **End** knob.
- **Deep** adds a different pitch envelope to the sound.
- **Curve**: this controls the curve of the decreasing pitch. A small value, around 0.02, makes the rate of the decrease in the pitch start fast and then slow down towards the end of the sound. These values are most useful, however with the pitch decay knob set to a short value.

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## Tuned Kick Drums



### Tuned Drums

Kick drums tuned to the pitch of your track can sound great. Just above the End knob is the **note** selection menu.

Bear in mind that the pitch selected here is only valid when **deep** is at or very close to zero.

Also you can only get a limited range of useful pitches out of a kick drum. In testing we found that if the tail is tuned to a D or D# it doesn't sound like a kick any more. If you are working in a track in D or D# and want to try a tuned kick, try using A and A# for the kick drum.

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## **Tip**

You can also type a note pitch, e.g. E1, into the pitch box.

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## EDIT MENU: MIDI Controlled Pitch



You can select MIDI controlled pitch in the EDIT window.

In MIDI controlled mode the keyboard will control the end pitch of your drum. The starting pitch will remain the same as the start knob but the END pitch which really defines the note of the kick drum varies with the keyboard.

There are no constraints on the pitch in MIDI mode. And, outside of the sensible kick drum range unusual sounds can be produced.

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## Sound Design Tips

### Sound Design Tips

Keep the attack knob at a value greater than 1.5ms. This reduces the click sound from the body oscillator and allows you to make the best use of a variety of attack samples. If you turn the attack to 0.0ms you get something a little like a 909 effect - but it's more flexible if you get a nice folder of 909 attacks loaded in the attack section.

Given a suitable set of source sounds, the ATTACK section's **decay** knob lets you go from quite a noisy sound, with a setting in 150ms+ to a very tight electronic sound when the setting is around 2-10ms.

If you are browsing through different attacks, sometimes adjusting the body's start frequency will really help the attack blend with the body sound.

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## Waveform Display



The waveform display has a number of useful functions. It displays:

The **current waveform** as you edit it.

The **duration of the current kick in 16ths** at the current tempo. In the example here you can see the kick drum is two point four 16ths long at the current tempo.

A note name if the **pitch** of the tail of the kick drum is in tune. See *tuned kicks*.

A **MIDI** input indicator, it flashes when MIDI notes are arriving.

If you **drag** the waveform you can export it to your DAW or another application.

**Zoom** by clicking on the wave: there are three zoom settings. Zoomed in, zoomed out and zoomed in-between.

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## INFO pane and Compatibility Mode

Here you can see the license information. Disable and re-enable tooltips and the wizard.

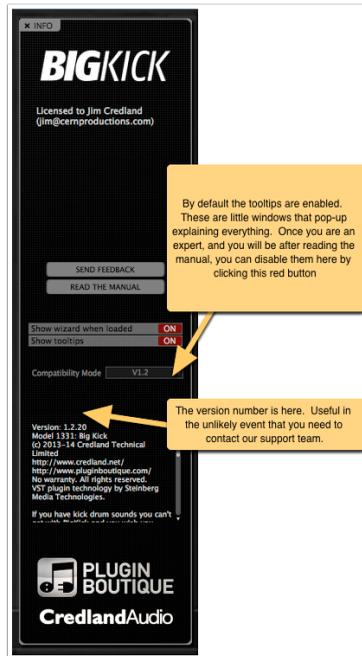
**Compatibility mode.** This should normally be set to v1.2. However enable it if you have an existing track that was written with v1.1 of BigKick and it uses either:

- Automation of the kick drum length controls.
- Distortion from v1.1.

BigKick will automatically prompt you when loading a track created with version 1.1 and ask if you want Compatibility Mode enabled.

Unfortunately there was no easy way of extending the maximum kick drum length and maintaining automatic backwards compatibility.

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## EDIT pane



The EDIT panel has some additional parameters for tweaking the sound of your kick drum.

### EQ

The EQ in BigKick is one of the last steps in BigKick.

The EQ is the most instantly satisfying. Many synthesised kick drums benefit from having a good chunk of mid taken out of them. Try winding the gain down to negative

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10db or so on the mid control and moving the mid freq knob around until your drum sounds sweet.

## **Tip**

You may want to use a more advanced multi-band EQ with BigKick for your final mixes, but by getting it roughly right in BigKick you'll find browsing through your presets will be a much more meaningful listening experience.

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## WAVE pane



The WAVE menu can be accessed by pushing the WAVE button in the master section.

It has the following features:

### Drive Mode

Push this button to change the mode. The available modes are:

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- DIST - a warm distortion. This is applied only to the body of the kick drum and not the sample\*.
- DIRTY, WT-C and HUM are more creative waveforms.
- CLIPPER is a hard digital clipper. See below for more information.

## Drive

This knob controls the amount of drive. Zero will result in a clean sound.

## Clipper

The clipper is most effective in conjunction with the punch control in the EDIT pane and with the attack set to a short (<1.5ms value). A number of clean sounding electronic kick can be created by:

- Disabling the sample section entirely.
- Setting attack to 0.0ms.
- Setting the punch control to maximum, producing a sound with a very loud short attack.
- Applying the clipper to warm and control this initial attack.

## Phase

Phase applies a phase offset to the kick drum body's waveform. In plain english it means the oscillator starts at a different point in the cycle. When you are layering the body with a sample adjusting the phase knob can have substantial effect on the sound. It's most noticeable when the attack on the kick drum amplitude is set to a short value (e.g. 1.5ms or less).

\*In compatibility mode DIST will produce the version 1.1 distortion sound.

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## Back Passage

Guildford bank engineered at Credland Audio using a Eurorack Modular, an Access Virus and a Sherman Filter bank and processed in-the-box.

Other attack sample banks courtesy of Loop Masters.

Many thanks to the beta-test team: it would have been almost impossible to make something that worked everywhere without you.

### **Support**

Support is available from Plugin Boutique. Visit [www.pluginboutique.com](http://www.pluginboutique.com) for contact information.

Further technical documentation is available from the Credland Audio help pages.

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## Tips

### Fine Adjustments

Hold down Command or Control whilst rotating a knob to make fine adjustments. (An enormous, 10kW pounding kick drum is all about fine adjustments: a well tuned hammer).

### Default Presets

If you save a preset 'Default' in the top level of the presets folder it will load when you deploy a new instance of the plugin. If there's no 'Default' in the user folder it will try to find a factory preset of the same name.

### Mac: AudioUnit vs. VST.

We recommend the use of the Audio Unit version over the VST version where possible.

### Add-on pack creation wizard

If you select a *folder* in the USER preset browser you can create an add-on pack creation wizard for sharing. Full instructions are available from within the wizard itself.