



AKG D112

List price: \$315

Akg.com

What the SM57 is to electric guitar amps, the AKG D112 is to kick drums. This industry standard large-diaphragm dynamic mic handles SPLs up to an amazing 160dB without distortion. The D112's specially designed diaphragm maintains the power and punch of crucial bass frequencies below 100Hz while providing a slight peak at 4kHz to provide definition as well as "click" from the beater. It's also a great mic to place in front of an electric bass guitar amp cabinet.



Audio-Technica AT2020

List price: \$169

Audio-technica.com

With the introduction of the AT2020 Audio-Technica has broken the price barrier without sacrificing sound quality or rugged reliability. This mic can handle very high SPLs (up to 144dB), and the tightly woven grill protects the element from distorting excessively even when subjected to plosives, which makes the AT2020 great for recording hip-hop vocalists who like to use close proximity effects to make their voice sound larger and boomer.



Blue 8-Ball

List price: \$279

Bluemicrophones.com

There's more to Blue's 8-Ball than eccentric looks. While Blue touts the 8-Ball as a utilitarian cardioid mic suitable for recording everything from vocals to drum overheads, we found it works best on midrange-dominant instruments like electric and acoustic guitars. It's a great alternative to an SM57 as it has a similar midrange girth, but it also tames the excessive high-end zing that can make using most condenser mics a hit-or-miss proposition.



Mojave Audio MA-200

List price: \$995

Mojaveaudio.com

This large diaphragm vacuum tube condenser mic delivers an exceptionally warm, vintage sound that contrasts the hyped treble and presence of many modern condenser mics. Features include a hand-selected 3 micron capsule, Jensen audio transformers and military-grade JAN 5840 tubes. This exceptional vocal mic comes with a storage box, power supply, shock mount and all necessary cables.



Neumann TLM 103

List price: \$1,299.99

Neumann.com

Featuring a capsule based on the design of the capsule found in Neumann's acclaimed U67 and U87 mics, the TLM 103 large diaphragm condenser mic offers the famous Neumann sound for a more affordable price. Its transformerless circuit provides extremely low self noise, and with a maximum SPL of 138dB it can be used to close-mic loud sound sources like guitar amplifiers.



Rode NT1-A

List price: \$230

Rode.com.au

Thanks to its familiar-looking design and surprisingly good sound, this low-cost large-diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone is often referred to as a "poor man's Neumann." The NT1-A may lack variable patterns, roll off or pad switches found on much more expensive models, but its exceptionally low noise floor, glassy highs and smooth midrange compete admirably with the performance of microphones that cost five times as much.