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WHEELS AND STRINGS: Rock Stars' Cars & Guitars exhibit is about to roll out of the arena at the Henry Ford

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BY CASSANDRA SPRATLING
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

This is the last weekend to check out the Rock Stars' Cars & Guitars exhibit at the Henry Ford.

And if you like classy, classic, sporty and super-shiny vehicles that were or are owned, driven by or made famous by rock stars and other musical legends, this is a must-see.

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The cars alone make checking out this exhibit worth the visit, but it also offers an amazing display of shiny guitars – 31 in all – played by the likes of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and Ted Nugent.

The guitars are what drove Mica McCrory, 22, of Flint to go to the Dearborn museum with her dad and sister.

"We're all guitar players," said McCrory, who plays an acoustic electric guitar. "I wanted to see what different people were using. I think it's pretty cool."

She marveled at the unique guitars.

Her favorite: a five-neck Hamer guitar played by Rick Nielsen of the band Cheap Trick. The orange custom-made guitar is one of 15 one-of-a-kind guitars from Nielsen's personal collection.

The 21 cars have their own special connection to rock 'n' roll.

Two cars in the exhibit are owned by Michigan rockers:

Bob Seger's red 1969 Ford GT 350 Shelby Mustang and Kid Rock's 1969 Dodge Charger, a car like the General Lee made popular in the TV show "Dukes of Hazzard."

By using their own Verizon cell phones or phones provided at the exhibit, visitors can listen to Seger, Kid Rock and others talk about the cars.

Seger, who was born in Ford's hometown, Dearborn, says cars are like art to him.

Like the guys in the "Dukes" TV show, Kid Rock, who grew up in Romeo, enjoys doing tricks in dirt fields with General Lee. The show used several versions of the car, since it was busted up badly in several episodes.

As people walk through the exhibit, they hear music from the artists.

If the exhibit were an album, every car would be a hit.

Among them:

- A sleek shiny black 1949 Cadillac called Cadzzilla, owned by ZZ Top's lead guitarist, Billy F. Gibbons, who also has guitars on display.

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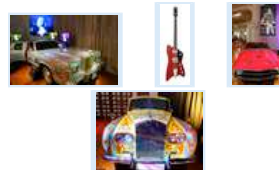
PHOTOS

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(The Henry Ford)

The exhibit includes a guitar signed by Chuck Berry.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

'Rock Stars' Cars & Guitars'

The Henry Ford

Today and Sunday

9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

Free admission to exhibit after museum entry fee.

Entry fee: \$14, \$13 for ages 62 and up; \$10, ages 5 to 12; free, 4 and under.

www.TheHenryFord.org

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- A psychedelic-floral-painted Rolls-Royce Phantom V once owned by John Lennon.
- A 1971 De Tomaso Pantera, formerly owned by Elvis Presley that still has a hole from a bullet he shot into the steering wheel when he was angry.
- A sparkling rhinestone-covered 1979 Lincoln Continental limo featured in Madonna's performance in the Grammy Awards show in 2001. A video featuring the car and the performance runs while people view the car.

The exhibit has attracted people from far and near.

Amber Kochel and Alex Holmer, both 21, drove two hours from their home in Attica, Ohio, after learning of the exhibit on the Internet. It was their way of celebrating her birthday.

"We both really like cars," she said as each of them took photos.

Richard and Barbara Sager of Ventura, Calif., stopped by the museum as part of their two-month journey around the country by motorcycle.

They enjoyed the exhibit, but Richard Sager, 64, frowned at the Rolls-Royce owned by Lennon, but driven by many others, including members of the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan.

"They were the death of good music," he said of the Beatles. "I liked the doo-wop sound. The Beatles, they're not my era."

Tiffany Carter, 18, and Brandon Rutland, 17, both of Oak Park, decided to take a break from their college studies to visit the museum.

They had gone to see the Montgomery, Ala., city bus Rosa Parks made famous by refusing to give up her seat for a white man.

They heard about the car exhibit while there and were glad they decided to check it out, too.

"I haven't been here since the seventh grade," said Brandon, a University of Detroit Mercy freshman. "It's cool."

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