

Musician's Mecca

Popularly known as the Musician's Mecca, the newly designed Sweetwater's Flagship Store is surely a treat to the eyes and ears of all music lovers. Designed by Chute Gerdeman, the massive store creates a 'wow experience', not only by its superb aesthetics but functionality too.



Sweetwater, the leading online retailer of music instruments and audio gear in the U.S., recently redesigned and expanded its Music Store in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The complex operates as their headquarters and warehouse, which is also open to the public and has become popular in Midwest USA and beyond. To translate the company's wildly successful catalogue and online retailing business, Chute Gerdeman created the new Music Store.

With the objective of delivering the best experience to customers, the 15,000 sq. ft. flagship store was designed to wow guests and convey the quality, huge breadth of products, and premium service that Sweetwater offers. Now four times the original size, the Sweetwater Music store is backed by the largest on-site inventory of musical instruments and audio gear of any music store in the country.

Visually striking, warm and inviting, the Music Store layout allows the shopper to see virtually the entire store from the entrance, reassuring customers that they will find what they're looking for. The Music Store

has vastly expanded demonstration areas, including a completely stocked drum room with interactive displays allowing musicians to simply pick up and play. Unlike most stores, electric guitars and bass guitars have



"Expanding on the brand's commitment to delivering the best online experience to their customers, our team designed a flagship store to wow guests, delight experts, and promote products that bring together the best of both in-store and online. The Sweetwater Flagship Store is a musician's mecca and we helped set a new precedent for music retail environments," says

Lynn Rosenbaum, VP, Brand Environments at Chute Gerdeman



"Everyone at Sweetwater is thrilled with the outcome of the store. It's not only beautiful with amazing design and details but also meets the needs for our unique business model. We believe this is the most attractive and functional music store we've ever been in and customer feedback has been extremely positive," says

**John Hopkins, Executive VP & COO
Sweetwater Sound**

been separated into individual rooms, allowing more space for both kinds of instruments. These changes now allow customers access to more than 10,000 guitars.

Being the regional dealer for Yamaha, Sweetwater has created a Piano Store, a charming space which houses many pianos and keyboards. It also contains a "living room" where the amazing Yamaha Disklavier piano can be demonstrated in a home setting.

A huge pedal wall has been built for customers to test out hundreds of effects. While the live sound room contains numerous demo capabilities for comparing PA and lighting systems. The recording room boasts of an extensive, interactive microphone display and a significant functioning collection of state-of-the-art recording gear.

As a core digital element in the new store design, Sweetwater Digital Warehouse system is a touchscreen display listing every product Sweetwater has both in-store and in the warehouse. Customers can view products with ultra-high resolution photography, 360 degree photos showing the product from every angle, product reviews, expert commentary and specifications. From here any product from the endless selection kiosks can be brought to the store in a matter of minutes for the customer to try out and purchase.



This massive music haven was completed in short span of 12 months. According to the design firm, Sweetwater played a large role in the makeover. The retailer was in tune with their customer and what they expect from a retail experience, which was critical in the design process. With Sweetwater's knowledge, Chute Gerdeman was able to create an experience that focused on the guests and how they would want to test new products prior to purchasing.

To sum it up, Sweetwater and Chute Gerdeman together have taken the science & art of store design to a whole new level. The store's video on youtube is definitely a must watch to appreciate this space! •

Chanda P Kumar

In-house design team

Chuck Surack – Founder and President
John Hopkins – Executive VP & COO
That Tegtmeier – Store Manager
Mike Ross – Senior VP, Marketing

Contract design firm

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Adam Limbach, VP, Brand Communications
Micheal Munchoff, Design Director, Brand Environments
Jeff Wietrzykowski, Senior Designer, Brand Environments
Brandon Boston, Designer, Brand Communications
Bonnie Kyle, Director, Architectural Design Studio
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Architect

MSKTD & Associates Inc.
Jerry Noble. Fort Wayne, Indiana

General contractor

Todd Goodwin
Weigand Construction. Fort Wayne, Indiana

Consultants, engineers, etc.

Engineer - RE Dimond & Associates -
Indianapolis, Indiana

Lighting Designer

37 Volts Light Studio - Cincinnati, Ohio

Millworker

Key Millwork - Fort Wayne, IN

Photographer

Jonah Garoutte - Fort Wayne, Indiana

Flooring

Dal-Tile Corporation, Dallas, Texas -
Porcelain Tile
Plyboo, San Francisco, California - Bamboo
Flooring
Roppe, Fostoria, Ohio - Vinyl Flooring Base

Ceiling systems

Armstrong, Lancaster, PA - Tegular Grid
Acoustical Ceiling Tiles

Lighting

Juno Lighting Group, Des Plaines, Illinois
Element Lighting, Skokie, Illinois
Hera, Norcross, Georgia
Jesco Lighting Group, Port Washington,
New York

Plastic laminates

Arborite, Lasalle, Quebec
Wilsonart, Temple, Texas
Nevamar, Shelton, Connecticut

Fabric finishes

Knoll, East Greenville, PA - Acoustical Fabric

Acoustical Panels

Manufacturer: Sweetwater
Product: pArt Science Space Array Wood
Diffusers

