

Harley-Davidson Museum

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



One can almost hear the ripping, throaty roar of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle just by gazing upon the industrial, steel framework of the Harley-Davidson Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Situated on a 20-acre reclaimed industrial site along the Menomonee River, the 130,000-square-foot museum is a bold tribute to Harley-Davidson's rich history, engineering excellence, and the culture that has made it a global icon.

Rather than applying a decorative façade, the designers drew inspiration directly from the motorcycles themselves. Durability, longevity, and quality—ideals embodied by Harley-Davidson engineering—found a perfect match in hot-dip galvanized steel, making it the natural choice for the museum's structure.

The building's design features exposed I-beams, columns, gusset plates, and cross bracing, all intentionally left visible to highlight durability and authenticity. To safeguard these elements against Milwaukee's harsh climate, the designers

chose hot-dip galvanized steel for its exceptional corrosion resistance, minimal maintenance needs, and industrial aesthetic.

Reflecting Harley-Davidson's ideals of durability and enduring craftsmanship, the museum continues to inspire, serving as a lasting testament to the power of hot-dip galvanizing and thoughtful design.

In 2007, over 2.5 million pounds of steel were hot-dip galvanized for the museum. The seamless collaboration between designers, fabricators, and galvanizers was key to the success of the project. Careful planning and communication ensured smooth execution and exceptional results. The choice of hot-dip galvanizing not only provided structural and aesthetic benefits but also offered significant cost savings and faster turnaround compared to traditional paint applications.

More than 15 years later, the Harley-Davidson Museum stands strong—a true testament to the enduring benefits of hot-dip galvanizing. With a \$75 million structure that has weathered the test of time, the museum remains virtually free from corrosion, maintaining its original integrity with minimal maintenance. Reflecting Harley-Davidson's unyielding commitment to durability and craftsmanship, the museum continues to inspire, serving as a lasting symbol of the power of hot-dip galvanizing and thoughtful design.

Hot-dip galvanizing has proven to be a perfect match for the Harley-Davidson Museum, fulfilling the building's long-term objectives by providing exceptional durability, corrosion resistance, and low-maintenance performance in the face of Milwaukee's unforgiving climate. The galvanized steel complements the museum's bold, iconic aesthetic, ensuring the structure remains as striking and functional today as it was when it first opened its doors. ■

Galvanizer

AZZ Galvanizing - Joliet

Architect

Pentagram Architects

Fabricator

Merrill Iron and Steel

Other

Mortenson Construction

Lifetime Achievement



American Galvanizers Association