



HALL OF FAME

TRENDS + OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

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**Dimensional
Innovations**

The immediate mental imagery of a hall of fame often conjures up thoughts of traditional museum spaces, full of artifacts and casework, showcasing things that may or may not be relevant to the viewer. Today's hall of fame is quite the opposite of that. It's an opportunity to tell the same stories in completely new ways—ways that are more relevant to the participants and visitors and, in the case of a sports hall of fame, immerse you in the sport.

Our visitors today learn and connect to content that makes them feel like they could be a part of the story and transports them to a place that provides a deeper connection. The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame is the perfect candidate for this modern approach to heritage storytelling. Basketball connects so many disciplines, markets, cultures and ages. A more multi-channel approach will elevate the user experience and drive attendance and dwell time.



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The Power of Belonging and the Hall of Fame Experience

Research shows, when fans walk into a hall of fame, their brains fire in the same areas used for recalling memories. This means they're not just passively viewing a sport or team's history, fans are actively entering their own memories.

The championship ring behind the glass doesn't just sparkle, it transports a fan to the exact moment the bucket was made and where they were when it happened. The retired jersey doesn't just hang there, it brings back the sound of a fan's father's voice describing that player's leadership on the team year after year that led to retirement.

This is what psychologists call "autobiographical memory." Autobiographical memory is a fan's personal memory system for events and facts from their life. It forms their self-identity and life story by blending specific experiences with general knowledge. A fan's autobiographical memory includes details like their first day of school or wedding day, helping them understand their past, present, and future, and influencing their emotions, goals, and sense of self.

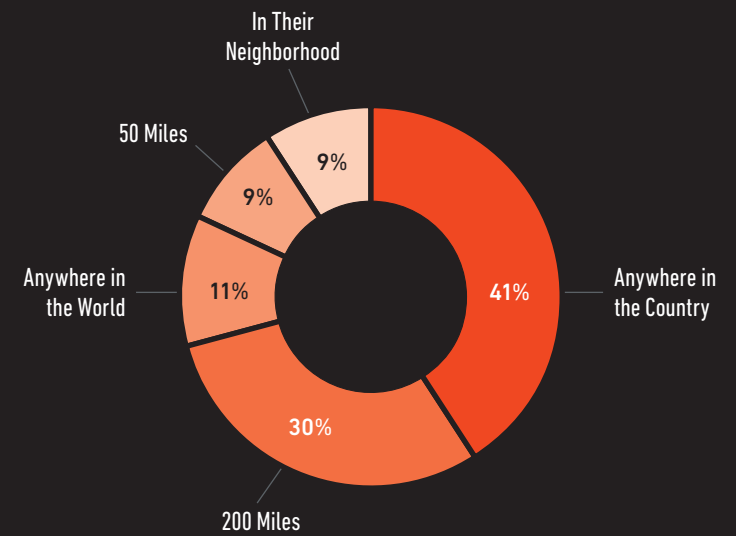
A great hall of fame doesn't simply preserve a sport's story, it forges emotional anchors by triggering a fan's autobiographical memory. A great hall of fame brings fans back to the moments that matter where they find themselves inside the stories. When a fan says, "I was there," they may not have actually been in the arena or at the ballfield, but they start to claim their piece of a shared emotional legacy with thousands of other fans.

This shared emotional legacy is one characteristic of belonging that helps fans find a sense of self among their fellow fans.

Social psychology shows that people form their sense of self through the groups they belong to. Sports fandom is one avenue that can create a shared identity for a group of people. This group may feel so deeply and collectively that it creates a kind of loyalty marketers try to manufacture but rarely achieve.

A visit to a hall of fame stimulates the need for a fan's own sense of recognition, identity, and belonging within this group. When a fan fuses their identity with a sport or team, every legendary player becomes part of their family mythology and every victory feels like a personal triumph. A hall of fame is the place where a fan's identity finds a home.

Distance Sports Fans are Willing to Travel to Visit a Hall of Fame Dedicated to Their Favorite Sport*



37% 
NAISMITH VISITORS
come to the Hall to see exclusive memorabilia that can not be found anywhere else.*

*2024 Hall Market Survey



International Skydiving Hall of Fame

Ever since humans first walked, they have wanted to fly. For centuries humans have worked to invent machines and contraptions that would take them into the sky. No sooner did we succeed, than an intrepid new type of adventurer jumped out of them. That primal longing—not to fall, but to fly—gave birth to a sport, a movement and a culture.

The International Skydiving Museum and Hall of Fame experience captures the thrill and wonder of skydiving for everyone who's ever jumped—or ever wanted to. For members of the skydiving community, it is where their life's passion can be celebrated like nowhere else. For everyone else, it provides a dynamic, fascinating look inside one of life's greatest possible adventures.



Celebrating Fan Devotion and the Hall of Fame Experience

A hall of fame can unlock something extraordinary in its fans when it is designed to treat the moments it highlights not as points on a timeline, but as shared memories that connect fans through a common longing to belong. The longing to feel part of something larger than themselves. The longing to find a place where their identity feels at home.

Think about the difference between glancing at a plaque that says “4x Champion, 1,856 career points” and stepping into a space where light, sound, and architecture converge to make you feel the arena erupt in a player’s greatest moment. One hands you the numbers. The other sweeps you into something bigger—a moment that lifts you out of yourself.

When a hall of fame is designed with belonging in mind, its focus shifts from presenting history as a list of facts to taking responsibility for telling the stories that shape a community’s emotional connection to the sport. This is where the custodians of a multigenerational legacy come together to tell their stories.

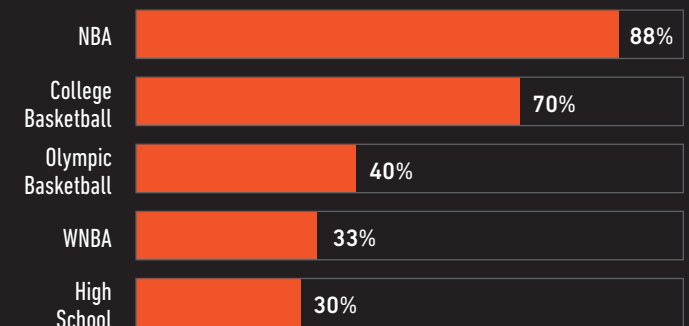
When greatness is celebrated, everyone who believes in it is uplifted. Recognition in this space works on two planes. Honoring icons sends a message to the fans that echoes far beyond the displays: “Your devotion mattered. Your voice was heard. Your years of cheering helped build this legacy.”

Halls of fame don’t just commemorate heroes—they affirm the millions who carried those heroes on their shoulders.

Naismith Visitors Are More Likely to Follow All Types of Basketball

OPPORTUNITY: In the realm of sports museums and halls, Naismith peers include Cooperstown, Canton, and others. Even though these institutions have fewer artifacts or inductees, they still serve similar purposes in their related sports. For example, the National Baseball Hall of Fame welcomes around 260,000 visitors per year and has built a strong tradition of pilgrimage by fans. The Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton sees 250,000 visitors annually and is currently expanding into a larger “Hall of Fame Village” tourist destination.

Naismith’s advantage is that basketball is a global sport on the rise. Basketball has huge followings not just in the U.S. but in Europe, Asia, and beyond. The Naismith Hall of Fame brand benefits from this international interest. Unlike Cooperstown or Canton, which serve as singular focal points for their sports, basketball benefits from a rich ecosystem of complementary attractions, including NBA team arenas with their own museums, the NCAA Hall of Champions, and the NBA’s ongoing celebration of its history through media. This dynamic landscape gives Naismith a unique opportunity to distinguish itself as the definitive, comprehensive home of basketball’s heritage and an essential, must-visit destination for fans.



The Future of Hall of Fame Experiences

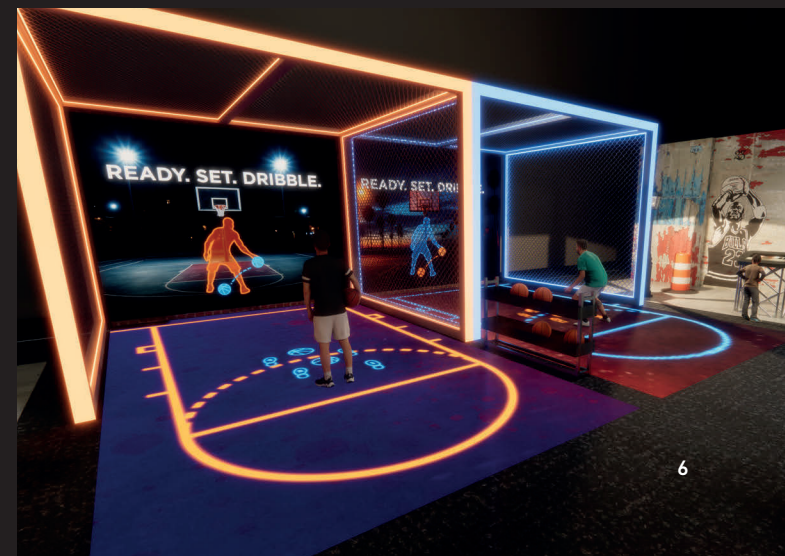
Reinvesting in the hall of fame experience for the future generation of fans honors their legacy. Every thoughtfully crafted exhibit shows fans that the organization treasures its sport's story and honors it with depth, emotion, and care. When a hall demonstrates the value of its past through emotionally intelligent design, it builds trust, excitement, and pride, inviting fans to invest in the future of the sport they love.

In a world where entertainment is splintering into endless choices, the real advantage belongs to the organizations that create spaces offering something no screen or stream ever can—raw, unforgettable emotion. Crafting places where people feel something they can't experience anywhere else becomes the strongest competitive differentiator.

When fans step into an intentionally designed hall of fame, the message hits them at a visceral level. They immediately understand whether an organization values its past. Every display and every detail reinforces that the stories, struggles, and triumphs of their heroes are respected and remembered. When an organization representing a sport demonstrates that kind of pride and care, fans feel it deep in their bones, inspired to pour themselves even more passionately into the chapters yet to be written. Over time, this shared emotional heartbeat strengthens the bond between the organization and its community, forging a living legacy that carries everyone forward together.

Understanding what will meet or beat a fan's experiential expectations requires investment in a design process that begins with research and strategy. The foundation of this strategy are basic design principles that create a bedrock for lenses to be overlaid. These lenses are specific to that fandom community and create a unique experience that honors their identity and legacy. This foundation for the hall of fame experiences is outlined in the five trends in the following pages.

Adjacent Photos: DI concept renderings for the future Naismith Hall experience.



01

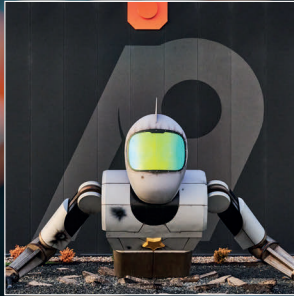
SETTING FOUNDATIONS



TREND 1
Legacy
Architecture



TREND 2
Multisensory
Immersion



TREND 3
The Power of
the Threshold



TREND 4
Layered
Storytelling



TREND 5
Dynamic Unfolding
of Narrative



TREND 6
Placemaking

TREND 1

Legacy Architecture

The most extraordinary hall of fame projects share a bold, visionary philosophy: they aren't designed just for today's inductees, they're built with the future generation of inductees in mind.

This long-term thinking transforms every choice. Materials are selected to age with grace and character. Display systems are crafted to evolve with future legends. Stories are framed not as finished tales, but as living narratives with room for chapters yet to be written. Every element becomes a declaration of confidence: *we are creating something that will matter for the next fifty years.*

And that confidence is magnetic. That confidence draws corporate partners seeking permanence, invites media attention that elevates the organization to cultural institution status, and, above all, captivates fans and stands as a pillar of recognition for their community.

Adjacent Photos: At the Mercedes-Benz Stadium, each helmet on the "Homegrown Legends" wall tells a mini-story about a player, combining identity, role, and connection to the Atlanta Falcons. The wall creates a visual "roster" that celebrates both individuals and the collective team legacy. It sets a tone immediately as fans walk by the wall, signaling, "You're entering a space where history, pride, and competition matter."

The George Brett "#5" sculpture is the true definition of iconic piecemaking and tells the Hall of Famer's story using 3,154 baseballs to create the sculpture (# of career hits) and also houses an infamous bat as a part of the display.



TREND 2

Multisensory Immersion

Memory isn't just something we think. It is something we feel. The rich scent of leather. The distant roar of the crowd echoing in your chest. The worn texture of a jersey magnified under glass. The gentle warmth of light highlighting each piece of history. When sight, sound, touch, and even smell converge, the emotional impact doesn't just add up, it multiplies. That's why digital solutions have to merge with physical solutions for an unforgettable, heart-stirring hall of fame experience.

A hall of fame shouldn't just show history; it should immerse you in it by combining light, sound, touch, and scent with deeply personal storytelling and technologies like AR, VR, and AI. These elements work together to pull visitors into the lives of each honoree. Exhibits spark emotional connections that hit like lightning, raw and immediate. Every space shifts in mood, every interaction peels back another layer of the story, leaving casual fans awe-struck and superfans lost in discovery. This isn't a static museum experience; it's a living story visitors can step into, feel, and carry with them long after they leave.

The best part, it doesn't always take sprawling budgets or complex infrastructure to create this type of experience. All it takes sometimes is inviting people in a slightly different way, a way that makes them feel the story, like they've stepped into something alive, unexpected, and entirely new. It's the difference between watching history and living it, between standing on the sidelines and becoming part of the story itself.

Adjacent Photos: THE JUMP at the Evel Knievel Museum is a Themed Entertainment Association award-winning immersive 4D attraction that transforms visitors into daredevils. Guests straddle a replica Harley-Davidson XR-750 and experience what it was like to be Evel himself, launching over a seemingly impossibly obstacle through a multisensory journey combining VR visuals, synchronized motion haptics, environmental effects, and spatial audio.





Viking Voyage Fan Experience

People visiting sports museums are looking for unique and incredible exhibits. They want experiences that bring them closer to the players, and they'd prefer that the experiences are interactive. They want to see things they can't see anywhere else. That's where they find value.

The Viking Voyage Fan Experience is designed to make fans feel like they are part of the game and part of the team, rather than just spectators. It blends physical immersion, mental engagement, and emotional connection to recreate the multi-sensory, high-energy environment of being a player. It's about letting fans feel the intensity, focus, and thrill of game day.



TREND 3

The Power of the Threshold

Crossing into a hall of fame should feel like stepping into another world. The lighting shifts, the soundscape transforms, and the materials themselves command attention and respect. This isn't about showmanship—it's about psychology. Our brains crave threshold moments to signal something meaningful is ahead.

Being intentional about entry points, shifting people from one experience into the next, and creating moments of rest in between, allows fans to prepare themselves for what's to come. As visitors move from the everyday concourse into a carefully designed hall of fame space, their senses and nervous systems recognize it: *something extraordinary lives here.*

Adjacent Photos: The *Atlas 9 Experience* is a walkthrough immersive art and interactive experience in Kansas City, Kansas. It's part art installation, part narrative adventure, and part interactive playground. The space is built around a fictional story of an old movie theater that's been "contaminated" or altered by strange forces, so each area feels like stepping into a different movie world or surreal narrative. Guests get RFID wristbands that let them engage with exhibits, solve clues, and track progress as they explore themed rooms and hidden details. Most elements are meant to be touched, triggered, moved, or otherwise experienced rather than just looked at, blending art with play.



TREND 4

Layered Storytelling

A hall of fame should captivate fans on every level. The casual visitor should be dazzled at first glance at the same time the devoted fan is uncovering new layers of meaning that rewards their curiosity. Exhibits should be designed with depth and participation in mind. Fans want deeper engagement with content-rich environments. Striking visuals stop an Instagram scroll. Hidden details reveal themselves only to superfans on their fifth visit. Each layer sparks wonder, deepens loyalty, and keeps visitors coming back, eager to discover more.

Adjacent Photos: At the Kansas University Jayhawk Welcome Center potential students learn about their future path to success through the stories of their predecessors. New student guides gather information about the potential Jayhawks and upload the information into databases that customize the stories perspectives students will encounter as part of their visit, starting with a personalized two-story welcome screen. Personalized QR codes throughout the welcome center hold curated content designed specifically for that student, allowing the visitor to go as deep or wide on topics from student life to life after college as they want.



TREND 5

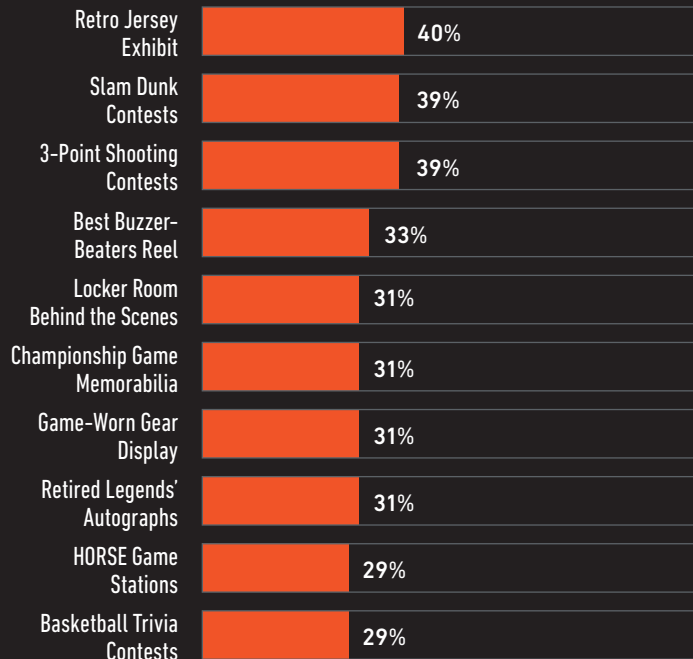
Dynamic Unfolding of Narrative

Rhythm is built into the best built experiential environments. In the greatest hall of fame, moments of soaring emotion—the game-winning ball, the championship trophy—are given space to shine, but they're balanced with quiet corners for reflection. Triumphant stories honor the struggles behind them. Individual brilliance is framed within the tapestry of team achievement. The visitor's emotional journey through the hall experience should rise and fall, letting each high and low resonate deeply before the next emotional moment.

What FIVE exhibits would you be most excited to engage with?*

OPPORTUNITY:

How can understanding the mix of exhibit types Naismith fans prefer help create a dynamic, unfolding emotional journey? With audience research and conversation, a journey can be designed to balance highs and lows, moments of rest and moments of excitement, moments of full body engagement and moments of cognitive focus.



*2024 Hall Market Survey

Adjacent Photos: The Naval Academy Athletic Association visitor center is a place to tell Navy Athletics' story in a way that feels authentic to the physical mission and service culture, while showing the scope of achievement. The goal is to dynamically connect history, academics, and life as a midshipman, while mixing big "wow" moments experienced through full immersion with more intimate, personal stories told through objects, images, and media.



TREND 6

Placemaking

Thresholds lead to spaces. Spaces are places yet to be discovered. Placemaking is the practice of designing and activating spaces to create meaningful, engaging environments that foster connection, identity, and a sense of belonging. Placemaking prioritizes people, local culture, and shared experiences over purely functional design.

Community-based organizations increasingly use placemaking to move beyond static exhibition spaces to become dynamic community hubs. Through thoughtful design, welcoming public areas, programming, and partnerships, Naismith can create environments that encourage social interaction, repeat visits, and community ownership beyond its current program.

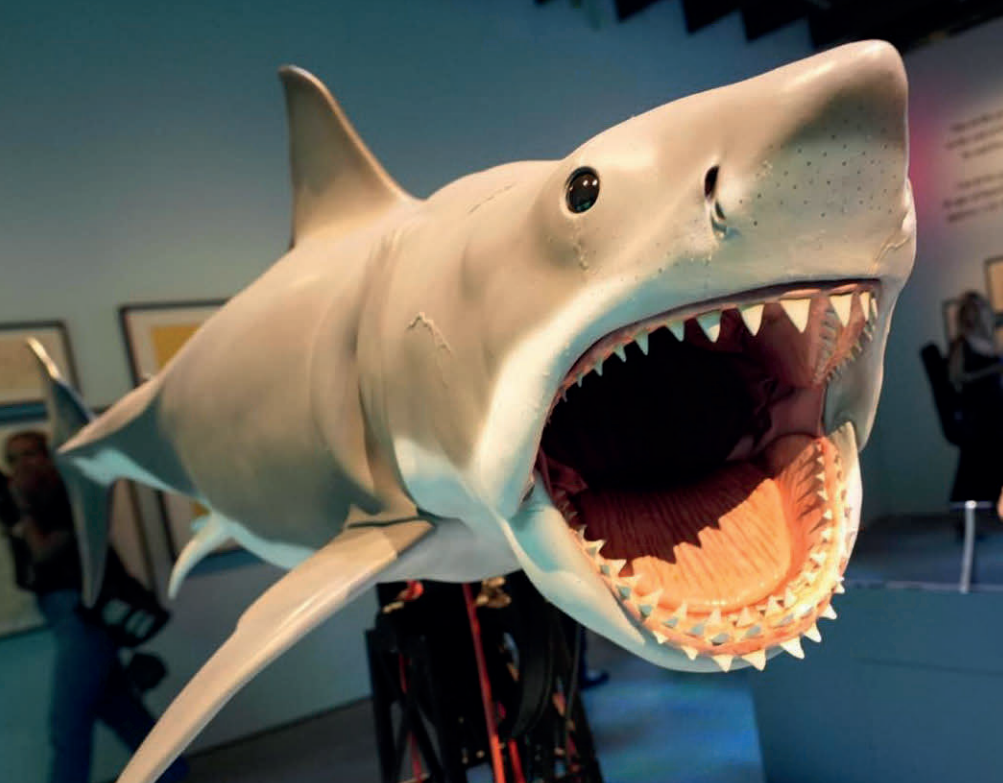
Adjacent Photos: The Petersen Automotive Museum creates a strong “place” for the car-enthusiast community by going beyond being just a car museum. It functions as a cultural hub built around shared passion, learning, and participation through community-centered experiences, rotating and themed exhibitions, and holding and promoting events that allow for social interaction among automakers, designers, collectors and car clubs with the everyday car lover created a space for shared experience.



02

BENCHMARKING

Academy Museum of Motion Pictures
College Basketball Hall of Fame
Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum
Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum
Museum of Pop Culture (MOPOP)
Museum of the Bible
Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame
NASCAR Hall of Fame
National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum
Pro Football Hall of Fame
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame



For the 50th anniversary of Jaws, the Academy Museum recreated the 25-foot model great white shark, and other props and special effects to give movie enthusiasts the chance to relive their love of the movie together.



Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

Location: Los Angeles, California

Age of Facility: Opened 2021

Last Major Renovation: New construction/adaptive reuse completed 2021

Square Footage of Exhibits: 50,000 sq ft (290,000 sq ft campus)

Annual Visitors: Not publicly standardized

Entry Fee: \$25 adult

Exhibit Experience: Celebrates film history, technology, and culture through iconic artifacts and cinematic exhibitions.





The College Basketball Hall of Fame honors the greatest players, coaches, and contributors in the history of men's and women's college basketball. It preserves the sport's legacy through exhibits, awards, and inductions celebrating excellence at the collegiate level.

College Basketball Hall of Fame

Location: Kansas City, Missouri

Age of Facility: Opened 2007

Last Major Renovation: None reported

Square Footage of Exhibits: 41,500 sq ft

Annual Visitors: Not publicly reported

Entry Fee: \$20 adult





The Country Music Hall of Fame celebrates the artists, songwriters, and industry leaders who shaped and advanced country music. It preserves the genre's history through exhibits, recordings, and honors recognizing lasting influence.



Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum

Location: Nashville, Tennessee

Age of Facility: Opened 2001

Last Major Renovation: Major expansion completed 2014

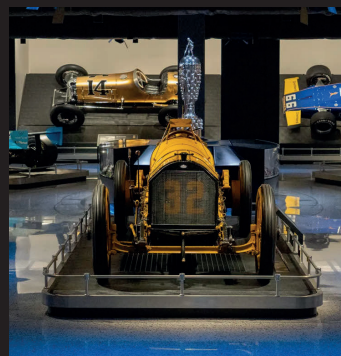
Square Footage of Exhibits: 350,000 sq ft

Annual Visitors: Approximately 1.6 million

Entry Fee: \$27.95 adult general admission

Exhibit Experience: Comprehensive, chronological exploration of country music history with rotating exhibitions and archival depth.





The Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum showcases the history of auto racing, with a special focus on the Indianapolis 500. It features legendary race cars, trophies, and exhibits highlighting motorsports innovation and tradition.

Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

Age of Facility: Opened 1956 (current building 1976)

Last Major Renovation: Reopened 2025 after major renovation

Square Footage of Exhibits: 80,000 sq ft

Annual Visitors: Approximately 140,000

Entry Fee: \$25 adult

Exhibit Experience: Historic race cars and immersive storytelling centered on the Indianapolis 500 and motorsports innovation.





The Museum of Pop Culture celebrates contemporary popular culture, including music, film, science fiction, and gaming. Through interactive exhibits, it highlights creativity and the impact of pop culture on society.



Museum of Pop Culture (MOPOP)

Location: Seattle, Washington

Age of Facility: Opened 2000

Last Major Renovation: Ongoing exhibit updates

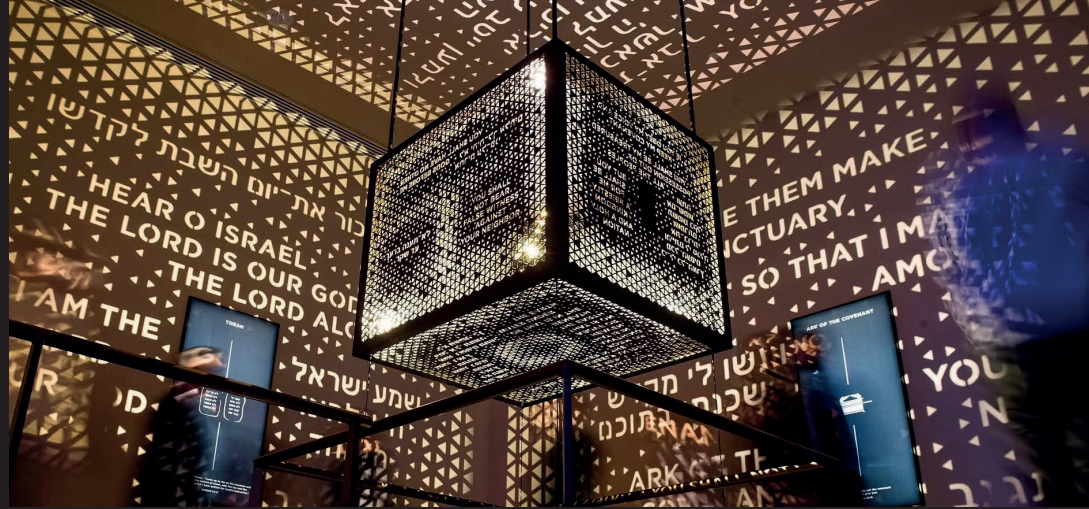
Square Footage of Exhibits: 140,000 sq ft

Annual Visitors: Approximately 575,000

Entry Fee: Varies by date

Exhibit Experience: Immersive pop culture museum spanning music, film, sci-fi, fantasy, and interactive performance spaces.

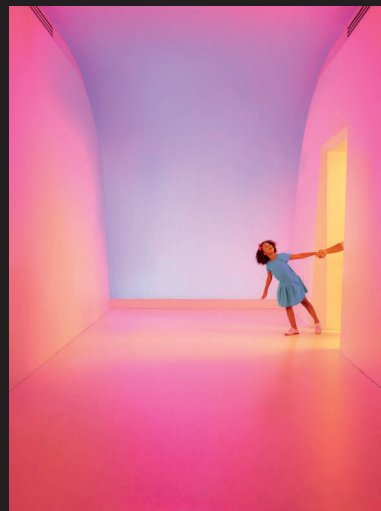




The Museum of the Bible explores the history, impact, and cultural significance of the Bible around the world. It features interactive exhibits, historical artifacts, and immersive experiences.

Museum of the Bible

- Location:** Washington, D.C.
- Age of Facility:** Opened 2017
- Last Major Renovation:** None reported
- Square Footage of Exhibits:** 430,000 sq ft building
- Annual Visitors:** Approximately 450,000
- Entry Fee:** Ticketed; partial free access
- Exhibit Experience:** Narrative-driven, immersive galleries exploring biblical history, text, and cultural impact.





The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame honors the greatest players, coaches, and contributors in the history of basketball worldwide. It preserves the sport's legacy through exhibits, memorabilia, and induction ceremonies celebrating excellence.

Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame

Location: Springfield, Massachusetts

Age of Facility: Opened 2002

Last Major Renovation: Ongoing exhibit enhancements

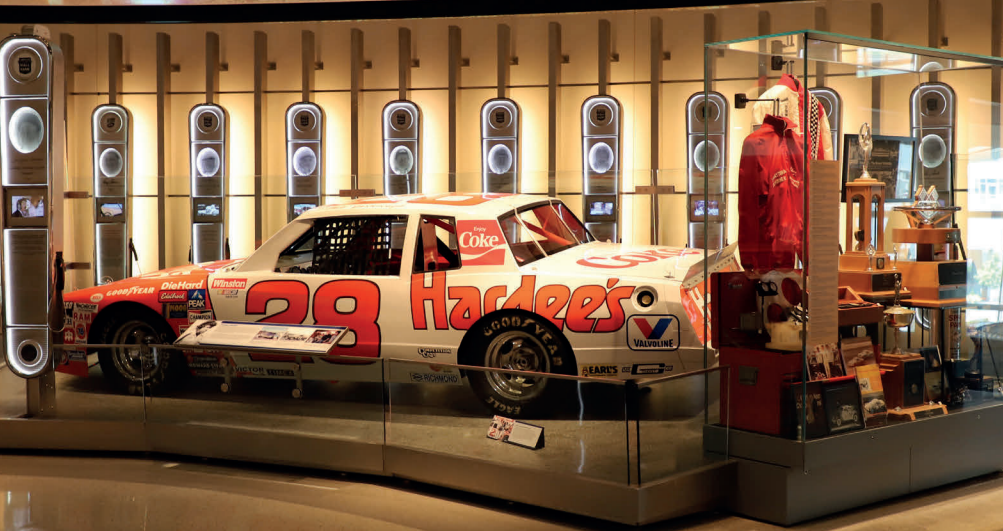
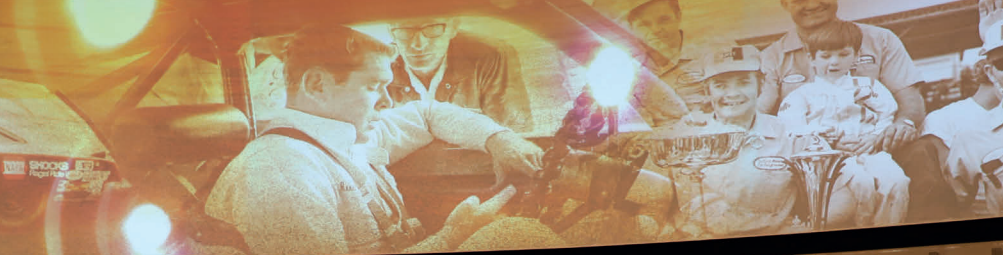
Square Footage of Exhibits: 40,000 sq ft

Annual Visitors: Approximately 200,000

Entry Fee: Varies by ticket type

Exhibit Experience: Blends basketball history, honors, and interactive on-court experiences.





The NASCAR Hall of Fame honors the drivers, team owners, and innovators who shaped stock car racing. Through interactive exhibits and historic artifacts, it celebrates NASCAR's history and impact on motorsports.

NASCAR Hall of Fame

Location: Charlotte, North Carolina

Age of Facility: Opened 2010

Last Major Renovation: No major renovation reported

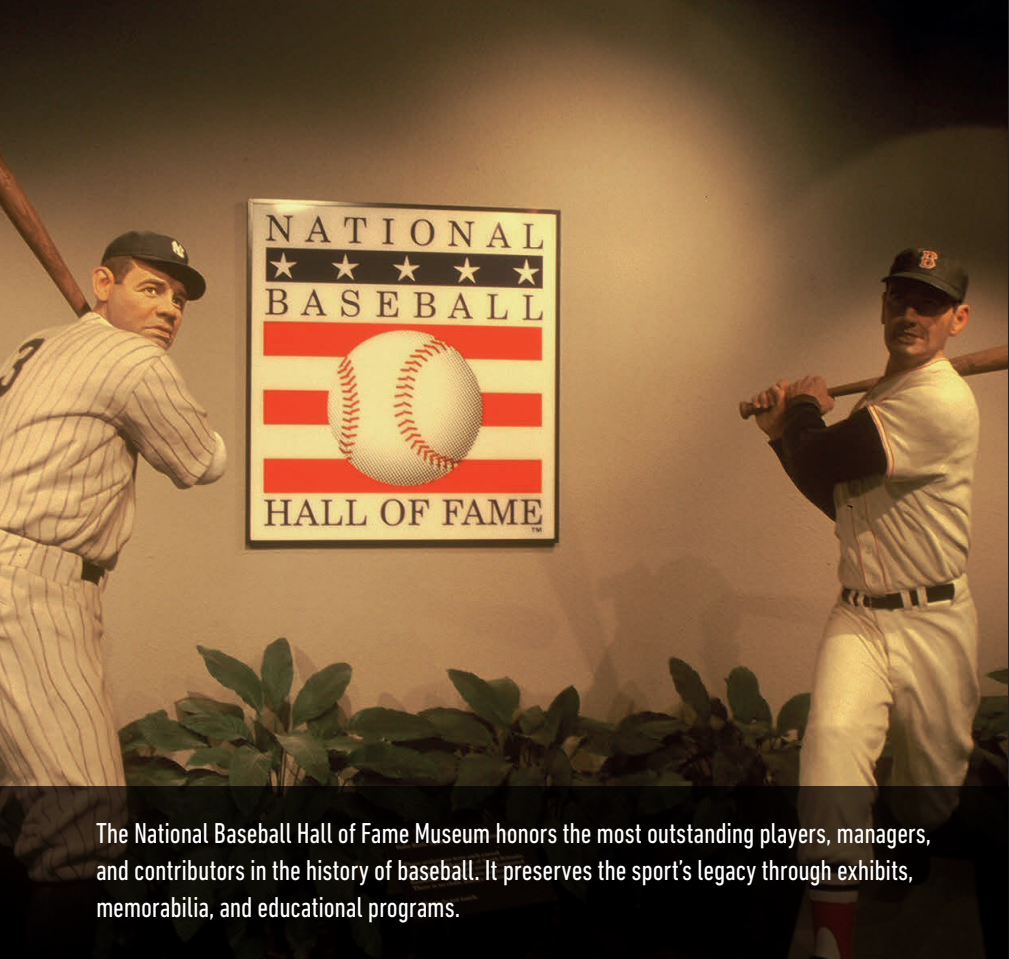
Square Footage of Exhibits: 150,000 sq ft

Annual Visitors: Approximately 200,000

Entry Fee: \$19.95 adult

Exhibit Experience: Highly interactive motorsports experience with simulators, iconic cars, and inductee-focused galleries.





The National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum honors the most outstanding players, managers, and contributors in the history of baseball. It preserves the sport's legacy through exhibits, memorabilia, and educational programs.

National Baseball Hall of Fame Museum

- Location:** Cooperstown, New York
- Age of Facility:** Dedicated 1939
- Last Major Renovation:** Major renovation completed 2005
- Square Footage of Exhibits:** Not publicly specified
- Annual Visitors:** Approximately 260,000
- Entry Fee:** Varies by season and age
- Exhibit Experience:** Extensive baseball history museum highlighting legends, artifacts, and the cultural impact of the sport.



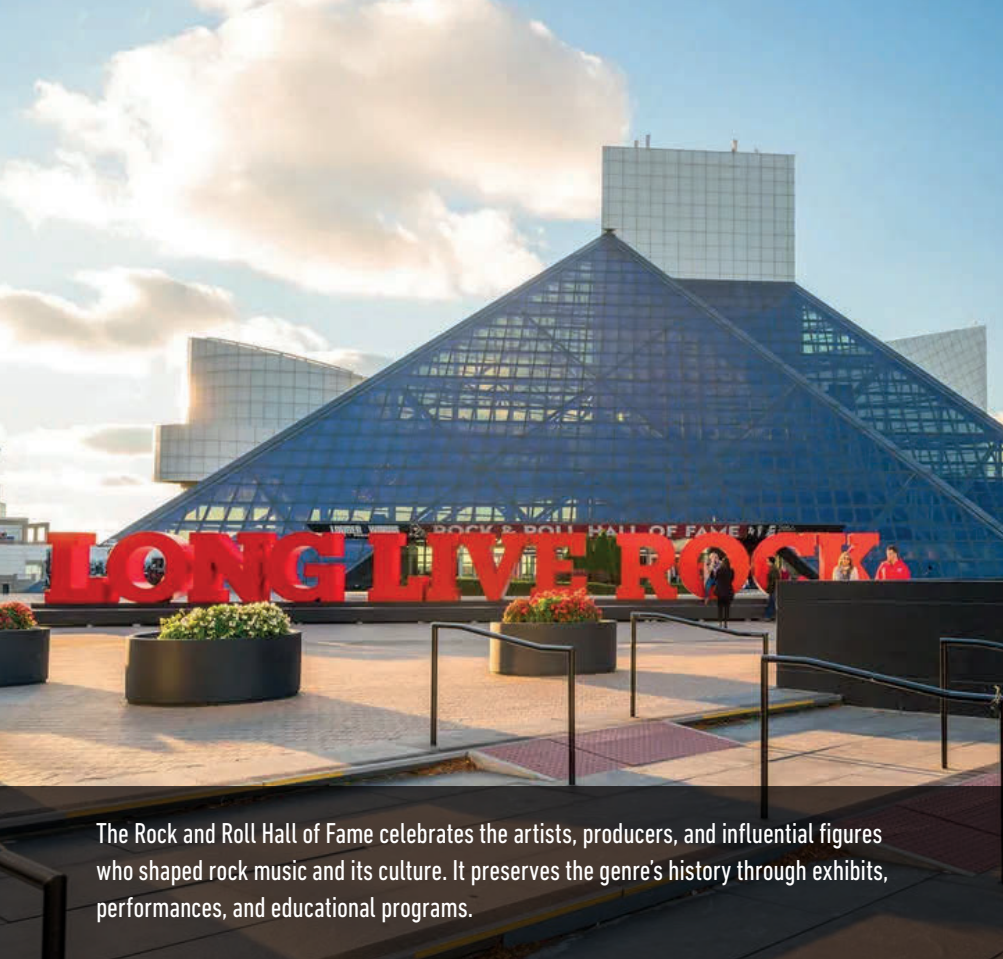


The Pro Football Hall of Fame honors the greatest players, coaches, and contributors in professional football history. It preserves the game's legacy through exhibits, memorabilia, and induction ceremonies celebrating excellence.



Pro Football Hall of Fame
Location: Canton, Ohio
Age of Facility: Opened 1963
Last Major Renovation: Major expansion completed 2013
Square Footage of Exhibits: 118,000 sq ft
Annual Visitors: Approximately 250,000
Entry Fee: Varies by ticket type
Exhibit Experience: Legend-driven professional football history with artifacts, films, and interactive exhibits.





The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame celebrates the artists, producers, and influential figures who shaped rock music and its culture. It preserves the genre's history through exhibits, performances, and educational programs.

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Location: Cleveland, Ohio

Age of Facility: Opened 1995

Last Major Renovation: Major expansion underway (2023–2025)

Square Footage of Exhibits: 155,000 sq ft (expanding to 205,000 sq ft)

Annual Visitors: Approximately 500,000

Entry Fee: Varies by date and ticket type

Exhibit Experience: Multi-level, artifact-driven exploration of rock music history with rotating major exhibitions and immersive storytelling.





The world is full of mediocre experiences.

**We help our clients create
REMARKABLE ONES.**

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