

# Made in America: Rock your own guitar

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Say goodbye to basket weaving and watercolors.

The craft of guitar making is debuting this summer in the labs of Purdue University, and its initiators are hoping it will rock the mechanical and musical worlds.

"It has almost become a guitar-building fantasy camp," said Richard Couch, director of engagement at Purdue's Center for Advanced Manufacturing and one of the coordinators of the workshop.

This week, several Purdue representatives have teamed up with guitar experts from across the country to create a guitar-making class opened to aficionados and beginners alike.

Between Monday and Friday, the participants in the class — depending on the day, attendance is between 10 and 15 — sand, varnish, paint and refine their once-crudely formed pieces of wood into flashy electric guitars.

The class takes place in Purdue's Michael Golden Labs. It's scheduled to run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but often goes until 7 p.m. or later, said Mark French, an assistant professor in Purdue's Department of Mechanical Engineering Technology and organizer of the class.

"We have to throw them out in the evening," he said. "The enthusiasm has been amazing."

The class fee of \$1,295 covers all materials. Perhaps more priceless, however, is instruction from Fender Guitars senior designer Tim Shaw and representatives from Taylor Guitars and Stewart-Macdonald, an Athens, Ohio-based supplier of guitar parts.



By Andrew Hancock/Journal & Courier  
**Toby Ban of Huntington Beach, Calif., works on his guitar during a workshop Thursday at Purdue University.**

The only female participant, West Lafayette resident Cathy Hayt heard about the workshop through the Lafayette Music League, of which she is a member.

"I've always wanted to build a guitar," she said.

So far, she said, it's going well. "I'm really enjoying putting together the neck ... I could have done with less sanding."

Participants in the class vary in age and skill level, said Brad Harringer, a professor of manufacturing engineering technology and another coordinator of the class.

One thing they share, though, is a love of guitar.

"People are just diving in head-first," French said. "They're all just absolute guitar fanatics. All they want to talk about is guitars."



For an up-close look at this week's guitar making class, go to [www.jconline.com](http://www.jconline.com) and click on "Guitar making class" under the featured videos section on the home page.