

# ROCK-OLA FACTORY TOUR

## APRIL 2, 2022

As we arrived at the Rock-ola factory in Torrance, the MOPAR's were in the process of concluding their monthly meeting which is held in Rock-Ola's front parking lot. This was a great opportunity to view their Dodges, Chryslers, DeSotos and Plymouths. After their meeting they gathered around our AACA collector automobiles for friendly conversations.



Michael & Sue's "new" Corvette



**Setting the standards for quality product manufacturing since 1927**  
**Rock-Ola is the last, great Jukebox factory in America**

Ken Urban who had been with Rock-ola for 50 years took us on an excellent tour explaining the company history and how they prepare the wooden cabinets using the same techniques as we did in the 1930's. The wooden cabinets and door assemblies are sanded and finished in a five-step process before receiving two coats of clear satin finish. We saw rows of customers jukeboxes being custom built with structures and details using fine woods, custom glass and state of the art components.



Original 1930's presses hold the Back-rail, bottom & sides when nailed and glued together



Ken shows the routed sides



CNC machine cuts four doors at a time



From the wood shop to the final testing line, there are 100 jukeboxes in production at the factory

The finished jukeboxes looked great and the sounded wonderful. We now have first-hand knowledge of their workmanship and appreciate why the wait for a custom Rock-Ola Jukebox can take upwards of six months.

David Rockola started the Rock-Ola Manufacturing Company in 1927 making 'low boy' penny scales, pinball machines and various trade simulators. During WWII Rock-Ola produced M-1 carbine rifles for the US Army. Then in 1936 one of Rock-Ola's famous Multi-Selector Jukeboxes was chosen to be highlighted on the Queen Mary's maiden voyage.



Model 1454 in 1956 offered 120 selections from 60 records while the 1988 model "Sea View" had the capabilities of holding both 45's and CD's. 1992 saw the ownership change to Glenn Streeter and in 2019 to Alexander Walder-Smith. Today, the touchscreen Music Center Jukebox allows you to load, organize and play up to 13,000 CD's—that's over 100,000 of your favorite Songs!





Tubes are heated to obtain a custom curve  
Michael demonstrates how the body heat can start the bubble action



Because it resided in the famous “Cheers” bar, one famous Rock-Ola Jukebox can be seen in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC with other TV archives.

From it’s start in Chicago to the state-of-the-art factory in Torrance, Rock-Ola products are now sold world wide. David Rockola’s classic jukeboxes inspired the term Rock & Roll and left an indelible mark on the music industry that literally echoes his name.