

Rick Derringer collects guitars because if a guitar has something to offer, "I'm going to use it."

Instruments of the stars: Rick Derringer

by John Stix

Coincidence and luck" are what Rick Derringer call his reasons for getting into music. At 17 his group the McCoys had a hit with "Hang On Sloopy" and he's been running with the guitar ever since. Besides his work as a solo artist, he's also recorded with Johnny and Edgar Winter, Todd Rundgren and Steely Dan.


"I'm a collector perhaps for better reasons than people who call themselves guitar collectors," Derringer explained. "If there's a guitar that has something unique to offer, I should have it because I'm going to use it." To this end Rick has about 20 guitars, including a rebuilt **T.V. model Les Paul** from the late '50s. He calls it a

"souped up sports car kind of guitar." The original pickup is now a humbucker with a second one installed. There's a toggle switch for pickup separation and phasing, and the neck has been cut down so it's smaller.

"I've got an **old Explorer**, either the first or second one made. You can tell by the v-shaped head. It's got one of the most consistent necks from top to bottom of any guitar I own. There's a '58 **Les Paul Sunburst** with a Bigsby, that's real special to collectors. You also see pictured a '55 **Dan Electro** with three pickups and one cutaway. It's the model Duane Eddy used on 'Rebel Rouser,' and still one of the best sounding guitars. It's similar to the top end of a **Tele** and the bottom of a **Gibson**.

There's a stone guitar and the body's made of granite. It has a maple neck with an ebony fret board. It has all sterling silver binding that's molded directly into each fret. I like this guitar especially for slide.

"I have a **double neck** made for me by **Charles LoBue**. Both necks are small **Gibson** style necks. The body is one piece of birch, which gives it good sustain. There's also a nice vintage '59 Strat. It's got a sweet pretty sound and I love to play it in the studio." Rick's main axe is a **B.C. Rich old style Mockingbird**, which he says is "better than any old Gibson."

"Anyone can buy one and it's gonna be that good," he said. 

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