



**NOTHING COMPARES:**  
2,000 guests attended  
the annual Paisley Park  
celebration June 8-11.

# Paisley Park Sharing Prince While Respecting Legacy

BY WENDY PEARL

**“It’s a truth. It’s a Prince truth and we are all aligned with his truth,”** said Londell McMillan, chairman of Paisley Park.

Prince Rogers Nelson was born in Minneapolis on June 7, 1958. Despite becoming a global superstar, the artist most enduringly known as Prince chose to stay close to his hometown birthright until his death on April 21, 2016, at his creative compound Paisley Park in Chanhassen, 20 miles west of the Twin Cities.

Shaped by the city’s diverse, thriving music scene in the 1980s, Prince routinely gave back to his hometown. He once said, “I like Hollywood. I just like Minneapolis a little bit better.”

Paisley Park, now owned by Prince Legacy

LLC and Prince OAT Holding LLC, is a 65,000 square foot purple magic refuge on approximately nine acres with recording facilities, a large sound stage, museum, performance club and event space open to the public.

The venue hosts an annual celebration of Prince, a gathering of fans from around the world. This year’s event, which took place June 8-11 and attracted 2,000 guests, featured music panels with Chaka Khan, Chuck D and Doug E. Fresh, in-studio recording sessions, in addition to year-round museum tours and concerts in the 200-capacity NPG Music Club.

“These are his wishes,” explained McMillan, a longtime friend and attorney for Prince. “He left notes indicating that he would love to turn this into a museum.”

From the start, Prince envisioned Paisley Park as an inclusive artistic sanctuary where he could record music and explore the visual arts, from photo shoots and music videos to theatrical releases.

Paisley Park opened in 1987 after two years of construction at a cost of \$10 million. The name comes from his 1985 song of the same name, which was released by Prince and The Revolution on the album *Around the World in a Day*.

Since opening, several like-minded creatives including Madonna, Tevin Campbell, R.E.M. and Lizzo have recorded there.

Today people can visit the studio and memorabilia exhibits such as “Beautiful Collection,” an exhibit of 300 pairs of Prince’s custom shoes including shoes from “Raspberry Beret” and even a pair of roller skates, reflecting his love of roller skating.

“There are always certain personal artifacts, assets and stories that we reserve, not for public consumption, but there are so many wonderful things about Prince that are public,” McMillan said. “To be able to see those things up close and personal and to experience them in his home and place of creative work — we call it his creative sanctuary — there is nothing that could be better than to be so intimate with the



**PURPLE REIGN:** A Love Symbol statue was unveiled outside Paisley Park in 2020.



**LET'S GO CRAZY:** Memorabilia on display at Paisley Park includes an exhibit of 300 pairs of Prince's custom shoes.

greatest artist in the world.”

McMillan refers to the collection, which includes an extensive archive of audio-visual content, as a “treasure trove.” Prince’s creative vision and bar-raising aesthetic are present in every decision, according to McMillan.

“When I think about him, all the things he would put us all through when we were working with him; he would always create challenges for us to leap and achieve, and this is no different,” he said. “We have an amazing team that is dedicated and committed to sharing Prince in a way that respects his legacy.”

The annual celebration this year fell seven

years after Prince’s death.

“Seven was always a special, powerful number for him,” said McMillan. “We are making sure everything has that purple magic we would want and expect from anything associated with Prince.”

Paisley Park welcomed 1,500 fans for the Celebration. On an average day, Paisley Park offers five to seven tours a day, with the exception of Tuesday and Wednesday. Each tour averages 25-30 people.

Visitors experience the atrium, studios, themed rooms and the soundstage, which has a capacity of 1,000 for events and has rotating

displays, including Prince’s vehicles and a special stage show. Ticket prices start at \$65 a person.

Blending music into the museum experience is important to the Paisley Park mission. Tommy Barbarella, who played keys from 1991-1996 with The New Power Generation, Prince’s recording and stage band, and Julius Collins, who was managed by Prince, make appearances at the NPG Music Club. Programming extends to a jazz series, Paisley Park After Dark with DJ Keezy, and other performances.

“A lot of thought is put into it. It’s a team-colaborated decision, but it is curated to what Prince’s vibe would be and what he would approve of,” said Makayla Elder, museum collections manager at Paisley Park.

“Music is not just the soundtrack to Paisley Park, it’s really the heartbeat and inspiration for the creative expression of the exhibitions as well as the design of the facility,” McMillan said. “It is music driven, embedded in the theme, because music was Prince’s primary love.”

The goal is to keep the facility as a recording facility and performance space and not just a static museum.

“Prince would be proud to know that we are still using recording spaces for future musicians,” Elder said. “Whether they are big or small, we continue to spread the love of music.”

“We are always thrilled to host people who really loved him,” McMillan said. “Whether you’re a new or old friend, you’re always welcome; and we try to bring a positive experience that people can leave and feel and stay connected to him and his music yearlong.”