

## POSTCARD

## Motown Museum

Detroit's top attraction is re-tuning with a \$55 million expansion programme in the works, finds **Zoey Goto**

It's hard to believe that the legendary Motown sound, a genre that gave us timeless hits such as Marvin Gaye's *I Heard It Through The Grapevine* and Diana Ross's *I'm Coming Out*, was born out of a row of unassuming houses in Detroit. But it's on this exact spot, where the Motown Museum now stands, that in 1959 record mogul Berry Gordy set up the headquarters and recording studio for what was to become one of the highest-earning black businesses of the 1960s.

Tours of the museum – or Hitsville USA, as it's affectionately known – have been running since 1985. It continues to resonate as one of southeast Michigan's most popular tourist destinations, attracting almost 100,000 visitors annually.

Part-way through an ambitious renovation (but still open to the public), I paid the museum a visit. I'd barely stepped through the hallowed doorway before the guide had our tour group singing and dancing to The Temptations hit *My Girl*. Ice broken, we were then shown a short video charting the rise of the distinctive Motown sound, a blend of blues and gospel with heavy pop overtones that made acts such as The Supremes, The Jackson 5 and Stevie Wonder into household names. At about an hour long, the tour is short but sweet, taking in exhibition rooms on the upper level that include Michael Jackson's sequinned glove, Berry Gordy's domestic spaces with period furnishings and, for the grand finale, the chance to test your vocals inside the famed Studio A, where the musical magic once happened.

The museum recently completed work on Hitsville NEXT, transforming three neighbouring buildings into professional recording pods and community spaces. But looming large on the horizon is the next phase – a 3,700sq m expansion that will include retail and interactive exhibition spaces alongside the Ford Motor Company theatre, which will have a dazzling gold facade to reflect Motown's logo, due for completion in 2024.

Beyond the museum's doors, a leisurely stroll along the Detroit Riverwalk, voted the best riverwalk in the US, gives music fans a bonus experience via an outdoor exhibit of informative panels. The Motown Mile Experience highlights the pivotal role that the label once played in the racial integration of American music. **TW**



## BOOK IT

Purely America offers a 13-night itinerary that includes two nights in Detroit. Prices start at £2,400 per person, based on two sharing, including Delta flights from Heathrow, a guided tour of the museum, car hire and three and four-star accommodation. [purelytravel.co.uk/usa](http://purelytravel.co.uk/usa)



FROM TOP: A rendering of the final stage of the Motown Museum's expansion; Studio A, where many of the label's best-known tracks were recorded