

GEAR / AUDIO

This Bespoke Fender Stratocaster Was Inspired by a Saleen S1 Sports Car

The full-throttle Fender is priced at \$33,000.

BY ROBERT ROSS ON APRIL 19, 2020



Cars and [guitars](#) often attract the same crowd of enthusiasts, each evoking a passionate response from owners who relish the look and feel of high-performance machines, whether mechanical or musical. And now both worlds are united in a single form: the Stratocaster 1.

Probably no guitar maker is as well-known as [Fender](#), whose Stratocaster changed the landscape of rock 'n' roll with its sound and has held a magnetic attraction for almost every notable guitarist across the last 60 years. In a rare collaboration, Fender and specialty car builder [Saleen](#) Automotive have created a custom electric six-string inspired by the Saleen S1, a mid-engine sports car from the boutique manufacturer made famous by its S7 supercar and high-performance Mustangs.

The Stratocaster 1 is a unique offering from Fender's Prestige Collection and was handmade by Ron Thorn, Fender Custom Shop's principal master builder. One of the industry's most accomplished artisans, Thorn is also a lifelong car guy. Challenged to make "a guitar with no boundaries," he came up with a design in harmony with the sleek Saleen S1.



Painted in Saleen’s brilliant version of candy-apple red, the one-off Strat features a hollow, handlaid carbon-fiber body that, like the vehicle itself, keeps weight to a minimum. Aesthetics are enhanced with a roasted-alder center block and a hand-carved maple top.

The neck is made of quarter-sawn roasted maple, with a 12-inch radius carbon-fiber, round-laminate fingerboard embellished with matching carbon-fiber headstock overlay. Also custom are the 6-Stack bridge and handmade tailpiece— for supporting and anchoring the strings, respectively —and the Strat 1 pedalboard, which controls the volume, tone and “wah-wah” effect.



As with the S1’s turbocharged engine, the instrument can push the needle—its high-output TV Jones Power’Tron Plus bridge pickup is visible through a tinted “rear window” at the back.

According to Thorn, “It was an extremely challenging yet fulfilling build, utilizing methods, materials and concepts new to both the Fender Custom Shop and myself.” Priced at \$33,000, the lone example is available at Cosmo Music. [fender.com](https://www.fender.com); [cosmomusic.ca](https://www.cosmomusic.ca)

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