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Clubhouse aims at car geeks Members-only garage blends clean storage, hangout

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The Woodward Warehouse in Royal Oak, Mich., cultivates enthusiasts of classic cars in a private setting. **DETROITFREE PRESS** [Enlarge](#)

ROYAL OAK, Mich. — It's being called a yacht club for classic car owners.

For \$250 a month, members can keep their cars in the new Woodward Warehouse -- a spotless, climate-controlled space in Royal Oak that's one part private museum, one part tinkering spot for car geeks, and two parts 24-7 social hangout.

"We're trying to create the car enthusiast's ultimate environment," owner Joe Polito said as he showed visitors the members-only car hoists, auto detailing area, kitchen, cigar room, showers, pool table, and private dining room.

Tucked into a small office park that's a two-minute drive from Woodward Avenue north of 13 Mile Road, the building previously housed a commercial heating and cooling firm and numerous other businesses before it fell on hard times and the roof began to leak, said Mr. Polito, 61, a retired lawyer who said he has been collecting cars since he was 16 years old.

Mr. Polito bought the building and put more than \$500,000 into the gleaming build-out, replete with neon automotive logos and a color scheme of white, gray, and red.

The garage area, with a speckle-finish resin floor as clean as the clubhouse dinner plates, has space for about 43 cars.

"It's fantastic," said new member Anthony Garth, 38, whose 2003 Vespa motor scooter and 2012 Harley-Davidson Sportster Forty-Eight motorcycle -- a replica of a '48 Harley -- drew admirers. Nearby, Mr. Garth parked his 1983 Cadillac.

"If they're just in my garage, there's nobody to talk to," Mr. Garth said.

It was a car scene laden with American iron, including a bright-red 1955 Ford Thunderbird, a 1959 Edsel Corsair convertible in white with turquoise trim, a 1966 Oldsmobile Toronado -- the first year for that landmark front-wheel drive car -- and Mr. Polito's own 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Sting Ray, from the first year of the Sting Ray body style, when the rear window was split.

For those who don't have a car to store, there are social memberships for \$150 a month.

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