



By Jim Basara - GJD

Welcome to the fourth installment in our NAMM awards series. Today's award category is "What Were They Thinking?" These are products that make you scratch your head and wonder what the heck the product manager was thinking when they made the go-forward decision on the product. As always, with 1500+ vendors, candidates for this award were not difficult to find. There were plenty of products about which you had to wonder if there was really a market for them.

This year, I'm giving an aggregate award to the dozen or so guitar manufacturers who apparently feel their path to fame and fortune is producing bizarre and whacky guitar shapes. These include guitars with 3-foot flames extending from the rear of the guitar, large Chinese dragon heads, ocean waves, geometrically perfect ovals, and all sorts of other "creative" designs.

Here are a couple of my favorites from this year's show:

## The Rambo



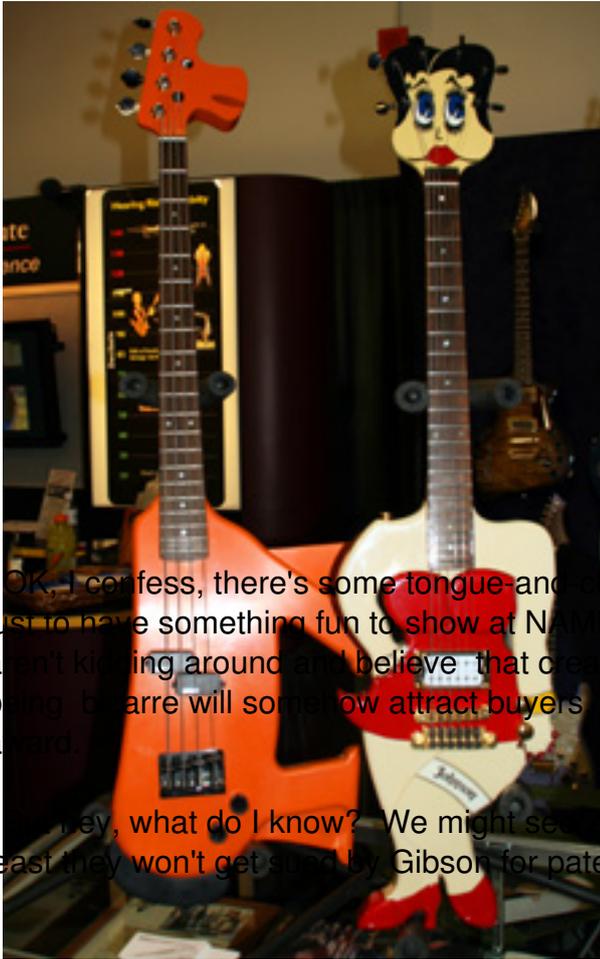
*Just in case your audience gets unruly*

**The Gumby**



*What, no whammy bar????*

And what's a Gumby without having a Pokey as a backup, with a Betty Boop thrown in for playing encores?



OK, I confess, there's some tongue-and-cheek here, as some of these manufacturers do this just to have something fun to show at NAMM. But, there are too many manufacturers who aren't kidding around and believe that creating body shapes that are bizarre for the sake of being bizarre will somehow attract buyers. It is to THOSE manufacturers that we give this award.

Hey, what do I know? We might see Jack Wylde with the Gumby sometime soon. And at least they won't get sued by Gibson for patent and trade dress infringement!