



WHAT'S NEW IN KENTUCKY BOURBON

Bourbon Events, Distillers, Expansions Enhance Guests' Experiences

Distilleries

Louisville distillery rebrands its speakeasy - Chicken Cock Whiskey has announced the relaunch of its Circa 1856 Louisville speakeasy as "The Coupe." This reimagined cocktail destination honors the brand's historic heritage while offering immersive spaces for whiskey enthusiasts. The venue debuted in March 2026, featuring a Mover & Shaker pop-up, and a brand-new cocktail menu.

<https://www.fredminnick.com/2026/03/16/chicken-cock-to-relaunch-speakeasy-as-the-coupe/>

Cave City Distilling Company being built in Cave City – In June 2026 Cave City Distilling Company is opening a full-scale production facility and tasting room near Mammoth Cave National Park. The distillery will bring tours, tastings, and production to the city. This expansion, part of a collaborative effort with neighboring distillers, and aims to bolster Cave City's bourbon tourism industry.

<https://www.wbko.com/2025/12/02/new-tasting-rooms-future-distillery-put-cave-city-bourbon-map/>

Horse Soldier Bourbon to open in July - Horse Soldier Bourbon's state-of-the-art Somerset distillery is slated for a July 2026 grand opening. President Scott Neil recently showcased the facility's "closed loop" fermentation process, which eliminates odors while recapturing carbon dioxide. The site features twelve 17,000-gallon tanks and solar-powered systems, aiming for maximum efficiency. Eventually evolving into a full tourism destination with walking trails and a wedding chapel.

https://www.somerset-kentucky.com/news/horse-solider-gives-somerset-council-sneak-peek-of-distillery/article_ac679ce8-0842-43bf-aa4d-5c1aa8f3aa8a.html

Never Say Die micro distillery to open in Lexington - Never Say Die Bourbon plans a \$4 million micro-distillery at 249 West Short Street, the former Parlay Social building. Located in Lexington's restaurant district, the "English-themed" site will offer tours, tastings, and bottling experiences. Targeting a fall 2026 opening, the project includes 19 new jobs and state tax incentives. The facility aims to join the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, producing at least 600 proof gallons annually while honoring the brand's historic racing heritage.

<https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article313755164.html>

Bob Dylan's Heaven's Door Distillery preps for opening - Heaven's Door Distillery, co-founded in a collaboration with Bob Dylan, is preparing to open its 160-acre campus in Pleasureville, Kentucky, in mid-2026. The opening will come after wildly successful preview tours throughout the previous fall. Though distilling since 2018, the facility is nearing completion and will feature a history village, two stillhouses, and an event venue. Dylan's involvement is integral to the brand, with the name referencing his music, his artwork featured on limited-edition bottles, and his gate designs pictured on the core releases.

https://www.madisoncourier.com/carroll_news_democrat/news/heavens-door-campus-revealed-before-the-gate-tours/article_30f043c7-827a-51e4-aacb-525aeefde243.html

Spirits producer buys "Castle" in West Louisville - Von Payne Spirits, known for its gothic style, has acquired the 60,000-square-foot, historic Whiteside's Bakery Company building that resembles a castle. The landmark, located on West Broadway Street, will be restored as The Von Payne Castle: Distillery and

Tasting Experience. Projected to open in late 2027, it will showcase the brand's alternative spirits, including its black currant infused whiskey, creating a unique destination on the Bourbon Trail and bringing new jobs and investment to the neighborhood. <https://www.fredminnick.com/2025/09/12/von-payne-spirits-buys-castle-in-west-louisville/>

Heaven Hill Unveils \$200 Million Bardstown Distillery - Heaven Hill, the world's largest privately held distillery, opened the \$200 million Heaven Hill Springs Distillery in Bardstown, Kentucky, in September. The new, state-of-the-art facility marks the company's return to Bardstown and began filling its first barrels in April 2025. The new facility is the site of the new Heritage Rising Tour, which is a small-group experience begins at the Heaven Hill Bourbon Experience, includes transportation to the new distillery, behind-the-scenes access, and a guided tasting at the facility's signature bar. <https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article311887450.html>

Four Roses Distillery sold to E&J Gallo Winery - Four Roses Distillery in Lawrenceburg has been sold to California based E&J Gallo Winery for up to \$775 million, setting a new record for Kentucky distillery sales. The deal, expected to close by mid-2026, includes a performance-based earn-out. Gallo plans no changes to either production or the visitor's experiences. This massive investment signals confidence in the bourbon industry despite global trade headwinds and plateauing spirits sales. <https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article314599723.html>

Experiences

Jeptha Creed adds new experiences to distillery tour - Jeptha Creed Distillery has expanded the list of hands-on experiences at its Shelbyville destination. Guests can now book a Single Barrel Thieving experience to taste whiskey directly from the cask while studying the family's heirloom Bloody Butcher corn profiles. The distillery has also launched an in-depth farm-to-glass educational session focused on their agricultural traditions, alongside a revitalized, behind-the-scenes distillery tour detailing their complete production process. <https://kybourbon.com/industry-news/kybourbon-a-new-era-at-jeptha-creed-expanded-distillery-experiences-arrive-in-2026/>

Buffalo Trace opens restaurant at distillery - Buffalo Trace Distillery has opened the John G. Carlisle Cafe inside the historic, remodeled Elmer T. Lee Clubhouse in Frankfort, Kentucky. Named after the politician behind the Bottled-in-Bond Act, the 4,900-square-foot restaurant features bourbon-infused dishes, rustic decor, and rotating \$6 cocktails. To celebrate its May debut, the cafe is hosting daily promotions throughout the month, including free meals, archivist open houses, craftsman meet-and-greets, and exclusive whiskey tastings. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/dining/restaurant/2026/05/15/buffalo-trace-distillery-in-kentucky-unveils-first-ever-restaurant/89931302007/>

Distillery on Mississippi River opens to the public - The Ingram Distillery has officially opened its historic grounds in Columbus, Kentucky, to the public, featuring the world's only floating barrelhouse operation. Moored inside converted grain barges on the Mississippi River, the site offers immersive "River Aging" tours, custom tastings, and bluff views. <https://www.lanereport.com/187181/2026/04/ingram-distillery-opens-grounds-to-public-partners-with-one-mississippi/>

New speakeasy opens on Louisville's Whiskey Row - The 1933 Society, a new 60-seat speakeasy, is now open beneath Hotel Distil on Louisville's historic Whiskey Row. Named after the year Prohibition ended, the subterranean venue features period interiors and honors figures who kept bourbon alive during the dry era. Led by general manager Casey Grinold, the establishment offers exclusive, rare single-barrel pours and a specialized cocktail menu inspired by historic rebels like bartender Tom Bullock and distiller Mary Dowling. <https://thewhiskeywash.com/whiskey-news/the-1933-society-speakeasy-opens-on-louisvilles-whiskey-row/>

Kentucky Bourbon Festival preps for 35th anniversary - The Kentucky Bourbon Festival will celebrate its 35th anniversary from September 10–13, 2026, in Bardstown, Kentucky. Held during National Bourbon Heritage Month, the milestone event gathers over 60 premier brands and global enthusiasts. This year, Northern Kentucky's independently owned New Riff Distilling takes center stage as the featured distillery. Longtime sponsor The Koetter Group returns to anchor the world-renowned celebration. Ticket sale dates will be announced in the near future. <https://www.fredminnick.com/2026/03/09/kentucky-bourbon-festival-to-celebrate-35th-anniversary/>

Whiskey Thief Bourbon partners with minor league baseball team in Louisville - Whiskey Thief Distilling Co. has partnered with the Louisville Bats to launch the "Whiskey Thief Bourbon Club" at Louisville Slugger Field. This high-end space, which debuted at the beginning of the 2026 season, offers fans a curated bourbon experience alongside professional baseball, featuring exclusive tastings and premium cocktails. <https://kybourbon.com/industry-news/kybourbon-whiskey-thief-distilling-co-partners-with-louisville-bats-to-introduce-bourbon-focused-club-experience-at-louisville-slugger-field/>

New app makes Bourbon Trail trip planning easier - The Kentucky Distillers Association launched "Build Your Own Bourbon Trail," a digital trip builder to navigate a record 68 destinations across 35 counties. This interactive tool at kybourbontrail.com allows travelers to curate, save, and share personalized itineraries featuring historic distilleries and modern tasting rooms. Designed to simplify planning amidst massive tourism growth, the feature highlights "hidden gems" and urban experiences, helping millions of annual visitors explore the diverse craft of America's native spirit. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/spirits/bourbon/2026/02/24/new-tool-helps-plan-kentucky-bourbon-trail-trip/88841628007/>

Onyx & Amber to offer blending experiences in Louisville - Bringing a "mile-high twist" to Kentucky, Onyx & Amber set up shop in the back of the Tartan House on in downtown Louisville in March. This "concierge" brand offers four appointment-only experiences, including immersive blending classes and custom barrel selections. It provides an educational, interactive alternative to traditional large-scale distilleries. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/spirits/bourbon/2026/02/18/onyx-amber-denver-whiskey-company-to-open-in-louisville/87996306007/>

Oscar Getz Museum of bourbon history announces coming upgrades - Bardstown's Oscar Getz Museum of Bourbon History is undergoing a major redesign to celebrate Spalding Hall's 200th anniversary. Supported by federal grants, the project will modernize exhibits, digitize artifacts, and renovate the historic building. The new layout will trace bourbon's evolution alongside American history, from 1780 to the present. Plans debut June 2026, during National Bourbon Week, aiming to transform the museum into a premier, must-stop destination for Kentucky bourbon tourists. https://www.pmg-ky2.com/kystandard/features/bourbon-museum-to-get-a-birthday-makeover/article_fce6f1c7-c9f0-55d2-a756-2ccc021fb2f2.html

Dueling Grounds opens tasting room in Cave City - Dueling Grounds Distillery has opened a tasting room in Cave City. The new location, called the Barrel Room, is located downtown, just minutes away from Mammoth Cave National Park. It offers guided bourbon tastings, craft cocktails, and a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy Linkumpinch Bourbon and seasonal releases. <https://www.wbko.com/2025/12/02/new-tasting-rooms-future-distillery-put-cave-city-bourbon-map/>

MB Roland opens visitor experience in Cave City – MB Roland Distillery debuted a new satellite location in downtown Cave City. Cave Du Bourbon is a tasting room with bourbons, ryes, and flavored spirits such as Kentucky Pink Lemonade. They also carry Cajun seasonings and meal starters, as well as Cafe Du Monde coffees and beignet mix. <https://kybourbon.com/industry-news/cave-city-kentucky-welcomes-two-new-tasting-rooms-and-a-new-craft-distillery-coming-in-2026/>

Larrikin Distillery opens cigar lounge - Larrikin Bourbon Co. has opened the Larrikin Cigar Lounge, making it Kentucky's only distillery with both a dedicated cigar lounge and a walk-in cigar humidor. The distillery, which is veteran-distilled and owned, styled the lounge to be "irreverently comfortable," avoiding a pretentious feel. The lounge allows visitors to enjoy bourbon and cigar pairings and adds to Larrikin's existing lineup of experiences, which include cocktail classes and private barrel picks.

<https://craftspiritsmag.com/2025/10/21/larrikin-bourbon-co-opens-kentuckys-only-distillery-cigar-lounge/>

Buffalo Trace launches Exclusive Barrel Tasting Tour - In November, Buffalo Trace Distillery began offering members of the Sazerac Barrel Select club a unique barrel-tasting experience. Guests will enter a hidden speakeasy and sample cask-strength Buffalo Trace Bourbon directly from three different barrels in historic warehouses, using a traditional copper "thief." The goal is to let more fans participate in the barrel selection process. At the tour's end, participants choose their favorite profile and immediately receive a take-home bottle from a sister barrel.

<https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article312531804.html>

New Era Whiskey & Spirits coming to downtown Lexington - New Era Whiskey & Spirits is expanding its Lexington-based bourbon brand with plans for a micro distillery and a members-only bourbon club on Short Street in downtown Lexington. The main building will house the club, offering members exclusive, cask-strength bourbon and rye releases from premium distillers. The adjacent micro distillery will produce gin and vodka and include a tasting room and gift shop. No opening date has been released.

<https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article312131218.html>

Louisville Rickhouse Whiskey Co. coming to NuLu - Nashville Barrel Co. is investing \$3 million to open the Louisville Barrel Whiskey Co. in NuLu, Louisville, by late July 2026. The 3,200-square-foot facility on East Market Street will feature a tasting bar and bottle shop for whiskey experiences. CEO Michael Hinds called NuLu the "ideal location" to showcase their unique approach in the "bourbon capital of the world." The non-distilling producer is known for sourcing quality Kentucky barrels.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2026/03/02/louisville-rickhouse-whiskey-company-launch-nulu.html>

WhistlePig Distillery tasting room opens in NuLu - The WhistlePig Vault on Market Street opened for business in September 2025. The location is a historic bank building originally built in 1912. The venue will serve as a tasting room, cocktail bar, and retail space, featuring interactive activities like dip-your-own bottle waxing. The name, "The Vault," pays homage to the building's history, which once housed what was reportedly Kentucky's largest bank vault. <https://www.bourboncountry.com/news/whistlepig-whiskey-joins-bourbon-country-with-new-louisville-tasting-room/>

Hotels

Hotel Distil partnered with Peerless Distilling on custom suite - Hotel Distil on Whiskey Row partnered with Kentucky Peerless Distilling Co. to design a custom eighth-floor suite. Curated with Olive Branch Design, the \$615-a-night Autograph Collection room features distillery artifacts, including a unique whiskey-thief coffee table. Guests enjoy exclusive perks like barrel-aged Stave & Bean coffee, two signature cocktails at the hotel's Repeal steakhouse, and a guided tour and tasting at the nearby Peerless distillery. <https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2026/05/22/peerless-distilling-suite-featured-at-hotel-distil.html>

Bourbon Barrel Retreats opens restaurant and tasting room - Bourbon Barrel Retreats has expanded its luxury Lawrenceburg destination with the opening of The White Bison restaurant and tasting room.

This new venue offers upscale dining and exclusive whiskey tastings, further enhancing the region's bourbon tourism appeal. The expansion creates a comprehensive hospitality experience, combining unique barrel-shaped accommodations with high-end culinary services.

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/bourbon-barrel-retreats-expands-with-opening-of-the-white-bison-restaurant-and-tasting-room-302695829.html>

Other

Kentucky Bourbon Trail hosted 2.7 million visitors in 2025 - The Kentucky Bourbon Trail welcomed 2.7 million visitors in 2025, matching the previous year's record total despite a broader nationwide cooldown in tourism. Out-of-state travelers made up 80% of the audience, with notable growth from New York, Florida, and Texas. The program expanded by adding 11 new distillery destinations, bringing the total to nearly 70. On average, these affluent, younger-skewing groups stayed three to five days, spending up to \$1,400 per trip. www.kybourbon.com/industry-news/kentucky-bourbon-trail-visitation-holds-strong-at-2-7-million-hosted-in-2025/

Bourbon Trail adds 10 distilleries to its rolls - The Kentucky Distillers' Association recently expanded its "family," welcoming Prova Spirits alongside nine other new destinations: WhistlePig, Dark Arts Whiskey House, LF Heritage, Left Bank, Chicken Cock, Green River (Louisville), J. Mattingly 1845, General George Stillhouse, and Purple Toad. This growth, along with the addition of Oxmoor Bourbon Co. last summer, brings the Bourbon Trail to 68 stops. Prova, a Louisville nano-distillery, adds a unique Italian flair with amaro and limoncello, enriching the Commonwealth's legendary \$10.6 billion spirits industry. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/spirits/bourbon/2026/01/29/10-new-bourbon-destinations-just-joined-the-kentucky-bourbon-trail/88414645007/>

Click [HERE](#) for a full list of experiences, tours, classes and events to experience Bourbon in Kentucky.

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Updated June 2026

*News collected by humans. Summaries drafted by AI and edited by humans.

TEAM 
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