



## WHAT'S NEW IN KENTUCKY BOURBON

*Bourbon Events, Distillers, Expansions Enhance Guests' Experiences*

### **Distilleries**

**First distillery since prohibition opens in Hardin County** - Boundary Oak Distillery, the first legal distillery established in Hardin County since Prohibition, has opened a new tasting room and retail store in historic downtown Bardstown. Located at 229 N. 3rd Street, the venue offers guided tastings, flights, exclusive merchandise, and a "dip-your-own-bottle" wax station. The expansion places the Radcliff-based craft distiller's award-winning bourbons and military-honoring spirits in the center of one of Kentucky's premier bourbon tourism destinations. <https://nelsoncountygazette.com/hardin-county-distillery-opens-tasting-room-retail-location-in-downtown-bardstown/>

**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/>

**Dueling Grounds Distillery celebrates 10 years of making bourbon** - Dueling Grounds Distillery in Franklin marks a decade of craft distilling, showcasing the strong connection between Kentucky's bourbon industry and regional agriculture. Situated just off Interstate 65 between Nashville and Bowling Green, the small-batch producer has grown into a key tourism destination. Over the past ten years, it has driven regional economic impact by drawing visitors to experience authentic Kentucky spirits, local farm partnerships, and welcoming hospitality. [https://www.franklinfavorite.com/russellville/news/article\\_10eb8123-f023-5891-bded-1e6eda8c30f2.html](https://www.franklinfavorite.com/russellville/news/article_10eb8123-f023-5891-bded-1e6eda8c30f2.html)

**Willett Bourbon unveils new facility in Springfield** - Family-owned Willett Distillery has expanded to a new 150-acre campus in Springfield. Launched in June 2026, the 70,000-square-foot facility will employ 35 people and includes room to build out future visitor experiences. Meanwhile, current guest operations remain unchanged: Willett's popular tastings, dining, bottling, and warehousing will stay centered at its flagship Bardstown campus, preserving the original visitor experience in Nelson County while significantly expanding distilling capacity in Washington County. <https://www.themanual.com/food-and-drink/willett-distillery-springfield-first-barrel/>

**Cave City Distilling Company opens in Cave City** – Cave City Distilling Company officially held its grand opening in July 2026, featuring a ribbon cutting ceremony and public celebration. Located near Mammoth Cave National Park, the veteran owned craft distillery offers award winning Kentucky spirits, including bourbon, rum, gin, and moonshine, alongside guided tours and tastings. <https://www.wnky.com/cave-city-distilling-company-official-grand-opening/>

**Horse Soldier Bourbon celebrates grand opening** - Horse Soldier Bourbon, founded by retired Green Berets, celebrated the grand opening of its new \$200 million distillery, Horse Soldier Farms, in Somerset. The July 2026 event launched a 240-acre bourbon tourism campus overlooking Lake Cumberland.

Featuring the 50,000-square-foot American Freedom Distillery, guided tours, tastings, and retail, the state-of-the-art facility brings new jobs and a signature tourism destination to Pulaski County  
<https://www.wkyt.com/2026/07/01/horse-soldier-bourbon-opens-distillery-somerset/>

**Barrel House Distilling on track to open facility in Cynthiana** - Barrel House Distilling is expanding from Lexington to a new 30-acre facility in Cynthiana, tenfold increasing its production capacity with a 1,000-gallon still and 5,000-barrel rickhouse. The craft distillery, which is slated to open in June 2027, will offer daily tours, a weekend tavern, and future plans for an amphitheater and cottages. Featuring locally sourced ingredients and heritage ties to Harrison County, the new location on Sea Biscuit Way officially restores distilling to the area. [https://www.news-graphic.com/harrison\\_county/bhd-prepares-to-bring-distilling-back-to-cynthiana/article\\_ba3d2445-b47c-4961-8667-d72e9300751e.html](https://www.news-graphic.com/harrison_county/bhd-prepares-to-bring-distilling-back-to-cynthiana/article_ba3d2445-b47c-4961-8667-d72e9300751e.html)

**Never Say Die micro distillery to open in Lexington** - Never Say Die Bourbon, a \$4 million micro-distillery is set to open in Fall 2026 in downtown. The two-floor micro-distillery features a British-inspired pub with live music and an upstairs tasting room. Visitors can bottle an exclusive "Double Ocean" aged bourbon and purchase the UK-exclusive Barrel Strength expression on-site.  
<https://www.breakingbourbon.com/bourbon-whiskey-press-releases/never-say-die-bourbon-to-open-transatlantic-brand-home-in-central-downtown-lexington-ky>

**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>

## **Experiences**

**Bourbon & Belonging returns for third year** - Queer Kentucky has announced the third annual Bourbon & Belonging: Kentucky's Queer Bourbon Week, scheduled for October 1–4, 2026. As the nation's only LGBTQ+-inclusive bourbon festival, the multi-city event spans Northern Kentucky, Louisville, Lexington, and Paducah. Partnering with major distillers including Angel's Envy, James Beam, Peerless, and New Riff, the four-day celebration features exclusive barrel tastings, behind-the-scenes distillery tours, culinary pairings, and drag performances to showcase that Kentucky's iconic bourbon culture welcomes everyone. <https://groupstoday.com/destinations/bourbon-belonging-returns-for-third-year-as-kentucky-s-queer-bourbon-week>

**Bourbon Alliance now offers coveted bourbon certification to professionals and enthusiasts** - The Bourbon Capital Alliance has launched the Bourbon Capital Diplomat Certification Experience, an educational program based in Bardstown, Kentucky. Hosted in person at Spalding Hall's Brindiamo Penthouse, the single-session class covers local history, production, and four guided tastings across ten partner distilleries. Participants immediately earn certification upon passing a 50-question on-site exam, unlocking regional benefits and access to ongoing biannual summits.

**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/>

**New tasting room opens in NuLu** - The Louisville Rickhouse Whiskey Co. has officially opened its \$3 million tasting room at 717 E. Market St. in NuLu. The 3,200-square-foot space features a full-service bar, retail area, bonded barrel room for single-barrel selections, and a 50-gallon still for small-batch experimental distillation. Visitors can enjoy \$15 craft cocktails, bourbon flights, and guided tasting experiences, with a covered 1,500-square-foot patio planned for the venue's second development phase. <https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2026/08/10/louisville-rickhouse-whiskey-opens-nulu-location.html>

**Makers Mark Distillery and Mint Julep team up to offer high class experience** – Maker's Mark Distillery and tour operator, Mint Julep Experiences, have teamed up to offer an opportunity for in-depth tours of both the distillery and the Samuels House, the ancestral home of the distillery's family. This premium experience features exclusive tastings, behind-the-scenes tours, and personal interaction with the family behind the world-renowned bourbon brand. <https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article266866871.html>

**Kentucky Bourbon Trail adds four experiences to the list** - The Kentucky Bourbon Trail® has surpassed 70 total stops after adding four new destinations across the state. The latest expansion introduces Louisville's Pursuit Spirits on Whiskey Row and Uncle Boogie's Distilling Co., alongside Western Kentucky's Cave City Distilling Company and Purple Toad Winery & Distillery in Bowling Green. Spanning 74 experiences across 34 counties, these additions encourage travelers to explore new communities beyond major urban hubs while savoring local craft spirits. <https://www.southernliving.com/kentucky-bourbon-trail-adds-4-new-destinations-12013560>

**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/>

**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/>

**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](https://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/>

**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, which is slated to take three years to complete, 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](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 Linkum pinch 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/>

## **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/](http://www.kybourbon.com/industry-news/kentucky-bourbon-trail-visitation-holds-strong-at-2-7-million-hosted-in-2025/)

**Kentucky distillery named a top small business in the United States** - Northern Kentucky's Boone County Distilling Co. in Independence was named one of the nation's top ten small businesses "worth building your next trip around" by The Points Guy and Capital One Business. Honored for its handcrafted bourbons dating back to the 1830s, the official Kentucky Bourbon Trail stop offers guided tours, tastings, and a gift shop featuring small-batch releases and rye whiskey developed by Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Famer Larry Ebersold. <https://www.kentucky.com/news/state/kentucky/article316803828.html>

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

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

