



WHAT'S NEW IN KENTUCKY BOURBON

Bourbon Events, Distillers, Expansions Enhance Guests' Experiences

Distilleries

Distillery being built in Cave City – Cave City Distilling Company is building 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 plans Spring 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 Spring 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/>

General George Stillhouse opens new facility in Grayson County - General George Stillhouse opened for business in June 2025. Located on a historic farm once owned by George Washington in Grayson County. The distillery creates a unique destination by offering immersive tours and tastings that celebrate local heritage. Additionally, General George was added to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail in late 2025. <https://www.wbko.com/2025/06/06/general-george-stillhouse-distillery-blends-local-flavor-with-big-tourism-dreams-grayson-county/>

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>

Wenzel Distillery opens new facility in Covington - Wenzel Distillery cut the ribbon on a brand-new distillery and tasting room in downtown Covington in July 2025. The new facility is the result of a \$6 million investment and is located in a revitalized 1916 Packard Auto building. The tasting room, dubbed The Proof Bar, is open to the public Wednesday through Saturday, 5 to 9 p.m. <https://www.wcpo.com/news/local-news/kenton-county/covington/wenzel-distillery-opens-new-location-in-historic-covington-building-as-city-focuses-on-revitalization>

Midway welcomes new distillery and experience - Bluegrass Distillers has officially opened its new \$8 million distillery at the historic Elkwood Farm in Midway, Kentucky. Founder Sam Rock began the brand in 2013 with a crockpot and self-financing, a story he shared at the grand opening. The new 62-acre property will allow the distillery, which started on the back of a local brewery, to grow its production and become a major destination for bourbon and rye whiskey. Elkwood Farm is open to the public until 5 p.m. daily. <https://www.distillerytrail.com/blog/bluegrass-distillers-cuts-the-ribbon-on-new-ground-to-glass-distillery-and-historic-mansion-on-62-acre-farm/>

Four Roses Distillery sold for \$775 million - 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

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 debuts 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/](https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/spirits/bourbon/2026/02/24/new-tool-helps-plan-kentucky-bourbon-trail-trip/88841628007/)

Colorado based whiskey company 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 "conciierge" 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

Ingram Distillery offers bourbon tours onboard floating rickhouses - The Ingram Distillery in Columbus, Kentucky, is launching unique "Barge to Bottle" tours in spring 2026. This distillery utilizes a rare aging process, maturing whiskey in grain barges on the Mississippi River. Visitors can book behind-the-scenes access or private group tastings starting in April. Experience the country's only floating barrelhouse and discover how the river's movement produces its signature smooth, mature taste. <https://www.kentucky.com/lexgoeat/bourbon/article313521017.html>

Buffalo Trace to open on-site restaurant - Buffalo Trace Distillery is expanding its visitor experience with the opening of the John G. Carlisle Cafe in Spring 2026. Located in the historic Elmer T. Lee Clubhouse, the 4,900-square-foot venue will offer indoor and porch seating for 70 guests. The cafe will serve fresh, made-to-order lunches and Buffalo Trace cocktails. <https://www.foodandwine.com/buffalo-trace-john-g-carlisle-cafe-11789890>

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 - 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 humidior. 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 free 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>

Bourbon club and distillery 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 Barrel Whiskey Co. coming to NuLu - Nashville Barrel Co. is investing \$3 million to open the Louisville Barrel Whiskey Co. in NuLu, Louisville, by late April 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/>

Chicken Cock Whiskey opens new tasting room in NuLu - Circa 1856, a new Chicken Cock Whiskey tasting room in Louisville's NuLu district. The 3,900-square-foot venue has been open since October 2025. It features two distinct areas: an upstairs tasting bar with whiskey flights and house cocktails, and a downstairs speakeasy focusing on other spirits. Management emphasizes that the spot is geared toward locals as a neighborhood bar, while also welcoming bourbon tourists.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2025/11/21/chicken-cock-whiskey-circa-1856-nulu-opening-2025.html>

Green River Distilling Co. opens tasting room on Louisville's Whiskey Row - Green River Distilling Co. has opened a new 4,400-square-foot tasting room on Louisville's Whiskey Row. The space features a horseshoe-shaped bar, a retail section with bottle engraving, and a hidden speakeasy. Visitors can enjoy walk-in tastings and a unique "Fill-Your-Spirits" experience, where they fill their own barrel-strength whiskey jug. This new location aims to make whiskey more approachable and solidifies Green River's presence in Louisville's bourbon scene. <https://www.fredminnick.com/2025/06/17/green-river-opens-louisville-tasting-room/>

Pursuit Spirits opens tasting room on Whiskey Row - Pursuit Spirits, opened a \$1.5 million bourbon experience on Whiskey Row in Louisville in August 2025. The 7,600 sq ft venue at 722 W. Main St. features a barrel-picking experience, tasting rooms, a cocktail lounge, and a podcast recording room.

<https://www.wlky.com/article/pursuit-spirits-opens-venue-whiskey-row/65864861>

Hotels

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>

Hotel Bourré Bonne opens in downtown Louisville - Hotel Bourré Bonne has opened on Louisville's Whiskey Row. The hotel's design pays homage to Kentucky's rich bourbon heritage with deconstructed bourbon barrels adorning the lobby ceiling and bar. The hotel features a steakhouse on the ground floor as well as a rooftop cocktail bar. Both establishments feature a menu that pairs French cuisine with a wide array of Kentucky bourbons. Named as a playful nod to the French origins of Kentucky Bourbon, the hotel aims to offer an immersive experience for those exploring the Bourbon Trail. <https://www.hospitality-interiors.net/uncategorized/hotel-bourre-bonne-opens-in-louisville/>

Other

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/>

Bourbon Tourism sets new visitation and economic impact records - The Kentucky Bourbon Trail achieved a new tourism record in 2024, welcoming 2.7 million visitors, marking the third consecutive year with over two million guests. Tourism numbers had a huge effect on the bourbon industry's \$10.6 billion economic impact in 2025. Bourbon tourism remains a vital economic engine, revitalizing rural communities and fueling local tax revenues. <https://www.distillerytrail.com/blog/kentucky-bourbons-economic-impact-grows-to-10-4-billion-1-45-billion-in-planned-investments-headwinds-ahead-as-sales-plateau/>

Third annual National Bourbon Week set for June 2026 - National Bourbon Week will return to Bardstown, Kentucky, the Bourbon Capital of the World, from June 14-21, 2026. The third annual celebration will feature a week of rare tastings, distillery-hosted dinners, limited-edition releases, and educational experiences. The event is a collaborative effort by Bardstown's distilleries, merchants, and hospitality partners to showcase the city's craftsmanship and hospitality. The highlight of the week will be the 23rd Annual Bourbon City Street Concert. <https://kybourbontrail.com/national-bourbon-week-returns-to-bardstown-for-third-annual-celebration-june-14-21-2026/>

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

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