WHAT’S NEW IN KENTUCKY BOURBON

Bourbon Events, Distillers, Expansions Enhance Guests’ Experiences

2021 Bourbon Trail™ Passport and Field Guide released – The Kentucky Distillers’ Association recently released the 2021 Bourbon Trail™ Passport and Field Guide, a 150-page document containing all the information needed for planning travel, food, tours, tastings and cocktails, plus tips and tricks about the 37 distilleries that are part of the official Kentucky Bourbon Trail® and Kentucky Bourbon Craft Trail®. The guide will be sold at all distilleries included on the trails, the KBT Welcome Center® and online. New this year, in addition to collecting stamps for visiting and touring spots, the passport will also unlock perks such as private barrel selections, tastings, special barware and access to collectible bottles. 


African American owned distillery planned for Lexington – African American Lexington entrepreneurs Sean and Tia Edwards plan to build a distillery, music hall, and event center in downtown Lexington. Fresh Bourbon Distilling Co.'s 34,000-square-foot facility will be near the Distillery District, with a likely completion date in late 2021.

https://smileypete.com/business/fresh-bourbon-distilling/

Angel's Envy plans to expand, double guest capacity – Angel's Envy Distillery in Louisville announced plans for a $8.2 million expansion doubling its annual guest capacity. The expansion will add more than 13,000 square feet to the distillery, increase annual guest capacity by 64,000 visitors and create 20 jobs. Plans include an additional bar space, five new tasting rooms, an event space and full catering kitchen and a designated "Bottle Your Own" experience. Construction is expected to be complete in spring 2022; the craft distillery will remain open throughout construction.


B-Line in northern Kentucky adds new stops – On National Bourbon Day, June 14, 2021, the B-Line announced four additions to Northern Kentucky's bourbon experience. The new stops include Smoke Justis and Libby's Southern Comfort in Covington, Three Spirits Tavern in Bellevue and The Beehive Augusta Tavern in Augusta. On the B-Line, visitors create their own experience by following a self-guided trail and complete the Line Guide by collecting two stamps or check-ins from each category of distilleries, bars, and restaurants. 


Bardstown Bourbon Company adds new bottling facility – Bardstown Bourbon Company announced a new 55,000-square-foot facility in spring 2021, adjacent to the distillery and visitors’ center. The new facility will enable the company to bottle hundreds of thousands of cases of bourbon and other distilled spirits each year, offering the flexibility to customize all specifications based on customer guidelines. The facility includes a logistics lab, comprehensive testing abilities, component and label flexibility, expert sourcing and an on-site blending lab.


Black Bourbon Society announces partnership with Maker’s Mark – The Black Bourbon Society recently announced a new partnership with Maker’s Mark Bourbon and video platform Spirits Network to launch “Barrel Select.” The new video program is hosted by Black Bourbon Society Founder Samara Davis and her husband Armond Davis, a partner of the society, and shows the process behind the creation of the second custom barrel from the distillery. Black Bourbon Society’s Maker’s Mark Private Selection: Recipe 2 is one of the first to include the newest Maker’s Mark Private Selection
stave, Roasted French Mendiant, which lends milk chocolate, buttery nut and smooth coffee notes. [https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/spirits/bourbon/2021/06/14/national-bourbon-day-2021-new-things-in-kentuckys-bourbon-industry/7475725002/]

**Boone County Distilling Company adds new event space** – Located just two miles off I-75 South in the heart of an international business district, Boone County Distilling Company has a newly completed Event Center. The Event Center is perfect for corporate or social group events, including weddings. Venue rental will include a dedicated event coordinator, an on-site catering kitchen, tables and chairs, complimentary Wi-Fi, room setup, ample parking and more. The Event Center is just five minutes from Florence and a quick fifteen minutes from downtown Cincinnati. [https://www.eventcenterboonedistilling.com/]

**Bourbon Chase relay race set for fall 2021** – The Bourbon Chase relay race is set for October 15-16, 2021 and for this year, the race is first-come, first-serve instead of a lottery entry. The approximately 200 mile running relay winds through the countryside from Clermont to Lexington. Teams will kick off their running adventures at Jim Beam and then head east over beautiful rolling hills and backroads, passing picturesque horse farms and stopping at some of the best bourbon distilleries along the way, finishing in downtown Lexington and then celebrating at a party hosted by Town Branch Bourbon. All runners must be 21 years and older to participate. [https://www.runragnar.com/event-detail/relay/thebourbonchase#overview]

**Bourbon Country Burn® bicycle tour returns in 2021** – The Bourbon Country Burn® is returning September 24-26, 2021! This fully supported bicycle tour of bourbon distilleries and horse farms lets riders choose their adventure with two or three day options available. Bikers will start their journeys at the Kentucky Horse Park near Lexington and will ride between 25 and 100 miles each day, making stops at up to seven different distilleries throughout the event. In the evenings, sip Kentucky bourbon and enjoy live entertainment with new and old friends. [https://www.bourboncountryburn.com/]

**Bourbon distillery and entertainment experience coming to Somerset** – Horse Soldier Bourbon will launch a two-phase, multi-million-dollar project to build a bourbon distillery that will add at least 56 direct jobs in Pulaski County. The project will include high-end hospitality and overnight accommodations, a chapel, outdoor event spaces, unique dining options and other activity and entertainment spaces. This American bourbon distillery is unique, as it was founded by members of the first U.S. Army Special Forces unit to enter Afghanistan following the infamous 9/11 attacks who later became known as “The Horse Soldiers.” [https://www.lanereport.com/128053/2020/07/horse-soldier-bourbon-assembles-award-winning-team-to-design-distillery/ & https://www.thetimestribune.com/news/local_news/expanded-horse-soldier-project-includes-hotel-retail-village/article_ea2a7907-f58c-5f2e-92d4-3af2ebc65983.html]

**Boutique hotel, bourbon blending experience coming to Covington** – The Pickle Factory Hotel, a boutique hotel in a historic brick building, opened in June 2021 on Madison Avenue in Covington. The hotel has eight suites on the second and third floors that can be leased on a short-term basis, each with a unique theme based on historic businesses that once shared the same building. In the future, the facility will add a ground-floor business called Wenzel Whiskey where customers can create their own bourbon blends to match their own palettes and then order bottles of the new blends. [https://www.nkytribune.com/2021/06/covington-busy-with-ribbon-cuttings-more-pickle-factory-hotel-frosthaus-covington-plaza/]

**Brown-Forman plans to expand distilleries** – Brown-Forman is planning a $95 million expansion at its distillery located near Dixie Highway in the Shively area of Louisville. The expansion will modernize the workspace, double the number of fermenters, add column still capacity and mash cookers, improve the grain handling and byproducts system as well as on-site traffic flow, plus create green space for an Old Forester oak tree nursery. The company is also set to expand Woodford Reserve Distillery in Versailles, doubling its production capacity and adding three copper still pots, constructing a new building to house the boiler plant, adding fermentation tanks, a grain unloading area, a barrel unloading and storage area and an employee conference and training center. Construction is expected to be completed in summer 2022; the distillery will be fully operational throughout. [https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2021/02/18/brown-forman-double-capacity-shively-distillery-95m-project/6799108002/ & https://www.brown-forman.com/woodford-reserve-to-expand-versailles-distillery-includes-addition-of-three-copper-pot-stills/]

Buffalo Trace continues expansion, upgrades visitor experience – Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort continues to work on its $1.2 billion infrastructure project to improve and expand to increase production for future bourbon demand, adding 10 new warehouses with three more to be built in 2021. During the pandemic, the company also completed a massive expansion of its Visitors Center – tripling the size of the previous space. The expanded visitor space allows for new products in the Gift Shop and more tastings in the new expansive tasting rooms upstairs. 
https://www.buffalotracedistillery.com/news.html

Castle & Key becomes Kentucky Distillers’ Association Heritage-level member – Castle & Key Distillery near Frankfort has been recognized as the Kentucky Distillers’ Association’s 15th Heritage-level member, the highest rank for distilleries that age more than 50,000 barrels a year. The historic distillery will be seeking a spot soon on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour®. 
https://www.wtvq.com/2021/07/14/castle-key-is-distillers-newest-heritage-member/

Clermont Distilling Co. plans to build new distillery along I-65 in Bullitt County – Clermont Distilling Co. announced in fall 2020 plans to create a new bourbon located off I-65 at the Clermont/Bardstown exit 112 in Bullitt County. Ground breaking is planned for 2021, with a distilling operation, tasting room, gift shop, grain house and 24,000-barrel rick house all in the works. 

Covington’s Former YMCA to Transform into Bourbon Distillery Experience and Luxury Suites – The former YMCA in downtown Covington will get new life with luxury suites, a “bourbon distillery experience” and office space with a $22.5 million-plus renovation. The 72,000-square-foot space is split between two three-story buildings and is located on the corner of Madison Avenue and Pike Street. The first floor will feature an urban distillery and “bourbon experience” in addition to 10,000 square feet of commercial office space. The second and third floors will be transformed into 60 presidential and VIP suites, each equipped with a kitchenette. Façade work to modernize and update the historic exterior started in early 2021. 

Enjoy Bourbon & Bridles tour at Kentucky Derby Museum – Combine two of Kentucky’s treasures: bourbon and Thoroughbreds, at the Kentucky Derby Museum’s Bourbon and Bridles Experience, offered at 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays. Learn about the intertwined history of bourbon and horse racing while walking through historic Churchill Downs, then learn how to make a mint julep at the Derby Cafe Express at the Museum, an official stop on Louisville’s Urban Bourbon Trail where guests can get their Urban Bourbon Trail passport stamped. Admission to the museum is included with the experience. 
https://www.derbymuseum.org/plan-a-visit/tours/bourbon-and-bridles-experience

Heaven Hill completes visitor expansion, renovations – Heaven Hill Distillery in Bardstown has undergone extensive, multi-million dollar renovations to add on a whole new two-story wing and bring the visitor center to about 30,000 square feet and three new themed tasting rooms. One room pays homage to Prohibition times and John Fitzgerald, another is more rustic and designed to invoke thoughts of Elijah Craig, and the third is a new retail area meant to have visitors feeling like they’ve been invited into the owner’s home. A new wing features a new restaurant - the Five Brothers Bar and Kitchen, a lounge-type area and a hands-on experience called “You Do Bourbon” where guests will receive product education before getting to select, fill and label their own bourbon to take home with them. For the first six months, Heaven Hill will donate $5 per “You Do Bourbon” bottle to Bernheim Forest as a part of a corporate partnership. 

Hermitage Farm’s Barn8 Restaurant & Bourbon Bar – 21c Museum Hotel co-founders Steve Wilson and Laura Lee Brown are the visionaries behind new agricultural dining and bourbon experience at Hermitage Farm, Barn8 Restaurant & Bourbon Bar, which opened in spring 2020. The Bourbon Bar & Lounge features an innovative cocktail program that utilizes ingredients from the surrounding farms, along with an extensive list of rare whiskeys and aged bourbons from Barn8’s small batch program. An impressive entrance of 100 bourbon barrels lines the main staircase leading up to the
second floor Hayloft, which will be used for private dining for up to 200. 

Historic Kentucky bourbon brand being revived at Camp Nelson site – The historic bourbon brand E.J. Curley & Co. is being reborn at Camp Nelson in Nicholasville. The brand dates back to the Civil War era and was formerly known as the Kentucky River Distillery at the Kentucky Palisades after prohibition until the 1960s. The new distillery will be located at the same site as the original E.J. Curley & Co. operation, which operated in Jessamine County from the late 1860s. A $5 million investment includes constructing a 22,500-square-foot facility that will offer two Kentucky mash bills. Plans are in motion for an E.J. Curley & Co. Revival Tour in late 2021, with spirits production and the opening of a tasting room expected in 2022. 

James B. Beam Distilling Co. revamping visitor experience – The James B. Beam Distilling Co. in Clermont is undergoing significant renovations to upgrade visitors’ experiences, set to be unveiled in late summer 2021. New visitor experiences will include: The American Outpost, a new visitor and retail center which will replace the American Stillhouse; The Kitchen Table, a 5,000 square foot restaurant and gathering space championing local farmers; “Beam Made Bourbon,” an immersive consumer tour showing how bourbon is made the “Beam Way”; and the Fred B. Noe Craft Distillery, a new functional production facility that will offer special distillation process sessions with Freddie Noe, 8th generation Beam Distilling, plus hands-on activities in the blending lab, a tasting bar and state-of-the-art classroom. 

Kentucky Bourbon Festival® celebrates 30 years in 2021, adds BBQ contest for summer 2022 – The Kentucky Bourbon Festival® is a weeklong celebration of the storied history and art of distilling America’s native spirit held in Bardstown, the Bourbon Capital of the World®, and the 30th anniversary celebration is set for September 16-19, 2021. On National Bourbon Day 2021, the festival announced it will grow its event beyond the traditional fall dates by adding the Bourbon Capital BBQ Challenge & Distillery Invitational in June 2022. It is an officially sanctioned event of the Kansas City Barbecue Society and additional details will be announced at a later date. 

Log Still Distillery planning family-friendly destination – Log Still Distillery, a new bourbon distillery located in Nelson County about 20 minutes south of Bardstown, recently opened its state-of-the-art tasting room, The Homestead Bed & Breakfast and The Poplar Cottage lodging, and has announced a new $24 million investment. This investment is for a second phase of its family-friendly Dant Crossing experience for the 300-acre property to include a restaurant and bar, 13,000-square-foot event venue, outdoor amphitheater, train depot, fishing lake and walking trails. 

Louisville launches “Unfiltered Truth Collection,” including 2 bourbon experiences – Explore Louisville’s rich and engaging Black history, heritage and culture with the new “Unfiltered Truth Collection,” sharing stories of extraordinary people that helped shape the city, with a special focus on the bourbon and horse racing industries and Muhammad Ali Tourism. At the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience, step back in time in the final days of Prohibition into a secret Speakeasy and meet Louisville native and renowned bartender Tom Bullock, who was the first African American to write a publish a cocktail book. Just steps away at the Frazier History Museum, the Official Starting Point of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®, enjoy an immersive cultural experience with “From Enslaved to Empowered: Kentucky’s African American Experience Through Bourbon.” 

New African American Brough Brothers Distillery in Louisville – Three African American Louisville-born brothers – Victor, Christian and Bryson Yarbrough – have created a new distillery in Louisville. The Brough Brothers Distillery was completed in 2020 on Dixie Highway in the Parkhill Neighborhood, and the 2,200-square-foot building is expected to open to the public for tours in summer 2021.
The Grady boutique hotel with cocktail bar opens in Louisville – A new 51-room boutique lodging facility located just steps away from popular Louisville attractions opened in May 2021. The Grady Hotel is in a renovated 19th-century history building in the Market District that originally housed a medicinal bourbon apothecary. Wild Swann, the hotel’s cocktail bar, opened in June and offers hand-crafted beverages and small plates. The name pays tribute to previous residents of the building, Swann-Abram Hat Co., an original designer of Kentucky Derby hats, and J.B. Wilder, the owner of the apothecary and bourbon distillery in the building’s basement. 

New distillery coming to far western Kentucky – In May 2021, Jackson Purchase Distillery announced plans for a new $8.76 million distilling operation in Hickman, located in Fulton County, Kentucky along the Mississippi River. The company will upgrade a long-idled facility and add new land, construct barrel storage and make other upgrades, with the expansion expected to be completed by April 2022. 

Newport welcomes new Derby-themed café, distillery – Pensive Distilling Co., a New American restaurant and distillery in Newport opened in spring 2021. The Derby-themed business takes its name from the horse that won the 1944 Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes, as well as the mood a person may take when sipping bourbon or other spirits. While waiting on its first bourbon to age, the business is offering vodka and bourbon contracted from another Kentucky distillery.

New Riff Distilling set to expand – The Newport-Kentucky based New Riff Distilling has plans for a $2 million expansion that will increase its whiskey production by 50 percent. It will also add 900-square-feet to its distillery space and three additional fermenters. The expansion will allow the distillery to operate six days a week and produce 12,000 barrels per year.

Non-alcoholic distillery opens in Louisville – Spiritless is Kentucky’s 74th licensed distillery, producing a non-alcoholic drink that can be enjoyed on its own or as a mixer in cocktails. Kentucky 74 is the first product on the market, delivering a high-quality smooth finish with notes of caramel, vanilla and oak. Made with a grain-neutral spirit to first produce an extremely high-proof and intensely flavored spirit, it’s then reverse-distilled to evaporate all but .5 percent of the alcohol.

Old Samuels Distillery experience planned for Bardstown – The historic T.W. Samuels Distillery site is set to be transformed into Old Samuels Distillery, a tourism, restaurant and lodging experience just 10 minutes from downtown Bardstown. The project will be completed in phases, with the historic Restoration Tour currently available, and in the future will offer a multi-faceted experience with a retail gift shop, dozens of private cottages available to rent, event space, a restaurant, bar and tasting room.

O.Z. Tyler Distillery rebrands as Green River Distilling Co. – The former O.Z. Tyler Distillery in Owensboro debuted their new name and brand in 2020, Green River Distilling Co., drawing on the history of their location. The original Green River was started by J.W. McCulloch in the late 19th century, then suffered a devastating loss in 1918 when a fire burned through the distillery. The rebrand helps the distillery celebrate the site’s heritage and start the beginning of a new chapter for the business.

Southern bourbon bar and restaurant coming to Germantown neighborhood – North of Bourbon, a new bourbon bar and restaurant, will open in the Germantown area of Louisville later in 2021. The bar will feature bourbon barrel booths and be infused with Deep South culture and cuisine plus New Orleans history.
Unified Bourbon Series coming in September to celebrate the Bourbon Capital of the World® – On National Bourbon Day, June 14, 2021, Heaven Hill, James B. Beam Distilling Co, Bardstown Bourbon Company, Preservation and Log Still distilleries announced a collaborative project to further establish Bardstown as the Bourbon Capital of the World®. They will release a one-of-a-kind bourbon series celebrating their Bardstown heritage, coming September 2021, with all proceeds from the release will be donated to the Bardstown community. 


Whiskey Row entertainment venue planned – The six-story W. L. Weller building on Louisville’s historic Whiskey Row is to be home to an entertainment venue called Number Fifteen, celebrating the history and future of Kentucky, and named after the Commonwealth being the 15th state to join the union. The venue will offer a combination of the state’s best musicians, distillers, brewers and chefs and is set to open in 2023. The building was purchased by The Number Holding Company, LLC and is located at 121 West Main Street in Louisville.


Whiskey Row adding another hotel – The Cambria Hotel Louisville Downtown-Whiskey Row is expected to open by fall 2021. Slated to have 128 guest rooms and nearly 2,000 square feet of meeting space, the hotel will also have two full-service restaurants, an indoor heated pool and more. https://www.choicehotels.com/kentucky/louisville/cambria-hotels/ky322

Wilderness Trail Distillery becomes 18th stop on Kentucky Bourbon Trail® – The Wilderness Trail Distillery is now the 18th stop on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®. This distillery is located on a 163-acre campus in Danville, and was one of the first destinations on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour®. Launched in 2012 as a premium craft distillery, Wilderness Trail has expanded its production and grown its distinctive visitor experience to meet the standards to become the first KBTCT distillery to graduate to the iconic Kentucky Bourbon Trail® tour. https://wildernesstraildistillery.com/

Wild Turkey debuts new virtual guided bourbon tasting – The Wild Turkey Distillery created the first-ever guided tasting for Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant voiced by the legendary Russell family. The new virtual experience is for both the novice whiskey drinker and mature connoisseurs, as the Russell family shares about the distilling process, the palate, glassware and Wild Turkey craftsmanship. https://www.yahoo.com/now/plan-virtual-escape-wild-turkey-135500417.html

Click HERE for a full list of experiences, tours, classes and events to experience Bourbon in Kentucky.

###

Media Contacts:
Angela Blank
Kentucky Department of Tourism
angelag.blank@ky.gov / 502.892.4001