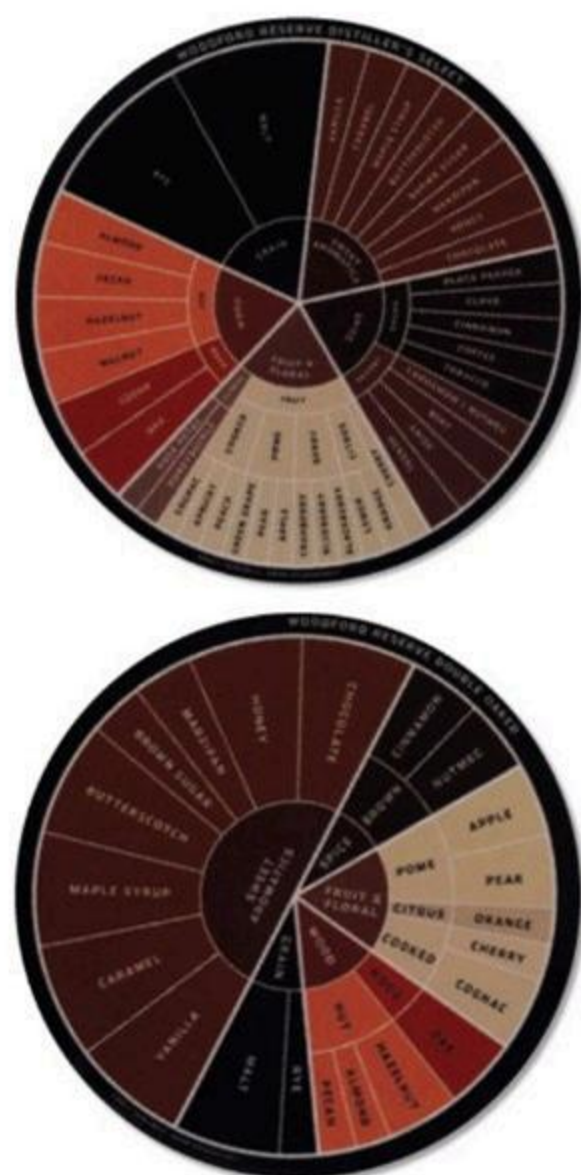


# WOODFORD RESERVE

## FLAVOR PROFILES



What makes Woodford so special? It begins with the approach of the famed distillery. The narrow, single-lane roads that lead to the company's impressive entry gate wind through some of the most beautiful horse farms in all of Kentucky. Beautifully manicured pastures, framed by meticulously maintained white horse fences, wind their way through beautiful bluegrass hills, with magnificent horse stock, before gently landing you at Woodford's opulent entrance.

Woodford Reserve is the Augusta National of the distilling world. With its neatly manicured lawns bursting with flowers and the impeccably maintained retail shop and buildings, Woodford Reserve sparkles like some of the best country clubs in America. In 1995 it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2000 it was designated a National Historic Landmark. Knowing that it had plenty to show off, Woodford was the first distillery to start offering tours.

But its beauty is not just superficial. It is one of the hardest working distilleries in the region. The buildings are beautifully restored and outfitted with fastidious care. As one tours the many buildings, there is no question Henderson and Morris designed their distillery to reflect the best of the classic Scottish style. The old stone buildings house giant fermentation tanks made from oak and banded in wrought iron. Their spirit safe is an authentic 19th century Scottish apparatus! Everything is done by hand, the old-fashioned way.

Even the packaging was a major decision. According to

Morris, it was imperative that the bottle stood out and that its profile and silhouette were absolutely unique. In the end, they wanted something more akin to a cognac bottle than a whiskey bottle, signifying to the consumer that it contained a more refined, more elegant spirit.

Henderson and Morris experimented with varying fermentation times of five, seven, and nine days, seeking the fermentation that would extract the most flavor. They settled on five days, which is still among the longest cook times in this illustrious distilling region. Their insistence is that this longer fermentation adds many more of the stone fruit flavors that they seek.

Even the yeast was a trial and error process. Woodford maintains its own unique cereal culture yeast. It took 20,000 yeast generations to develop the Woodford strain of yeast. Even today, in order to keep the strain pure, all yeast at the distillery is destroyed once a quarter, and a new, purer strain (kept isolated in their lab) is brought out.

The distillery also focuses on quality by utilizing five giant pot stills to augment their large column still, more pot

stills than any other bourbon maker in Kentucky. Pot stills create a better, more flavorful whiskey, and pass on many more of the traits Henderson and Morris were looking to capture.

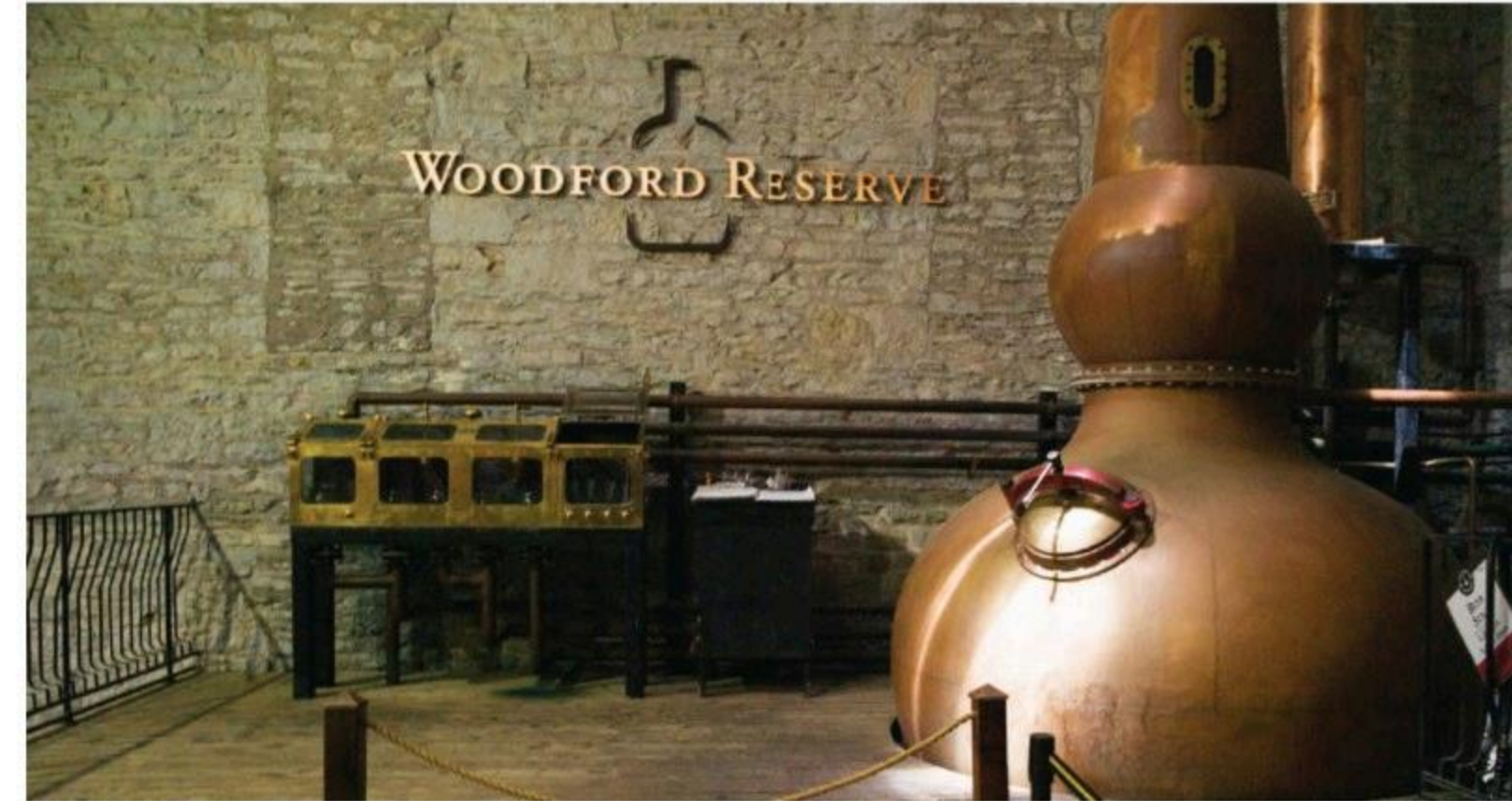
Woodford Reserve Kentucky Straight Bourbon (90.4 proof) has a mash bill of 72% corn, 18% rye, and 10% malted barley. The bourbon is aged an average of seven years in charred new American oak barrels. Woodford Reserve Distiller's Select Bourbon consists largely of pot still whiskey. Some amount of column-distilled bourbon from the Brown-Forman Distillery in Shively is blended in, resulting in a magnificent bourbon filled with honey, caramel, stone fruit, yellow cake, and gingersnap.

Woodford Reserve Kentucky Straight Rye Whiskey (90.4 proof) is a special, Baltimore-styled rye, with a decent dollop of corn to smooth out the spiciness. The mash bill is 53% rye, 33% corn, and 14% malted barley. Honey, apple, and pear hit you on the nose and palate. Caramel and vanilla follow, and it closes with a lovely, spicy gingersnap finish. It's easily one of the best ryes on the marketplace, and is sure to impress your

guests.

Woodford Double Oaked (90.4 proof) is the same as Woodford Reserve but it undergoes a unique barreling process. According to the company, this is a “twice-barreled bourbon . . . uniquely matured in separate, charred oak barrels—the second barrel deeply toasted before a light charring.” This second barreling intensifies the flavors in the whiskey, creating a softer and sweeter dram. For those who like woody whiskeys and are looking for a bigger flavor statement without the extra alcohol usually associated with such finishes, this is the clear choice.

Woodford Reserve Kentucky Straight Wheat Whiskey (90.4 proof) has a unique mash bill with wheat as the dominant grain at 52%, 20% malt, 20% corn and 8% rye. This deep amber whiskey has a uniquely floral nose, but has the smooth vanilla bean and brown sugar one would expect. A hint of white pepper on the finish.



## NEW VISITOR'S CENTER WOODFORD MASTER'S COLLECTION

According to the distillery, “Woodford Reserve Distillery’s Master Collection honors the pioneering work of Pepper and Crow, applying their handcrafted methods to a variety of grain recipes, fermentation styles, and maturation processes to create a range of unique whiskeys.” This is meant to be a homage to Oscar Pepper and former master distiller James Crow, whose discoveries and innovations in bourbon



making “are credited with refining and defining key processes such as sour mashing, yeast propagation, copper pot distillation, and the maturing of whiskey in new, charred oak casks.”

These bourbons are high-end expressions and every one is an absolute winner. The most beautiful finishes that I have tasted in this group are the 1838 Style White Corn and the Four Wood Selection. But all are simply spectacular. If you like fine bourbon, every single one is worth its price. They deliver like few other houses can. Impeccable!

The offerings from the Master’s Collection are as follows: 2019 – Chocolate Malted Rye; 2018 – Oat Grain & Select American Oak Bourbon; 2017 – Cherry Smoked Malt Bourbon; 2016 Brandy Cask Finish; 2015 1838 Style White Corn; 2014 Sonoma-Cutrer Pinot Noir Finish; 2013 Double Malt Selection; 2012 Four Wood Selection; 2011 Rare Rye Selection; 2010 Maple Wood Finish; 2009 Seasoned Oak Finish; 2008 Sweet Mash (First International Release); 2007 Sonoma-Cutrer Chardonnay Finish; 2006 Four Grain (National Release); and 2005 Four Grain (Kentucky Release).





## BACCARAT EDITION

Woodford has long been a leader among the bourbon scene. Several recent releases have confirmed their and master distiller Chris Morris's place in the hierarchy of Kentucky distilling. The most recent accomplishment was the release of the Woodford Baccarat Edition. Not sure which is more remarkable – the whiskey or the packaging. Woodford Reserve Baccarat Edition (90.4) is crafted by uniquely finishing Woodford's best barrels of bourbon to be re-barreled in select XO Cognac barrels. Each barrel has seen three seasons of cognac before being filled with Woodford Reserve. The whiskey is presented in a bespoke Baccarat decanter.

Baccarat Crystal is a French manufacturer considered to be one of the finest crystal producers in the world, and is located in Baccarat, France. The founding of the original glass works in 1764 was granted by permission of King Louis XV of France. They began crystal production in 1810.

“Woodford Reserve Baccarat Edition is a celebration of history, a celebration of the connections between France and

Kentucky -- and a celebration of the finest flavors of bourbon and cognac,” said Morris.

The finished product features the high points of both worlds. Caramel, brown sugar, stone fruit, figs, vanilla, honey, orange zest, and orange blossom, and a creamy, smooth finish. This is sophistication usually reserved for the world’s greatest Scotches. The American distilling industry should hold its collective breath – for sophistication of product and presentation, Woodford and Morris have done it again. They have both thrown a gauntlet down in the name of American whiskey and by doing so, have stretched the value of it as well.

## DISTILLERY SERIES

Woodford Reserve Five Wood Bourbon Whiskey Finished in Port and Sherry Casks (90.4 proof) is a Woodford Reserve’s bourbon matured in new American oak, and then finished in Tawny and Ruby port wood, and Oloroso and Amantillado sherry wood casks. Five woods. A limited edition, this whiskey features figs, stone fruit, caramel, and brown sugar,

with a super smooth finish that lingers forever. Elegant. Complex. Incredible! Tasting room only. The terrifying thing? Is super reasonably priced.

Woodford Reserve Four Grain Blended Whiskey (90.4 proof) is a blend of Woodford Reserve bourbon, rye, malt, and wheat whiskeys. Each whiskey was aged in new and used charred oak barrels. This is a lovely whiskey with a rich nose of grains, cereal, oats, caramel, vanilla, brown sugar, and a pinch of ginger snap. Textured, layered, chewy, yet absolutely stunning. It’s only available from the tasting room.



## ELIZABETH McCALL

Woodford Reserve assistant master distiller Elizabeth McCall, CSS (Certified Specialist of Spirits) is the second generation of her family to work in the bourbon industry, and one of the youngest female distillers in the United States. She followed in her mother's footsteps, starting as a sensory expert and working in the quality department. McCall has a master's degree from the University of

Louisville and has been a member of Brown-Forman's R&D Department since 2009.

She was jobless and a friend suggested she apply for an entry-level job at Brown-Forman. She knew nothing about distilled spirits at the time. "It's unique that I am a woman in this role, just given the history of the titles in the industry," McCall said. "But at Brown-Forman, I've always been surrounded by women. It's never been weird for a woman to have a seat at the table and to voice her opinions."

Now, she works directly with master distiller Chris Morris on innovation and the development of new products within Woodford Reserve. Additionally, she works directly with consumers through personal barrel selections and education on sensory methodology. She also works to define the quality sensory standard to which every drop of Woodford Reserve must live up to.

"It's how our industry goes. I had a master who I was trained under, and I'm the seventh master distiller at the company," Morris said. "We really respect that lineage. You learn all of these secrets and processes that are handed

down from generation to generation. What I'm doing with Elizabeth is passing that legacy onto her."

"It feels like a huge amount of responsibility," McCall said of her job. "But I also have so much pride and understanding of the big picture of it all. I'm extremely honored and humbled to be taking on this role. I almost don't have the words to really describe it. It's very surreal. I get choked up and emotional thinking about what's ahead."





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# TENNESSEE



## INTRODUCTION: SHOW ME THE MONEY! DISTILLING IN TENNESSEE

In the movie *Jerry Maguire*, Cuba Gooding Jr. shouts “Show me the money!” In *All the President’s Men*, Hal Holbrook urges Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman to “Follow the money!” Both are right—and the evidence of this is very clear in Tennessee.

For the uninitiated, Tennessee is a battleground state, and we’re not talking politics. We’re talking whiskey. Tennessee whiskey! There is big money on the table, and for those playing, they’re betting that Tennessee whiskey is the next big thing.

There are new distilleries popping up everywhere. Some are small mom-and-pop, craft distillers. Some are larger distilleries, like Old Dominick, Nelson’s Green Brier, Chattanooga Whiskey Company, SPEAKeasy Spirits, Old Glory, Ole Smoky, and a slew of others that count banks and

industry players like Sazerac and Constellation among their investors.

As the popularity of craft whiskey grows, large conglomerates are looking for new ways to satisfy the public's thirst for brown spirits worldwide. Numerous brands are being established and marketed and it is absolutely awesome to watch the ingenuity, excitement, and entrepreneurial spirit that is skyrocketing the industry forward.

The amazing thing is that Tennessee was once the leader in distilling. The state passed statewide Prohibition in 1908, 12 years before the national law went into effect. The rugged terrain of the Tennessee landscape was a great place to hide stills and escape, or pay off, the law. Corruption exploded. Things were so dire that even Jack Daniel's moved to Kentucky for about 10 years!

Today, the landscape is filling up fast with incredibly fascinating players. From moonshiners and white lightning producers, to those who are hoping to create lasting brands and working to craft extremely fine spirits, Tennessee is

suddenly teeming with the bold and talented.

In 2009, there were only three distilleries in the state: Jack Daniel's, George Dickel, and Prichard's. Today, there are more than 30 and the number is growing. There is even a Tennessee Whiskey Trail.

Fortunately, the evidence of considerable investment is everywhere. From huge new distilleries to massive overhauls and upgrades at Daniel's and Dickel, everywhere you look, expectations are sky-high.

With so many options to choose from, try as many of these distilleries as you can. There are some terrific people out there making everything from moonshine to bourbon to Tennessee whiskey, not to mention some great gins, vodkas, and other spirits.



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Teresa Biddle-Douglass in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*.

## TENNESSEE WHISKEY TRAIL

Despite the fact that the largest single brand of American whiskey, Jack Daniel's, is just south of the border in the neighboring state, it's Kentucky that has always held itself in high regard in terms of distilling.

In this sense, Tennessee has always played second fiddle. It is time for Tennessee to be the star. The Tennessee Whiskey Trail was announced in July 2017. Headlined by the two largest manufacturers in the state—Jack Daniel's and George Dickel—the new association featured 25 small and large distilleries.

With the craft distilling boom swelling the state's rolls, it is now time to flex their muscles and proclaim Tennessee whiskey second to none. Tennessee has a proud history of distilling. "Distilleries in Robertson County date back to the early 1790s, when settlers Thomas Woodard and Arthur Pitt established small stills on their property," wrote historian

Jasper "Jack" Newton Daniel (born 1848) got into the whiskey business at 15. And he struck out on his own 22 years later, establishing a 5,000-acre facility in his hometown of Lynchburg in 1886. George A. Dickel also established his distilling operations during this time and the rest is history.

Today, Jack Daniel's is the best-selling brand of whiskey. In 2016 they sold 12.5 million cases worldwide. Dickel is the second-largest distiller in the state making Tennessee whiskey (with its special mellowing process) one of the hottest whiskey styles out there.

The new boom in Tennessee distilling has boosted the tourism industry and increased the number of exports. With the federal authorities allowing the term "moonshine" to be applied to white whiskeys, there is a whole new industry bubbling up in still columns around the state—the moonshine boom.

The classic Tennessee whiskey has even been codified. Tennessee governor Bill Haslam signed House Bill 1084 on May 13, 2013, which requires charcoal filtering using maple wood (known as the “Lincoln County Process”) as well as attaching the already existing laws for bourbon. This ensures “Tennessee whiskey” remains a consistent product in order to make it a distinct category. New distillers such as Prichard’s, Nelson’s Green Brier Distillery, Corsair Distilling, Nashville Craft, Collier and McKeel Distillery in Nashville, and Tenn South Distillery in Lynnville are all producing Tennessee whiskey and many others are setting up production.

With all the quality spirits out there, there has never been a better time to tour Tennessee!



## THE HISTORY OF DISTILLING IN TENNESSEE



Tennessee has a long history of distilling—and we’re talking about legal distilleries established as proper spirit producing companies. This is not to be confused with moonshining.

As Teresa Biddle-Douglass writes in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, “Tennessee’s natural limestone springs, ample timber, and fertile soil for growing grain have made the state an ideal location for whiskey production.” She continues, “Whiskey was an important part of frontier life as both an easily portable diet staple and a medicinal drug.”

The earliest known distilleries, dating all the way back to the early 1790s, were originally located in Robertson County, when settlers Thomas Woodard and Arthur Pitt established small stills on their property. Their sons continued the operations and developed whiskey production into a prosperous business. Wiley Woodard inherited his father’s farm and distillery in 1836 and had doubled his whiskey sales by 1841. Soon, he was shipping large quantities of whiskey throughout Tennessee and other southern states,” according to Biddle-Douglass. Soon competitors such as Nelson’s Greenbrier arose and became distillers of national prominence.

Other distilleries also blossomed, such as Jasper “Jack”

Newton Daniel’s distillery in Lynchburg in Moore County. Jack got into the distilling business at the age of 15 and by 1866 he owned the company. George A. Dickel was a successful Nashville merchant during the same time. He established a partnership that began to sell whiskey sourced from several local distillers. Dickel eventually bought the distillery which became one of his most popular suppliers, Cascade Creek in Coffee County. Dickel’s Tullahoma distillery is still making whiskey today.

Journalist Jason Wolf wrote in *The Tennessean*, “Looking back to the early 19th century, the state has had a complicated relationship with alcohol.” He continues, “Tennessee passed the first prohibition law in the United States on Jan. 26, 1838, making it a misdemeanor to sell alcoholic drinks and delighting the religious-minded temperance societies that had grown in political clout.”

, The American Temperance Society was founded by Marcus Morton in Massachusetts in 1826. The Tennessee affiliate was formed three years later in Nashville. The 1830s and 1840s saw a rise in the movement to eradicate alcoholic

beverages for consumption. It was at their first convention in 1853 that a complete statewide temperance ban in Tennessee was first mentioned.

According to the Tennessee Whiskey Trail, “Tennessee was a leading producer of distilled spirits even prior to the Civil War. In fact, Tennessee made so much whiskey, that the then Confederate government of Tennessee outlawed whiskey production in order to field and supply the army. This was the nation’s first act of prohibition. Following the Civil War, Tennessee quickly rebuilt its distilled spirits industry.”

In 1885, there was an attempt to ban the manufacture and sales of distilled spirits in all of Tennessee, but it failed to pass through the Tennessee state legislature. Other efforts included the creation of the Anti-Saloon League in 1895 as a response to saloons that had been operating since 1831

The early temperance efforts focused on tighter regulations and controls of alcohol, as well as restricting the sales of these legitimate businesses. For example, sales were restricted by their proximity to schools, hospitals, and

churches. More restrictions were slowly added to the state statutes.



The death of Edward Carmack was a pivotal moment in Tennessee's prohibition history. Carmack, the temperance candidate of the Anti-Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, was murdered while running for governor. In Tennessee he became something of a martyr for the cause, but his death was only marginally related to Prohibition. This inspired temperance forces to work with a new intensity, as if the "murder" of their candidate proved the iniquity and sinfulness of spirits.

By January 1909, Senator O. K. Holladay of Putnam County submitted a bill that "forbid the sale of liquor within four miles of any school in the state; an identical bill was introduced in the House," wrote W. Calvin Dickinson. Then Governor Malcom Patterson assailed the proposed law, thundering, "For a State...to attempt to control what the people shall eat and drink and wear...is tyranny, and not liberty." Regardless, the measure was approved and Patterson's veto was overridden. A follow-up law prohibiting the manufacture of spirits was passed shortly thereafter.

In 1908 Tennessee contained hundreds of registered

distilleries across the state," claims the Tennessee Whiskey Trail. Only two survived Prohibition: Jack Daniel's and George A. Dickel. Jack Daniel's reopened soon after the law permitted in 1940 while George A. Dickel, after some retooling, reopened in the 1950s. These two distilleries formed the cornerstone of Tennessee distilling for the next 40 years.





In 1997, Phil Prichard went through great pains to open up his new craft distillery, Prichard's Distillery, in Kelso. It was among the first wave of craft distillers in the nation, though state and local laws had remained fiercely anti-distilling. Prichard still tells the story of the fight to gain a state license and the more difficult fight to change public

opinion on the local level.

In 2009, a cadre of ambitious entrepreneurs attempted to ease many of the restrictions on distilling in the state. With the craft distilling boom exploding across the nation, Tennessee now lagged behind substantially. Among this group were Heath Clark, of Heath Clark Distilling; Mike Williams, of Collier & McKeel; and Darek Bell, of Corsair Distillery. These three were instrumental in the legislative effort.

On July 5, 2009, the Knoxville News Sentinel put out an article with the headline: "Ground Zero for Whiskey: Law Allows Production of Distilled Spirits in State." The accompanying article, written by Cynthia Yeldell, noted, "Under the new law, about 44 counties are now eligible for distilleries. Manufacturers will be allowed in any county where both retail package sales of liquor and liquor-by-the-drink sales have been locally approved. Some 10 counties, including Cocke—with its reputation for moonshining—opted out of the legislation. Knox County hasn't had

any discussions of opting out, according to Knox County Commission Chairman Thomas ‘Tank’ Strickland.”

This opened the floodgates and by 2017, there were 30 to 40 distilleries crafting authentic Tennessee whiskey. Today, the future for Tennessee whiskey is as bright as ever. Somewhere, Jack and George are toasting a glass to Tennessee!

## TENNESSEE WHISKEY IS ALL GROWN UP

Jeff Arnett, Jack Daniel’s master distiller, speaks passionately about producing the bestselling American whiskey in the world. He is proud of the brand he represents and wears his passion for the product on his sleeve.

Arnett talks about the importance of setting standards for Tennessee whiskey as a product, not just a brand. With the announcement of the new Tennessee Whiskey Trail and the rise of the craft distillers, he has serious concerns about what will happen to the world-famous style of Tennessee whiskey.

Tennessee whiskey is different from bourbon in that

it is first filtered through charcoal (which Jack Daniel’s refers to as “mellowing”) before going into the barrel. This softens the whiskey, taking off the rough edges making it a consequential step.

Many distillers were anxious that bourbon was suddenly being made all over the United States, including New York State, which produces seven or eight bourbons. The TTB and the federal government specified the steps required to put bourbon on your label, ensuring the consumer of what they are getting.



Arnett says the lack of a standard for single malt whiskey in the United States underscores his worries about Tennessee whiskey. He and state authorities have talked to the TTB about setting a national standard, but because of the name “Tennessee whiskey,” the TTB kicked the can down the road to the state liquor authority, claiming it was a state issue instead of a national one. It was up to the Tennessee liquor authority to set a standard for the whiskey their state has become world famous for.

George Dickel & Co. brand ambassador Brian Downing is in complete agreement with Arnett. With craft distilling exploding in the state, he is worried that having no set standard will adulterate what Jack Daniel’s and Dickel have built over the course of a century.

Bourbon has national regulations that distinctly set it apart from Tennessee whiskey. The state of Kentucky has erected even stricter regulations in order to label something “Kentucky bourbon.” No such stringency exists for Tennessee whiskey, despite Arnett’s and Downing’s desire for it. With these stricter laws directed to protect

quality for beer, champagne, and even wines from Napa, they feel the time is ripe for a definition and regulation of what Tennessee whiskey really is. It is about preserving their distillery’s century-plus heritage, as well as ensuring consistency and quality in any product using the “Tennessee whiskey” designation.

There is a whole slew of craft distillers chomping at the bit to make Tennessee whiskey and people will be watching and waiting for the explosion. The only problem? It takes time to make quality whiskey.





## LINCOLN COUNTY PROCESS

While you're in Tennessee and you're trying Tennessee whiskey, you will hear the term "Lincoln County Process." This is the step that separates Kentucky bourbon from Tennessee whiskey. As they say at Jack Daniel's, bourbon comes out of the still, but Tennessee whiskey goes into the barrel.

All whiskey—with the exception of Prichard's—is made using the Lincoln County Process.

In most cases, the whiskey is processed in the same way as most bourbons. The mash is cooked, yeast is added, the distiller's beer is poured down the still, and what emerges is essentially the same spirit. The only difference is that Tennessee whiskey must be passed through a charcoal filter before it is barreled. This filtering is called the "mellowing process," or the Lincoln County Process.

The degree to which the spirit is exposed to the charcoal beds varies greatly. Jack Daniel's puts their spirit through massive, 10-foot-high tanks while George Dickel uses 13-foot-high tanks. On the other hand, some of the other distilleries pass the distillate thorough fish tank-sized

charcoal filters. There is no minimum, but there is the legal insistence that the process be followed.

Jack Daniel's burns \$1 million worth of maple each year and employs their own small fire department to keep up with their manufacturing demand.

This process helps filter impurities out of the whiskey. It has been conjectured that this strips the distillate of flavor, but there is also a belief that the final product is somewhat smoother than non-filtered products (similar to Irish whiskey being lighter and softer than single malt Scotch).

## READ THE LABEL

A label's wording can be confusing, especially where Tennessee whiskey is concerned. It must say "Tennessee whiskey." If it says "Tennessee straight whiskey," that means it was made in Tennessee, but it didn't go through the Lincoln County Process.

Here are 13 Tennessee whiskeys available on the market right now. They are available for sale or for tasting in Tennessee. But in the next five years the number will triple. Tennessee whiskey is the next big thing in brown spirits!



### 1. Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey Barrel Select 100 Proof



2. George A. Dickel Tennessee Whiskey Barrel Select
3. H. Clark Distillery Tennessee Whiskey
4. Ole Smoky Whiskey Straight Bourbon Whiskey
5. Corsair Tennessee Single Malt
6. Sweetens Cove Tennessee Straight Bourbon Whiskey
7. Fugitives Grandgousier Tennessee Whiskey
8. Clayton James Tennessee Whiskey
9. Prichard's Tennessee Whiskey
10. Collier and McKeel Tennessee Whiskey
11. Nelson's Green Brier Tennessee Sour Mash
12. Chattanooga Whiskey Tennessee High Malt
13. Davidson Reserve Tennessee Straight Sour Mash Whiskey

## MOONSHINE IN TENNESSEE

In *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, William E. Ellis writes, [Moonshine] is untaxed liquor, furtively produced quite often by the light of the moon, or at least out of the immediate reach and oversight of law enforcement.” Ellis continues, “Nicknamed ‘corn likker,’ ‘white lightning,’ ‘white mule,’ ‘mountain dew,’ and numerous other local appellations, the typical moonshine is clear in color and potent, usually approaching 100 proof, or 50 percent alcohol by volume.”

Most moonshine is sold clear in mason jars at 80 to 100 proof (40%–50% ABV). In recent times it has become very popular to sell the moonshine with added flavorings. The most popular flavor offered is the apple pie moonshine, usually mixed with fresh sweet cider and cinnamon. Other favorites have blended in lemonade, sweet tea, or berries. These have proven to be popular with young adults, and great for barbecues as well. Many other flavor combinations are also available, including a cream version.

The word “moonshine” has never been thoroughly confirmed, but it is felt that the term is closely derived from the early English term “moonrakers.” The idea was that in order to avoid detection by revenue or tax collectors, moonshiners brewed, fermented, and distilled by night, under the light of the moon. Until recently, the term “moonshine” was always associated with clandestine and illicit production, distribution, and sale of such spirits.

Most moonshiners operated in the back country and woods, a tradition that continues with modern hoochers to this day.

Moonshine was an important part of Appalachian culture here in America. In the late 1700s and throughout the 1800s, Scottish and Irish descendants who settled into the mountains’ craggy peaks and hidden dales brought their whiskey making techniques to the region and flourished. Throughout the 1800s, especially during Prohibition, whiskey became an important source of revenue and income for otherwise insolvent families.



As a study of farmers in Cocke County, Tennessee, once reported, “One could transport much more value in corn if it was first converted to whiskey. One horse could haul ten times more value on its back in whiskey than in corn.”

A 2006 article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported, “To many Tennesseans, Cocke County is the place their parents

warned them about, the butt of hillbilly jokes, the last redoubt of an old, untamed Appalachia. For decades this poor and dramatically beautiful area, north of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, was a haven for moonshiners and bootleggers who evaded federal tax agents by hiding in its rugged hills and hollows.” Times reporter Richard Fausset wrote that County Mayor Iliff McMahan Jr. “who counts a few illicit whiskey makers among his forebearers—said a wariness of federal power was deeply ingrained here. ‘In the old days’ McMahan said, ‘moonshiners were rarely considered criminals—just people trying to feed their families. When they were busted by federal revenueurs those families often went hungry.’ ”

“In my time on the bench, we have obviously had a tremendously greater devastation from OxyContin and prescription pills than we ever had with moonshine,” Circuit Judge Rex Henry Ogle told the *Commercial Appeal* newspaper. Ogle presided over Sevier County (previously a dry county) and conceded that moonshine had always been part of the community’s culture. Ogle’s father had told him stories of

that illicit trade from back in the 1940s. “He had driven up English Mountain and...he kept hearing shotguns go off. [The neighbors] were letting those making the liquor know somebody was coming up the mountain,” Ogle said.

There are several types of spirits sold as moonshine. Classic ‘shine is usually made of 100% cane sugar. Corn whiskey is mostly corn and cane sugar. Some distillers use a classic recipe of “Corn & Cane,” which is predominantly cane sugar mixed with a small amount of corn. There are other white spirits sold as white whiskey, featuring classic bourbon or Tennessee whiskey mash bills. These are sold as immature or unaged whiskey, identical to Tennessee whiskey which is run through the Lincoln County Process and sold white and unaged.

Today, the Federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau has approved of the term “moonshine,” allowing it to be labeled on a legally made jar or bottle of moonshine. Many whiskey experts agree that due to white whiskey or ‘shine’s long history and popularity within the craft distilling industry, it should be recognized as a category unto

itself. Moonshine deserves its place on the top shelf given its history in Tennessee.

That said, illegal moonshine is still made in Tennessee. *Moonshiners*, a series on The Discovery Channel, follows the exploits of illegal distilling operations throughout the South. Several of the stars even went on to make legitimate 'shine with legal distilleries.

## BOOTLEGGERS DISTILLERY

Bootleggers Distillery was founded in February 2015 in Hartford, Tennessee. After exploring a number of different occupations, founder Darrell Miller decided to return to his roots. His mother's side of the family contains a long line of moonshiners, dating all the way back to William Mullins, who was said to be the only passenger on the Mayflower that wasn't part of their religious sect.

"It's just an itty-bitty country place," says Miller, claiming that Bootleggers is that smallest batch distillery in the US.

"We do not brew in hundred or even thousand gallon tanks. We brew in 25-gallon pot stills so that we can maintain a closer more regulated quality." The smaller the batch, the more control you have over the product. I will never do it any other way."

Miller started with his original corn- and-cane moonshine recipe, calling it "the straight-up, down-to-earth, no flavor added white lightning!" Bootleggers soon branched out into other flavors, including apple moonshine, peach, salted caramel, pineapple, hot toddy, lemon drop, mocha, cinnamon, and many more. They also produce a straight silver rum, a coconut silver rum, and have a line of cocktail mixes as well as a cherry moonshine that is packed with maraschino cherries.

Bootleggers Whiskey Select (86 proof) is a small batch whiskey made right there at the distillery. There have been two bottlings a year. This is very small-batch. It sells out quickly and their customers rave about it.

The Old 15th Whiskey Small Batch Continuously Mellowing (95 proof) unaged whiskey is bottled with a piece

of charred oak in the bottle. The idea is that the whiskey ages in the bottle, not in the barrel, and the consumer gets to play cellar master, choosing when to open the whiskey. The consumer then has the option of aging the whiskey with one stick, two stick, or three sticks for either light, medium, or heavy oak flavors. The bottles will range from 95 to 110 proof and make for a very unique offering and a great gift for the real whiskey lover in your family.





# BIG RIVER DISTILLING Co.

Big River Distilling Co. (also known as B.R. Distilling Company) is a brand-new distillery in North Memphis, Tennessee, just across the street from the Mississippi River. The distillery belongs to three childhood friends Alexander Folk (Director of Operations), McCauley Williams (President) and JB Blancett (Sales Manager) “We’re Memphis guys through and through,” Blancett told *Edible Memphis* magazine. “This truly is a premium Memphis product.”

They started out as only a local product, in Memphis, but have expanded to have statewide distribution. All the bottles are hand filled and hand labeled.

“We’ve seen the craft brew movement really take off here and how proud Memphians are to call these beers their own,” said McCauley. “We wanted to provide the same thing overtime with spirits.”

Blue Note Juke Joint Whiskey Straight Bourbon Whiskey (93 proof) is unfiltered, made in Kentucky, and aged and blended in Tennessee. It has a mash bill of 70% corn, 21%



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rye, and 9% barley. The age of the whiskey is 3 to 4 years and it receives its name from Memphis, Tennessee's claim to being the home of the blues. This is the workhorse of the line. Sweet corn, cherry, allspice, and oak on the nose with vanilla, allspice, apricot, and pear coming across the palate. Pear, cherry, and vanilla on the finish. Very smooth.

Blue Note Straight Bourbon Whiskey Aged 9 Years (93 proof) is a premium small-batch whiskey. Blue Note is a proprietary blend of two mash bills 84% corn, 8% rye, and 8% malted barley and 70% corn, 22% rye, and 8% malted barley. Less than 1,000 bottles were produced (five barrels). Maple and butterscotch on the nose with maple, caramel, and vanilla across the palate, and a lingering hint of vanilla.

"We wanted to bring to Memphis a high-quality bourbon product that we blend here," said Folk. "A bourbon is a very unique product and has very different elements that really go into creating a quality blend."

Another product they've put out more recently is the Riverset Straight Rye Whiskey (93 proof), a high-rye rye made from 95% rye and 5% barley. A small-batch rye, the

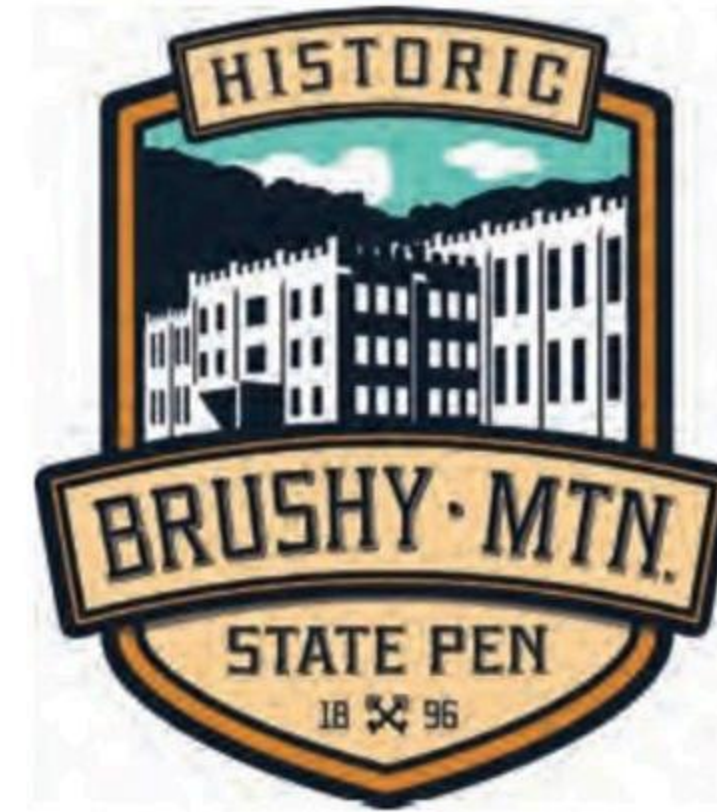
whiskey is aged for four years in barrel and finds inspiration from the Mississippi River across the street. Vanilla and spice on the nose with hints of apple, cinnamon, vanilla, and oak. A finish of vanilla, spice, and black pepper.

Riverset Straight Rye Whiskey Single Barrel (123 proof) is a high-rye with a mash bill of 95% rye and 5% malted barley. It's an unfiltered, barrel strength, four year old whiskey. Vanilla and spice on the nose. Apple, cinnamon, vanilla, and oak on the palate. Vanilla, spice, and black pepper on the finish.

"We want them all to be something that we can really hang our hat on, and that the Memphis market can be proud to call their own," Williams said of their whiskeys. It seems like Memphis has barrels of things to be proud of.



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## BRUSHY MOUNTAIN DISTILLERY

Brushy Mountain Distillery is located at the old Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Petros, Tennessee, in Morgan County. From 1896 to 2009, it was the end of the line for hardened criminals. It is a prison for housing infamous inmates both real and fictional, having been set in novels by Thomas Harris and Cormac McCarthy. It is considered one of the most notorious prisons in America.

In 2013, local citizens came together to turn the prison into a tourist attraction by developing it into a commercial real estate center. It reopened in 2018. It is a popular

attraction and within its confines is a distillery—Brushy Mountain Distillery.

Chattanooga entrepreneur Pete Waddington envisioned the distillery while touring the old prison years before. He and a partner founded End of the Line Moonshine in 2017. Today, the distillery offers End of the Line Moonshine, Frozen Head Vodka, Brimstone and Copperhead Cinnamon Moonshine and Liqueur, and Double Barrel Whiskey.

Employing locals as their distillers, the Bushy Mountain Distillery's End of The Line moonshines are made from farm to still, using local grains and water from the mountains' natural springs. This is true Tennessee Moonshine. They offer Apple Pie, Blackberry, Butterscotch, Cinnarum, Frosted Orange, Honey, Peach Cobbler, and Scared Straight.

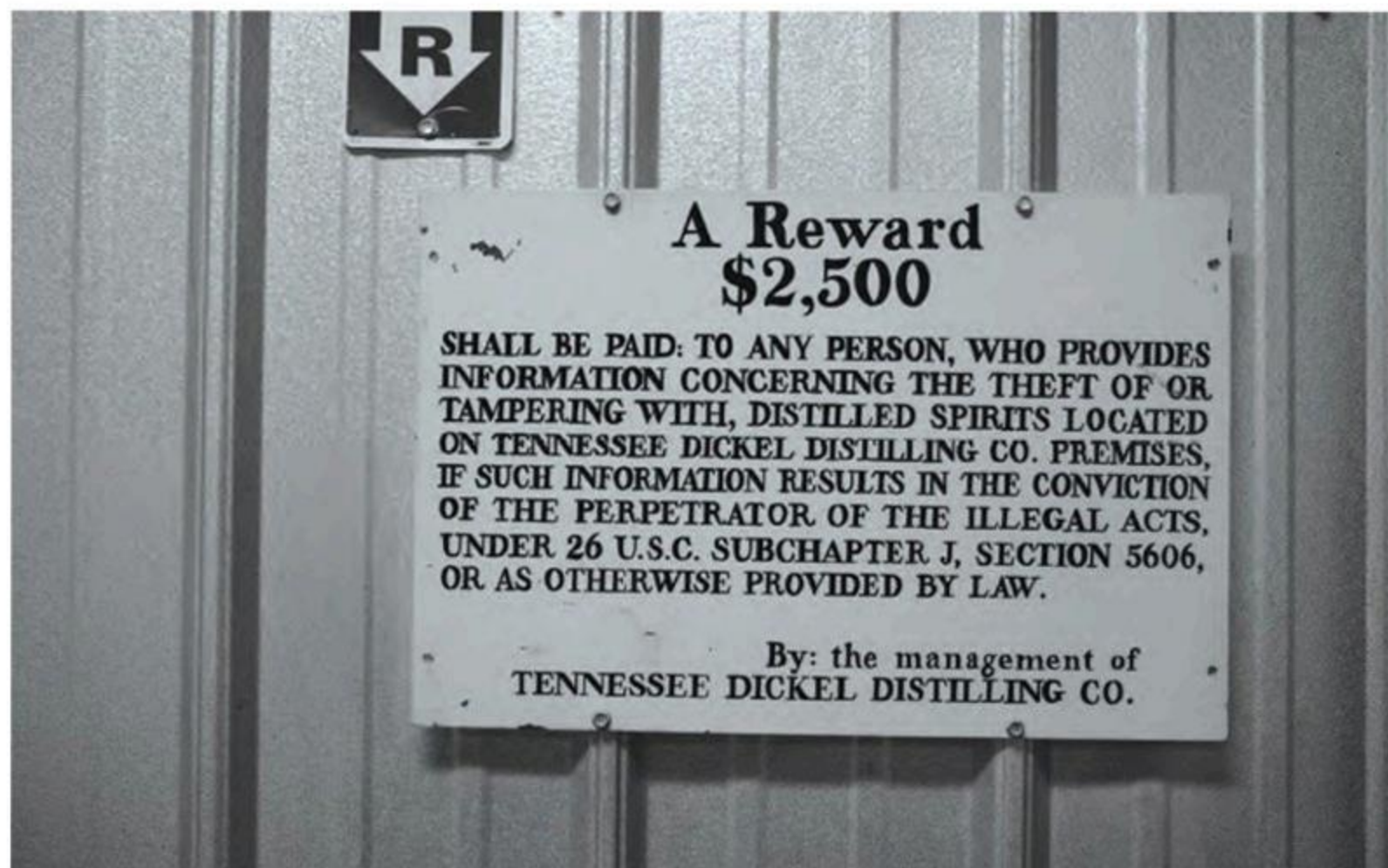
Brushy Mountain Double Barrel Whiskey (117 proof) is made from the best corn and natural mountain spring water available. It's aged 6 years and finished in Caribbean rum barrels. It's bottled it at cask strength right there in Petros, Tennessee. A big nose of caramel and butterscotch notes is balanced by a hint of vanilla in this wonderful craft sipping

whiskey.

Believe me, you'll enjoy doing your time at Brushy Mountain.

## CASCADE HOLLOW DISTILLING Co.





Cascade Hollow Distilling Co. was formerly known as George Dickel Distillery. The name was changed in March 2018 as part of a rebranding by its parent company, spirits conglomerate Diageo. The distillery is still the maker of George Dickel Whiskey, their main brand.

Born in Germany in 1818, George A. Dickel arrived in the United States in 1844. He settled in Nashville and opened up a retail store in the 1850s. By 1861, he was selling liquor.

After the Civil War, he established the wholesaling company George A. Dickel, wherein he purchased whiskey from various distillers, and sold it to other retailers in barrels, jugs, and bottles. As the company started to grow, Dickel took on his brother-in-law Victor Emmanuel Shwab and Meier Saltzkotter as partners.

Dickel's biggest and best supplier in the 1870s was John F. Brown and F.E. Cunningham in Cascade Hollow, near Tullahoma, Tennessee. After Matthew Sims bought out Brown in 1879, McLin Davis entered the picture as the head distiller. It is Davis who more than likely came up with the recipe George A. Dickel & Co. still uses today. By the 1890s, Cascade "Mellow as Moonlight," a reference to the mash being cooled at night to produce a smoother whiskey, was one of the bestselling whiskeys in the region.

As Dickel's health declined, Shwab took on more and more control. By 1916, he had consolidated his positions at both Dickel and Cascade. He used this power to move the company to the Stitzel Distillery in Kentucky when Tennessee enacted statewide prohibition in 1908.



The brand remained in the Bluegrass State until 1956 when Ralph Dupps reconstructed the Cascade Hollow distillery about a mile from the old site. The new distillery drew its water off the Cascade Branch and took advantage of the classic Lincoln County Process. The first batch came off the still on July 4, 1959, and was not bottled until 1964. The distillery and brand changed hands several times in the intervening years and is now owned by Diageo.

Today, George A. Dickel & Co. remains the No. 2 distiller in the taste of Tennessee, behind only Jack Daniel's. They are also the second-largest producer of Tennessee whiskey in the world. With the rebirth of brown whiskeys, Dickel has seen the popularity of the brand growing immensely. The distillery has gone through a facelift in the last few years and the newly renovated retail shop is an absolute eye-catcher.

And, ever mindful of tradition, Dickel remains the largest, non-computerized distillery in the United States.

The distillery's barrels are made from eastern Tennessee wood because it's local and contains slightly less sap, which will flavor the whiskey less. The mash bill is 84% corn,

8% rye, and 8% barley. They use Tennessee corn grown within 30 miles of the distillery. The rye and barley are from the Dakotas and Wisconsin and the company has nine fermenters that hold 22,000 gallons each. These behemoths produce 500 barrels of spirits in a day. The whiskey is chill-filtered at 40 degrees in 15-foot-high charcoal tanks.

Interestingly, Dickel's barrels are toasted to #4 char, but the heads are only toasted to #2 char. Since it uses single-story rickhouses, the distillery has 14 warehouses that contain up to 250,000 barrels of whiskey at any one time.

George Dickel White Corn Whiskey No. 1 (91 proof) is an un-aged whiskey finished with the signature Dickel "Chill Charcoal Mellowing" process. It is one of the best white whiskeys available on the market. Complex, elegant, and smooth with rich corn bread and vanilla flavors, alongside hints of buttered popcorn.



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George Dickel Rye Whiskey is the only rye that's finished using the chill-filtered, Lincoln County Process in the United States. The rye whiskey is sourced from Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and is made from 95% rye and 5% malted barley. The charcoal can't mellow out this super spicy, super smooth rye.

George Dickel Tennessee Sour Mash No. 8 (80 proof) is the signature Tennessee whiskey from Dickel. This blend is often thought of as a value-priced sour mash, but it is an excellent whiskey with great quality and flavor. Though I like some of Dickel's other products better, this is a very, very solid whiskey, perfect for sipping or cocktails! Sipping it brings corn bread pancakes with pecans, butter, and maple syrup to mind.

George Dickel Tennessee Sour Mash No. 12 (90 proof), a blend of 7- to 9- year Tennessee whiskeys, packs a little more punch. There is a lot of butter pecan, salted caramel, and black pepper in this one, which becomes incredibly aromatic with just a few drops of water. This one's the go-to whiskey in my liquor cabinet.





George Dickel Tennessee Whiskey Barrel Select (86 proof) is a small batch Tennessee whiskey bottled from 10 barrels at a time from whiskey that is nine-and-a-half years old on average. In the distiller's opinion, the esterification is complete at this age. On the nose and palate, the cognac notes come through big and loud with stone fruit appearing upfront and remaining throughout. This is not only one of the best Tennessee whiskeys on the market, it is one of the best whiskeys in Kentucky and Tennessee—period. It's also a great value, making it a good bottle to trot out over the holidays!



# NICOLE AUSTIN

## THE REAL WONDER WOMAN

Nicole Austin isn't your normal Kentucky or Tennessee master distiller. She's not from the region and she learned her trade out of town—in New York City.

In 2006, Austin graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Manhattan College in Riverdale, New York. She then began her career in environmental engineering. "I thought I was going to be the next Erin Brockovich. That was one-hundred percent my plan," says Austin.

She fell in love with whiskey while out on a date and went to work at King's County Distillers in 2010. "I didn't have the right last name to work in Kentucky or the right degree for Scotland, so I was like, 'What am I going to do?' " Austin said. "In 2010, Kings County got the license to distill ... and I basically knocked on their door and was like, 'I'm going to work for you now. I'm done asking, I'm telling.' " She was 27 years old when, as master blender, she created a rye whiskey that eventually won double gold in 2015.

"It's rare as a distiller that you actually get to touch every part of the process," she said. "But the first time Kings County made rye, I actually touched every part of the process."

"What is maturation of this spirit like? What does it taste like when it's new? What does it taste like when it's two years old, three years old, four years old? I feel like that's where it all starts. It's the liquid first," Austin said.

In that same period, Austin helped co-found the New York State Distillers Guild and the American Craft Spirits

Association (ACSA). She established a standard for Empire Rye, a New York State codified standard for rye made in the state. On behalf of the industry, Austin worked hard to get the excise taxes lowered which endeared her to the crafters, as well as the big boys. “There are so many craft distilleries out there who are going to become profitable this year because of this legislation. It’s the first time in the history of this country that the tax on distilled spirits has been reduced, ever,” Austin said.

She began working for Dave Pickerell, the famed flying master distiller and industry legend. Austin then went on to work for William Grant & Sons, one of the largest distillers in the world, as the commissioning engineer for Tullamore Dew, the famed Irish whiskey.

At the age of 33, in March 2018, Austin was named the master distiller of George Dickel in Cascade Hollow, Tennessee.

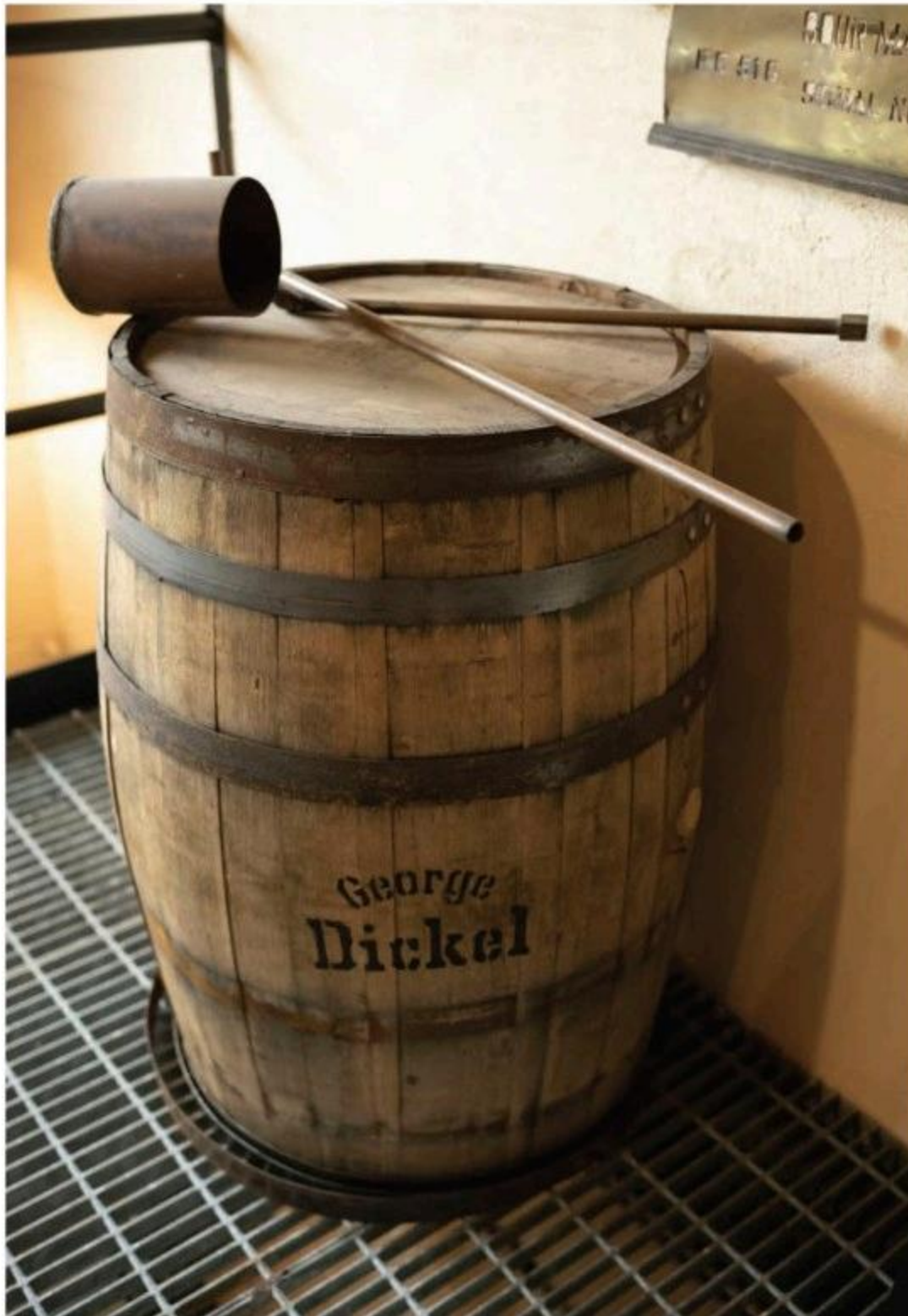
“Nicole is absolutely perfect to lead Cascade Hollow

Distilling Co. because she brings so much to the table,” Sophie Kelly, senior vice president of North American Whiskeys for Diageo, said in a statement. “Not only is she an established chemical engineer and distiller, she has a real business mind, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a true vision for the future of the company, its brands, and the category.”

“You can still respect tradition and innovate. Innovation doesn’t mean it has to be something that’s completely out there. You can respect the tradition, respect the history and respect the legacy and still bring something new to the world,” Austin said of her new role at Dickel.

By May 2019, she released George Dickel 13-Year Old Bottled In Bond (100 proof), a mash bill of 84% corn, 8% rye, and 8% malted barley. Being a Tennessee whiskey, it was charcoal mellowed using the Lincoln County Process. “We wanted George Dickel Bottled in Bond to be rooted in authenticity, quality, and truth, reflective of the values we feel are most important when making Tennessee’s finest whiskey. The aged stocks we have access to here at Cascade

Hollow are absolutely beautiful and it's important to me that we create whiskey that's sure to be a great value for the quality you're getting," Austin said at the whiskey's release.





## SWEETENS COVE

Owners of the Sweetens Cove brand include football great Peyton Manning, tennis legend Andy Roddick, sportscaster Jim Nantz, and singer-songwriter Drew Holcomb. Among others are the co-owners of the Tennessee golf course Sweetens Cove, a dream course which they purchased in 2019. They decided they wanted to have a house brand of whiskey to offer their members. That idea went even further.

Sweetens had no clubhouse, but it had traditions. The “wonderfully organic tradition” was: newcomers had to have one shot of whiskey before hitting off the first tee. “People would drop off or leave bottles and it became part of the lore and experience.” explained co-owner Mark Rivers.

“We wanted a Tennessee product that reflected the nature and story of Sweetens Cove. In some ways, this first release is a love letter to Tennessee. Whiskey was a part of the Sweetens ritual and is certainly a part of centuries

of legacy in this state. It was a natural.” Rivers told Nino Kilgore-Marchetti of WhiskeyWash.com.

First, they hired Marianne Eaves, who had been at Woodford and Castle & Key before striking out on her own as a consultant. She in turn found some sweet 13-year old Tennessee whiskey to blend and bottle. Approximately 100 barrels. The whiskey was bottled at barrel strength and only 14,000 bottles were produced. Four barrels were held back for a special 2020 reserve release.

Many in the industry had loudly opined that there was only one place to get that much whiskey that is so old – Dickel’s. Neither company would confirm the source of the whiskey.

“I always look for ways to create balance while celebrating what the barrels have to offer,” Eaves told industry insider Fred Minnick for Forbes. com. “It was great juice and through blending, I was able to come up with some really fun flavor profiles. All five batches are different, celebrating the age of the bourbon and highlighting the nuanced flavors they managed to present, even above the oak after all that time.”

That said, the whiskey got some great reviews and a hole-in-one for the golf course and Eaves.



## MARIANNE EAVES

Marianne Eaves's career has been nothing short of amazing. A meteoric rise through the world of bourbon and she's doing it as a woman in an old boys' game—and winning.

Bourbon's history is filled with names. Jack Daniel's. Jim Beam. George Dickel. So who was Kentucky's first woman distiller? Marianne Eaves. She was born in Tennessee and raised in Kentucky. She went to the University of Louisville where she earned a degree in chemical engineering. "Right out of college, I could have built an efficient ethanol plant," Eaves told the Daily Beast, "but it wouldn't have tasted very good."

She went to work for Brown-Forman, starting out as an intern and then indispensable assistant to legendary master distiller Chris Morris at Woodford Reserve. She rose to the position of master taster and she made numerous contributions to Woodford and Brown-Forman.

“Women do have a more sensitive palate,” Eaves told the *Daily Beast*, “Women should be able to create more nuanced spirits.” Eaves was recognized in *Whiskey Advocate* as “The Next Generation” for the bourbon industry. She has been honored by *Forbes* and included in the 2015 Food & Drink “30 Under 30” list.

When Eaves was named Kentucky’s first woman master distiller in 2015 at the age of 28, the news went national. Eaves was the first woman ever to be named master distiller in modern distilling history. There have been prominent women in the industry, but none in memory were awarded the honor of master distiller. Morris made note of how proud he was of Eaves and how sad he was to lose her.

As she stepped into the role of master distiller herself, taking on the herculean restoration project of Castle & Key Distillery, Eaves was recognized by *Wine Enthusiast* as one of America’s “Top 40 Under 40 Tastemakers.”

From the very beginning, Eaves helped create and build

Castle & Key.. After starting whiskey production, the next goal was to create a signature London Dry style gin. Eaves told Imbibe magazine, “We also believe that gin is a growing category and hope that our Kentucky-style gin using a bourbon or rye mash base will appeal to a more diverse set of drinkers.”

As for the bourbons and whiskeys? Eaves insisted on using all Kentucky grown and bred grain and corn. According to Imbibe writer Emma Janzen, “Eaves worked with a local farmer to resurrect the endangered Hickory King corn, an 1800s-era heirloom variety that would have been similar to the kind used for original production of Old Taylor. It will take three years to propagate enough seed to fulfill the amount required to make the whiskey.” Eaves worked with the Halcomb family of Walnut Grove Farm in Adairsville, Kentucky, to grow a non-GMO white corn.

“For our proprietary recipes, we will be using this grain exclusively,” Eaves said at the time. “I have been out in the field, planting and harvesting with the Halcombs to evaluate

the fields and review their approach to fertilization so that we get the right starch content and flavor.”

Eaves abruptly left in 2020, leaving the industry buzzing once again. Just as her whiskeys were maturing, especially the Pinhook line which she helped craft. Industry journalist Fred Minnick opined, “Eaves left Castle & Key and embarked on a consulting career that could very well reshape the whiskey industry’s cottage segment of consulting.”

Minnick was right. The famed Dave Pickerell, the industry’s star consultant and equivalent of the wine industry’s Michel Rolland, had passed away in late 2018. The industry suddenly lacked an experienced flying distilling consultant.

“The project building Castle & Key was a tremendous opportunity to meet people and have people reach out to me. I’m just really grateful for my time there. They have a great team. They have a strong desire to improve the industry and to be a leader,” said Eaves. “My opportunity is to take my expertise beyond bourbon and beyond Kentucky and try to

spread the gospel a little bit and extend a helping hand to folks. One thing that I’ve found I’m really passionate about is sharing the technical expertise that I brought with me to Castle & Key from Brown-Forman.”

And that’s exactly what she’s doing.

Her first release as a consultant was the Sweeten’s Cove Tennessee Bourbon. Currently, she’s working on a rosé vermouth with Lindsay Hoopes at Hoopes Vineyard in Napa, California. She’s also a consultant to the highly-acclaimed boutique St. Augustine’s Distillery. She has worked for Sonoma County Distillers as a technical consultant for their expansion. Eaves also hopes to produce the first premium whiskeys from scratch in China with Judy Chan, who revolutionized the wine industry in China with her vision at Grace Vineyards.

“Marianne is well poised to be the ‘next big thing’ in the craft whiskey world,” said St. Augustine Distillery co-founder



Michael K. Diaz. “Her education, experience and work ethic all combine to provide a real benefit to the craft distiller.

To borrow a line: Marianne Eaves’s future is so bright she needs to wear shades—and you’ll think she’s pretty cool, too



## CHATTANOOGA WHISKEY COMPANY



Chattanooga used to be a hotbed of distilling. By the end of the 19th century, there were more than 30 distilleries in the city; more than any other city in the state. Unfortunately, Tennessee’s statewide prohibition began a full decade before the national “Great Experiment” which all but shut down the distilling industry.

There was no distilling in Chattanooga until almost 100 years later. In 2009, Joe Ledbetter and Tim Piersant established the Chattanooga Whiskey Company. However, their road was not an easy one. Though the state of Tennessee was willing to grant them a license, Hamilton County was not one of counties allowing distilleries to operate. After a long battle, via social media and the courts,

the question “Would you drink Chattanooga whiskey?” was put to the public. In November 2012, the “Vote Whiskey” campaign came to a head when the Hamilton County Commission approved the new distillery. In spring 2013, Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill allowing it to go forward and in March 2015, the Chattanooga Whiskey Company was established.

The distillery has gone through some changes since its inception. The original distillery, known as the Chattanooga Whiskey Co. Experimental Distillery, is across the street from Terminal Station, which is famous for its association with the Glenn Miller song “Chattanooga Choo Choo.” The distillery’s custom-made still is affectionately called “Doc.” It was fabricated by Vendome Copper & Brass Works and the head distiller is Grant McCracken. According to Piersant, the distillery is “part experiment and innovation lab, part museum and all good.” This remains their bread-and-butter retail shop.

The main distillery is a sleek black machine a few miles away. Clad in black, it is a combination of a sleek ultra-

mod show room and a down-to-earth brass tacks distillery. This is a state-of-the-art mid-sized distillery with power and room to spare and what’s going on here is nothing short of spectacular.



Chattanooga Whiskey Co. 1816 is one the brands the distillery distributes.

The three expressions of barrel-aged whiskey currently available for purchase are all high-rye bourbons made using a mash bill of 75% corn, 21% rye, and 4% malted barley.

Chattanooga Whiskey Co. 1816 Reserve (90 proof) has a mash bill of 75% corn, 21% rye, and 4% malted barley, and is solera barrel finished. Caramel, honey, brown sugar, and vanilla notes with a lovely hint of spice.

The Chattanooga Whiskey Co. 1816 Cask (113.6 proof) has a mash bill of 75% corn, 21% rye, and 4% malted barley. This is a blend of barrels between 2 and 10 years old. This is a big, barrel-strength bourbon with a slightly darker color. It offers lots of burnt caramel, vanilla, baked apple, and toffee flavor with a big, bold spicy ending of gingersnap and a slight, slight hint of cinnamon. It's a big and warm dram.

There was also a limited-edition Chattanooga Whiskey Co. 1816 Single Barrel (106 proof) release. It was highly prized, highly coveted, and sold out quickly. Additionally, there was a Chattanooga Whiskey 1816 Native Beer Barrel Finished (100 proof). It has a mash bill of 75% corn, 21% rye, and 4% malted barley and is a blend of 2 and 10 years old whiskeys.

For the 1816 Native, the distillery partnered with local craft breweries, giving them bourbon barrels to age and add complexity to their unique beers. Those barrels were returned to finish the 1816 Reserve. The result was a match made in barrel heaven—eight barreled bourbons layered with unique flavors from the traces of beers and whiskey

that came before them. 2018 breweries included Heaven & Ale Brewing Co, Oddstory Brewing Co, Terminal BrewHouse, Hutton & Smith Brewing Company, Chattanooga Brewing Co, Moccasin Bend Brewing Company, Three Taverns Craft Brewery, and Big River Grille & Brewing Works. Some of the most unique whiskeys were made in either Kentucky or Tennessee by either a big or craft producer.





Then there's the High Malt series with three different finishes. Chattanooga Whiskey Straight Bourbon Whiskey (91 proof) Tennessee High Malt is now one of the big workhorses of the distillery. It has a four grain mash of yellow corn, malted rye, caramel malted barley & honey malted barley. The mash bill experiences an extended 7-day fermentation. Distillers feel that this emphasizes the fruit complexity and high-malt character. The whiskey is aged in two different charred and toasted white oak barrels. After aging more than 2 years, the distillery uses a Solera finishing process—involving more than 100 barrels into a 4000-gallon charred, white oak Solera finishing barrel, which must be empty. Tasting notes include dried apricot, sweet tea, and honeyed toast. It's an easy drinking, craft bourbon and fantastic whiskey that is getting more and more publicity and distribution.

The Chattanooga Whiskey Straight Bourbon Whiskey Unfiltered Barrel Strength (111 proof) goes through the same process but is bottled at barrel strength. A small-batch

whiskey, it's slightly harder to come by aged a minimum of two years and full of character and flavor.

Chattanooga Whiskey Straight Rye Malt Whiskey (99 proof) is a four grain whiskey with at least 51% rye), including a blend of slow toasted and drum roasted rye malt. Aged more than 3 years, each batch is 6-10 barrels each. Tasting notes of sweet and savory notes of candied fruit, herbs, and spice. An excellent, smooth rye.

There is also the Experimental Series, a limited collection of whiskeys and spirits born from their original 100-gallon Experimental Distillery in Downtown Chattanooga. Each batch utilizes a multitude of grains, barrels, techniques, and unique ingredients to create one-of-a-kind whiskeys. This series is a whiskey geek's dream!

The Chattanooga Whiskey Batch 16 (75-77 proof) is a whiskey infused with coffee. It's a 2-year and 7 months-old whiskey infused with a special blend of Ethiopian and Colombian coffees, citrus peel, vanilla bean, and cane sugar. They released three barrels worth in Fall 2020.

The Chattanooga Whiskey Batch 14 (102 proof) has a

mash bill of ten grains. Aged 2 years and 8 months, the 4 barrels were finished with South American Demerara Rum and Barbados Rum for an additional 11 months. It was released in April 2020.

Other Experimentals include: BATCH 013 Bourbon Barreled Gin; BATCH 012 Mead Barrel Finished; BATCH 011 Maple Syrup Barrel Finished; BARREL 91 Tennessee High Malt; BARREL 75 Tennessee Double Barrel; BARREL 63 Tennessee Double Malt; BARREL 50 Tennessee Single Malt; BARREL 42 Tennessee Rye Malt; BARREL 51 Wheated High Malt; BARREL 62 Scottish Style High Malt; BARREL 55 Native Barrel; BARREL 52 Smoked High Malt; BARREL 32 Tennessee High Malt; BATCH 010 Tennessee Double Barrel; BATCH 009 Tennessee Double Malt (high corn); BATCH 008 Tennessee Single Malt (Barleywine finish); BATCH 007 Tennessee Rye Malt (3 varieties of malted rye); BATCH 006 Native Barrel (Wheated), and many more.

Chattanooga is gaining fans. The word is spreading and rightfully so. Chattanooga distills some of the best craft whiskeys in any state and soon they won't be the little craft

distiller who could. Chattanooga Whiskey Co. is full steam ahead and only a fool would miss this train!

## THE CHATTANOOGA TASTING EXPERIENCE

I have been to a lot of wine, beer, spirits, and cider tasting rooms. It's what I do for a living and every so often, a tasting experience makes a huge impression. None more so than that at the Chattanooga Whiskey Co.

First off, tastings happen at the bar. I like that because it's a beautiful bar with wood staves, copper, and black iron which adds just the right touch of steampunk. The barrel staves woven throughout the space, crafted from reclaimed wood from a local factory, are from their own barrels. Architect Thomas Palmer and carpenter Matt Sears of Haskel Sears Design and Construction helped set the bar very high for this tasting.

For Piersant, the goal of the tasting is “to allow us to get

creative with techniques and showcase our current product.” Each tour concludes with a full tasting of Chattanooga Whiskey and locally-produced Dr. Thacher's Cocktail Syrup.

The tasters sample three whiskeys—the 1816 100, 1816 Reserve, and 1816 Cask. They are served alongside the cocktails made with those bourbons using the local Thacher's cocktail mixes. It's a smart, clever, and informative tasting that's done extremely well in a beautiful, relaxing setting.





## EXPANSION, BUT STAYING LOCAL

The downtown Experimental Distillery is a small production facility that Chattanooga has been using to chug along since the early days—similar to Apollo 11 where one side was used as a life raft until it was time to jet home. It will continue to be the experimental section of distillery operations. However, Chattanooga Whiskey Co. purchased an old Chevrolet dealership location and is turning it into a state of the art distillery in downtown Chattanooga. Less

than a few miles away from the tasting room, a massive new plant is under construction. The interior of the building was gutted, reconstructed, and is now being filled with massive fermenters, two stills (a very large column still and a pot still), and huge barrel rooms.

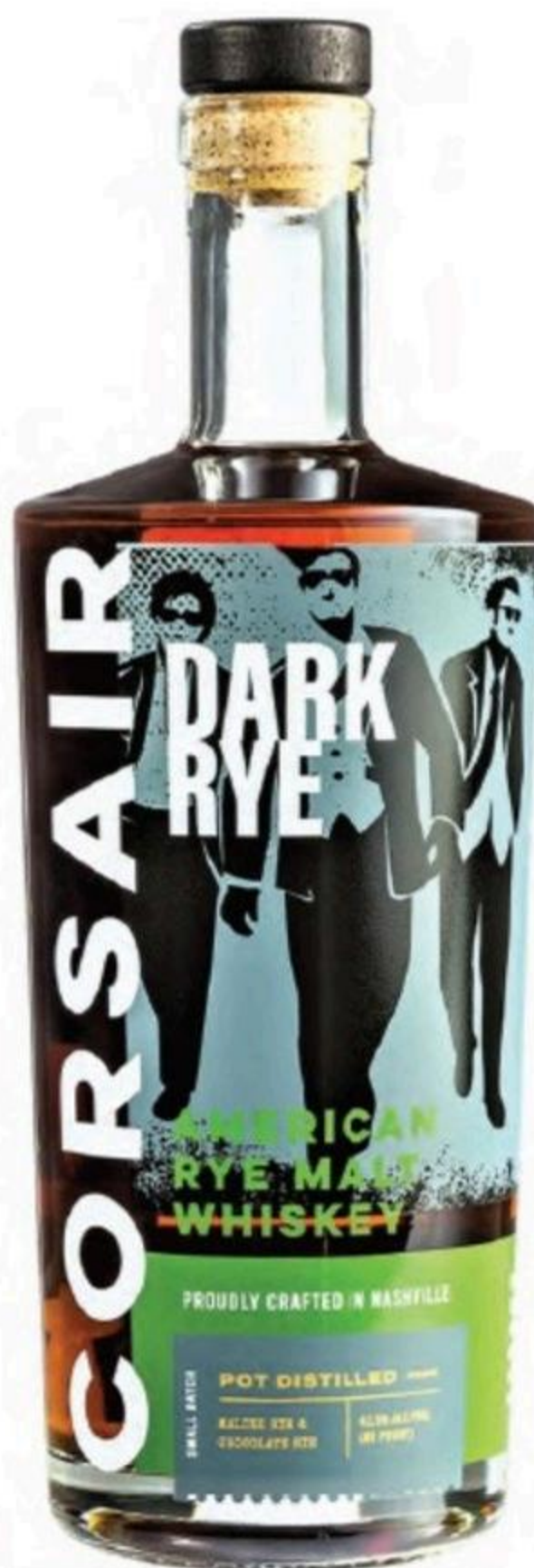
The distillery will produce six different recipes for both their bourbons and their Tennessee high malt. They are already at work on a four-grain bourbon as well. The new distillery features an immense event space with a cavernous production area. These guys are serious and it's a great sign of things to come.

# CORSAIR

Corsair is one of the most famous and most accomplished of American craft distilleries.

From the moment you step into a tasting room at Corsair Distillery and see the labels on each bottle, you know there is something different about the place. The labels feature three men in black-and-white suits, reminiscent of Quentin Tarantino's iconic film *Reservoir Dogs*; they look as if they're about to walk right off the bottle. That's just a hint of the place's bold attitude.

Of all the most impressive whiskey makers in Tennessee and Kentucky, few compare to Corsair. Corsair is a mad whiskey scientist's dream. In one visit we tasted almost a dozen different whiskeys, everything from nine-grain bourbon to quinoa whiskey to two types of hopped whiskey. Even the most dyed-in-the-wool curmudgeons grudgingly admit that Corsair is one of the most interesting distilleries in the entire United States. Everyone within the Kentucky





and Tennessee whiskey communities have an eye fixed on Corsair.

In a world of Vermeers attempting to emulate the grandmaster bourbons, Corsair wishes to be Van Gogh. The rules that guide most of the bourbon whiskey world in Tennessee and Kentucky suddenly disappear when one comes into contact with Corsair. It's as if these folks stepped into a time machine and set the controls for one or two decades ahead. The idea of a bourbon made simply with corn, rye, and barley seems absurd here. Nothing is too sacred to be experimented with and no technique seems too crazy.

Granted, there is still an appreciation for the fundamentals. Corsair prefers to make their own beer or mash and they age their bourbon in new American oak. Beyond that, it's a giant playground.





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## DISTILLER, PUSHER OF BOUNDARIES

Darek Bell, a Nashville native, is the founder and owner of Corsair Distillery. Bell began fiddling around as a homebrewer and winemaker (even dabbling in sake) before he attended the Siebel Institute in Chicago and the Bruichladdich Distilling Academy in Islay, Scotland. He is dedicated to one thing—pushing the envelope and always seeking ways to push past the accepted wisdom of distilling. He focuses constantly on new recipes, using alternative grains, unconventional smoked grains, and unusual botanicals. This daring way of distilling prompted *Spirits Business* magazine to name Bell one of the “10 Most Pioneering Distillers.” Bell is the author of two books: *Alt Whiskeys* and *Fire Water*.



### DAREK BELL: FOUNDER, OWNER,



According to the company's website: "Childhood friends Darek Bell and Andrew Webber began homebrewing beer and wine in Darek and Amy Lee Bell's garage. They hit a snag while working on a prototype bio-diesel plant, causing Andrew to remark that making whiskey would be much more satisfying."

Andrew Webber (who holds an MBA) is head distiller and the distillery's president, a job that entails running day-to-day operations, bean counting, janitorial work, lecturing, and serving as brand ambassador. Amy Lee Bell is a co-owner and leads the marketing side of the business, serving as a brand ambassador, as well as the copywriter and publicist. Together, these three make magic.

In 2008, Corsair opened its first tasting room and distillery in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The Marathon tasting room location in Nashville was opened in 2010. And their new headquarters, on Merritt, was opened in 2016.

Each location has its own distiller. Aaron Marcum is the head distiller at the Bowling Green location, Colton Weinstein is the head distiller at the Marathon location, and Clay Smith is the head distiller at the headquarters on Merritt. Each distiller makes a special number of recipes. Some are very specific and particular to one person. Occasionally, whiskeys from one part of the Corsair empire are blended with those produced at another location. Each distillery makes something unique and different and all

of them make whiskeys that may be blended at another location.

Not long after Corsair opened their products and experiments started garnering immediate attention from writers and spirit historians, as well as media hotspots like *Food & Wine*, *Saveur*, *Imbibe*, *Whisky Magazine*, *Whisky Advocate*, *The Atlantic*, *Time Out New York*, and *Maxim*.

While Corsair has a reputation for experimentation and small production, their three facilities make their whiskeys much easier to find than ever before. Ryemaggedon, Triple Smoke, Dark Rye, and Oatrage can all be found in discerning shops, or at can be ordered by your local purveyor.





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I visited the Nashville headquarters on Merritt where they have an 800-gallon pot still, two column stills, and six healthy-sized fermenters. Smith is friendly, helpful, and proud of what he and the company produce. As you would expect, he is also a beverage freak who loves all wine, beer, and spirits.

That love helps Corsair make some wicked cool whiskeys. Their two biggest sellers are the Triple Smoke, their version of a single malt, and their Ryemageddon, which is truly an outrageous rye whiskey.

The Triple Smoke American Malt Whiskey (80 proof) is a malted barley whiskey made from three smoked batches—cherry wood, peat, and beechwood—pot distilled and barrel-aged in new charred oak. Essentially a single malt whiskey, it is rich with notes of caramel, brown sugar, vanilla, and smoke. It's very good, especially for those who like things a little smoky.

The Ryemageddon (92 proof) is an American high-rye made from chocolate rye and malted rye. It has a mash bill of 88% rye—80% malted rye and 8% chocolate rye and

is aged in oak for eight to nine months. While some may not like rye for its spiciness, this is a wonderful new twist on rye whiskey. The chocolate malt adds a big, rich flavor to the caramel and toffee up front, but doesn't take away from the lovely gingersnap finish so often associated with a traditional rye. It is an absolute winner and among my favorite rye whiskeys in both states.!

There is also a Ryemagedon Single Barrel cask strength boasts a 123.5 proof (61.75% ABV).

Corsair Tennessee Single Malt (90 proof) is a 100% two row malted barley American single malt, first aged in American oak casks. The whiskey is finish in ex-Caribbean rum barrels. Sweet, dark rum, bold oak, and mild malt tones on the nose. Rum, honey, and malt come across the palate.

Corsair Dark Rye American Rye Malt Whiskey (85 proof) has a mash bill of 61% Malted rye, 4% malted chocolate rye, and 35% malted barley. Unlike many other rye whiskeys, Corsair does not use corn to fill up our grain bill. Corsair Dark Rye is technically both a rye whiskey and a malt whiskey.