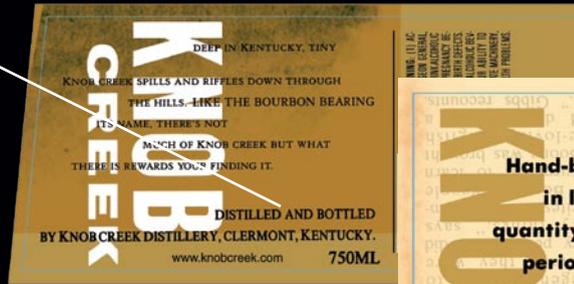


DISTILLED BY AND DISTILLED IN –

If it says “distilled and bottled BY” or “Distilled BY,” it must be distilled by the following distiller. If it says “Distilled IN Kentucky, bottled BY XYZ Distillery” then most likely they have bought bourbon on the open market and bottled and labeled it privately.



PROOF/alcohol by volume – Must be printed on the label. The higher the proof, less water is added to get to bottling proof. Make sure you're paying for the “stuff.” Not fluff.

Only water can be added to bourbon after aging to get it down to barreling or bottling strength.

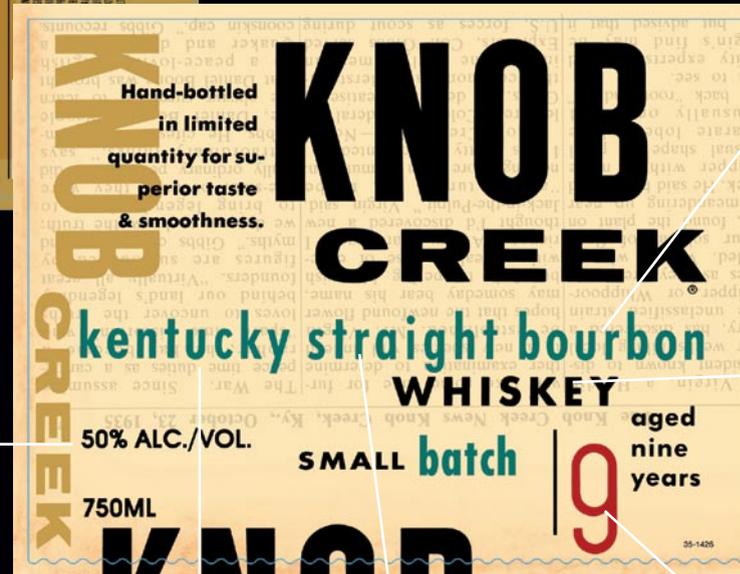
NOTE: Extra aging adds to the final cost of the product. Every bourbon has potential of maximum aging. That is to say they can reach a point of diminishing returns. Additional aging adds color and flavors for each additional year, to that point.

BOTTLED IN BOND – Whiskey must be aged for a minimum of four years, be a product of one distillery, distilled during a single season and bottled at 100 proof.



KENTUCKY – A damn fine state, and if the label says it's from Kentucky, that means it was the “state of distillation of domestic types of whisky...”

Any statement in quotation marks “.” is a quote from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms 'Standards of Identity,' which regulates our industry.



BOURBON – Defined as “whiskey produced at not exceeding 160 proof from a fermented mash of not less than 51% corn, and stored at not more than 125 proof in charred new oak containers; and also includes mixtures of such whiskeys of the same type.”

Minimum bottling strength, 80 proof

WHISKEY – The U.S. ATF Standards of Identity defines whiskey as “an alcoholic distillate from a fermented mash of grain produced at less than 190 proof in such manner that the distillate possesses the taste, aroma, and characteristics generally attributed to whisky, stored in oak containers, and also includes mixtures of such distillates for which no specific standards of identity are prescribed.”

STRAIGHT – “Straight bourbon whiskies conforming to the standards” prescribed in the definitions of whiskey and bourbon “which have been stored in the type of containers prescribed for a period of two years or more shall be further designated as ‘straight.’”

AGE STATEMENTS

Labeling laws require:

- If the bourbon is under 4 years old, an age statement is required
- If the bourbon is over 4 years old, an age statement is optional
- If age is stated, it will reflect to the age of the youngest whiskey in the bottle

WHISKEY PROFESSOR

BERNIE LUBBERS

LABEL READING GUIDE

GLOSSARY

SINGLE BARREL just means that the bottle comes from one barrel. This really gives no further quality assurance. Just tells you that it comes from one barrel.

SOUR MASH is the set back, meaning the distiller uses some of what he made today to start tomorrow's batch. The percentage varies by distillery, but it usually hovers around 25%. Using the set back helps with consistency. Dr. James Crow (Old Crow Bourbon) is credited for employing this method on a consistent basis.

BLENDED WHISKEY (whiskey – a blend) “is a mixture which contains straight whiskies or a blend of straight whiskies at not less than 20% on a proof gallon basis, excluding alcohol derived from added harmless coloring, flavoring, or blending materials, and, separately, or in combination, whisky or neutral spirits.” The % of neutral grain spirits must be printed on the label for U.S. whiskies.

SCOTCH WHISKY is a distinctive product of Scotland. There are three types of Scotch Whisky.

SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY must come from a single distillery, must be distilled in a single season, made from 100% barley malt and distilled only in pot stills; usually double distilled. In practice, most malts are distilled around 60-70% by volume [120-140 proof]. Keep in mind, single malt scotchs all have the same grain bill of 100% barley.

BLENDED MALT WHISKY, also known as “vatted malts,” are whiskies comprised entirely of 100% barley malt whiskies, originating from at least two different distilleries.

BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKIES are typically 60 – 70% grain spirits and 30-40% single-malt whiskies. Distillation may occur in pot or column stills.

IRISH WHISKY is a distinctive product of Ireland. According to the Irish Whisky Act of 1980 it must be “distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8 by volume [189.6 proof] in such a way that the distillate has an aroma and flavour derived from the materials used. Aged for a minimum of 3 years in wooden casks.” In practice they are often triple distilled in pot stills and/or blended with column still whiskies.

TENNESSEE WHISKEY must be made in Tennessee and must utilize the “Lincoln County Process.” Charcoal made from the sugar maple tree is collected into ten-foot deep (legal minimum) filtering vessels, and then the whiskey is slowly filtered through the charcoal. The spirit is then put into a barrel for aging. (This adds flavor, and thus knocks it out of the bourbon category).

THIS INFORMATION COMES FROM THE BEVERAGE ALCOHOL RESOURCE 2007 New York

CANADIAN WHISKY – A distinctive product of Canada, distilled to any proof from cereal grains. By law they must be no less than 3 years old, and no more than 50% of any straight grain spirit. That is to say, at least 1/2 of the whisky in the bottle is neutral grain spirits. The % of neutral grain spirits is NOT required to be printed on the label under Canadian law.

GRAIN SPIRITS “are neutral spirits distilled from a fermented mash of grain and stored in oak containers.”

NEUTRAL SPIRITS “are distilled spirits produced from any material at or above 190 proof...”

GOOD TO KNOW

GRAIN BILLS for most bourbons are 70-80% corn – nearly all the same. However, some have wheat. Experience, quality control, the proof it is distilled to and aging has a great deal to do with the outcome. Another important factor is whether or not the distiller uses a jug yeast or dry yeast; it's a big deal congener-wise.

A 1964 ACT OF CONGRESS made bourbon America's Native Spirit. Bourbon can only be produced in the United States of America. All of the color and much of the flavor in bourbon is the result of aging in new charred oak barrels.

IT'S OFFICIAL - As we all know, the U.S. Senate has been known for declaring a lot of things. But to this day, only one left bourbon lovers everywhere uniting in glorious cheers. On August 2, 2007, SR 294 was approved, officially naming September as National Bourbon Heritage Month.

There are **10 DISTILLERIES IN KENTUCKY**: Jim Beam, Booker Noe, Maker's Mark, Barton Brands, Heaven Hill, Buffalo Trace, Wild Turkey, Woodford Reserve, Four Roses, Old Forester.

COLORING, “no such statement is required for the use of caramel in brandy, rum, or tequila, or in any type of whisky, other than straight whisky.”

To get even deeper down into the depths of bourbon, and a few other things, check out The Knob Creek® Stillhouse at knobcreek.com.

Knob Creek® Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, 50% Alc./Vol.
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