

KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY  
NAVY YARD, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK  
REGISTERED DISTILLERY N<sup>o</sup>. DSP-NY-15025

STORYBOOK



THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

# KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY

NEW YORK CITY'S OLDEST,  
LARGEST, & PREMIER DISTILLERY

FIND THIS BOOK ONLINE ANY TIME  
[www.kingscountydistillery.com/trade](http://www.kingscountydistillery.com/trade)

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK  
MMXXIV



## 1. WHO WE ARE

KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY is New York City's premier craft distillery and among the most acclaimed small distilleries in the United States. Focused exclusively on whiskeys, Kings County has made a name for its bourbon, peated bourbon, rye and other creative whiskeys.

We have sold almost 1,000,000 bottles of whiskey, all from New York grains on our own stills. We never source whiskeys from any other producer, ensuring our whiskeys are distinctive and unique to our label.



## 2. CREATIVITY & TRADITION

NEW YORK CITY HAS NO OBVIOUS tradition of distilling like Kentucky or Scotland, but as a *melting pot* of cultures from all over the world, our whiskeys tend to borrow from a variety of distilling styles. Our ingredients and aging are typical of American whiskeys, our distillation and fermentation are more like single malt scotch or pot still Irish whiskey, and our appreciation of unaged whiskey can be traced to Appalachian moonshine.

*Kings County embraces a variety of whiskey cultures and blends them into creative, distinctive whiskeys.*

Kings County represents:

- A true craft spirit from grain to glass
- Authentic, nontraditional whiskeys
- A focus on integrity and transparency
- Sourcing organic, local, or non-GMO grains
- Distilling for quality over yield using true pot stills
- A radical shift in style from commercial whiskey





### 3. PRAISE

KINGS COUNTY HAS WON praise in numerous press outlets and has won several double-gold, gold, and best-in-category medals from the San Francisco World Spirits Competition, the American Distilling Institute, and the American Craft Spirits Association. Our whiskeys have been named to best-of lists by the *New York Times*, *Wine and Spirits Magazine*, *Bon Appetit*, *GQ*, the *New Yorker*, and many others.

Recognizing the distillery's role as a leader in the craft distilling movement, the American Distilling Institute named Kings County *Distillery of the Year* in 2016. Tales of the Cocktail and the New Orleans Spirits Competition bestowed the same honor in 2023.



The team after winning Distillery of the Year at Tales of the Cocktail/New Orleans Spirits Competition in July, 2023.



## 4. KENTUCKY ROOTS

Inspired by regular trips to his hometown in Harlan, Kentucky, founder Colin Spoelman brought back jugs of moonshine from a local bootlegger, which proved popular at parties. With college friend and roommate David Haskell, the two imagined a way to make moonshine in Brooklyn for friends and neighbors.



## 5. HOMEMADE MOONSHINE

THEIR CURIOSITY piqued by the popularity of the Kentucky moonshine, Spoelman and Haskell started distilling with a small still purchased from the internet. As the two began to receive messages from strangers asking to buy the moonshine, they decided to turn the illegal hobby into a legitimate business, just as New York was amending distilling laws.





## 6. AMERICA'S SMALLEST LEGAL DISTILLERY

**K**INGS COUNTY first opened in a 300-square foot room, making it not just the first of a wave of craft distilleries to open in New York City, but the country's smallest. The business quickly received attention and overwhelming orders and has been growing steadily ever since.

New York Magazine, April 2010

*New York Daily News*, July 2010  
*Wall Street Journal*, June 2010

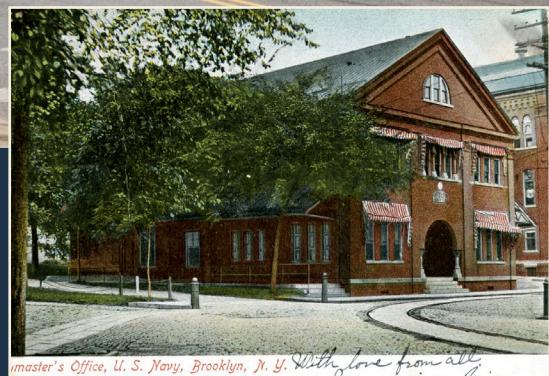
## 7. AN URBAN DISTILLERY

DISTILLING IS SO OFTEN associated with Kentucky and Tennessee that it's hard to remember that distilleries used to be as much a part of urban life as rural life. The great advantage of being in a city, especially one as vibrant as New York, is participating in its culture by collaborating with other Brooklyn makers, customers, and with the stores and restaurants that sell our whiskeys.



## 8. A NAVY YARD HOME

BY 2012, the business had outgrown its original space and moved into to the former Paymaster Building, a historical 117-year-old landmark structure in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.



THE DISTILLERY IS JUST steps from the location of the Whiskey Wars of Brooklyn, a series of raids against Irish moonshine distillers immediately after the Civil War, and a block and a half from where bootlegger Al Capone was born in 1899.





## PRODUCTION OVERVIEW



## 9. GRAIN

AS A WHISKEY DISTILLERY, Kings County consumes a lot of grain—more than a ton each day. We use organic corn from upstate New York (grown by Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens at Lakeview Organic Grain), and malted barley grown in the United Kingdom and malted by Thomas Fawcett & Sons.

- We don't use rye or wheat in our bourbon.
- Our corn is 100% organic, and we don't use GMO ingredients.
- We believe distinctive ingredients make better whiskey
- Our high-malt mashbill borrows more from scotch whiskey than is traditional for bourbon.





*Loading the silos with 40 tons of organic corn via a tractor trailer in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.*



## 10. MASHING & FERMENTING

WE MASH BY BOILING New York City water, then cook the corn and barley until we have extracted the sugars. We strain the mash and ferment for four days.

- Our open, off-the-grain fermentation is more typical of a scotch distillery.
- Our traditional wood fermenters were built by Isseks Bros, makers of Brooklyn's distinctive rooftop water towers.
- We also use stainless steel fermenters, also open to the atmosphere, so wild yeast contributes to our flavor.
- We mostly use a sweet-mash rather than sour-mash process, which further differentiates our whiskeys from traditional bourbon recipes.



## 11. POT DISTILLATION

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENTIATING factor in our whiskeys is our method of distillation. Using true pot stills built in Scotland, we take the narrowest part of the distillation run, the heart, so as to include only the best spirit and recycle back the remainder.

- Our stripping still was built by Vendome in Kentucky and our spirit stills by Forsyths in Scotland.
- Narrow cuts make clean but flavorful whiskey.
- We avoid chemicals that make hangovers worse by taking less from the fringe of the run: quality over yield.
- Most bourbons do at least one distillation on a column still; we do both on pot stills, yielding a lower distillation proof—richer flavor and better mouthfeel.







## 12. AGING

**B**OURBON, BY LAW, must age in charred, new, oak barrels. We age our flagship bourbon for a minimum of three years, or longer for some of our allocated whiskeys (7 years for our oldest). We use a combination of 5, 10, 15, 30 and 53-gallon barrels, and are saving a large inventory of barrels for longer aged whiskeys.

- We age much longer than our peers for each barrel size, including 53s.
- Small barrels allow us to be more experimental, with oatmeal whiskey, peated rye, applejack, and brandy as upcoming projects.
- The 4000 barrels currently in inventory could last us 10 years at current sales rates.
- All of our whiskey is aged in warehouses in Brooklyn or at the former Blue Point Brewery in Patchogue, New York, on Long Island.
- Barrels are sourced from the Barrel Mill, ISC, and West Virginia Great Barrel Co.
- 25% of production is designed to age for 7-12 years.





## 13. BLENDING

EVERY SINGLE ONE OF OUR BARRELS has been evaluated and approved by head blender Ryan Ciuchta, who regularly samples barrels for maturity.

- Unlike most distilleries, we pull based on taste, not age, but most of our whiskeys are 4-7 years old.
- We put great emphasis on uniformity and excellence in blending.
- We offer a single barrel program for interested accounts.
- Our former head blender, Nicole Austin, is now the head distiller and general manager at George Dickel in TN, one of the legacy commercial distillers. One measure of our blending program is that our key talent has been hired and promoted by the largest spirits company on earth, Diageo—the first example of the big guys hiring from craft.



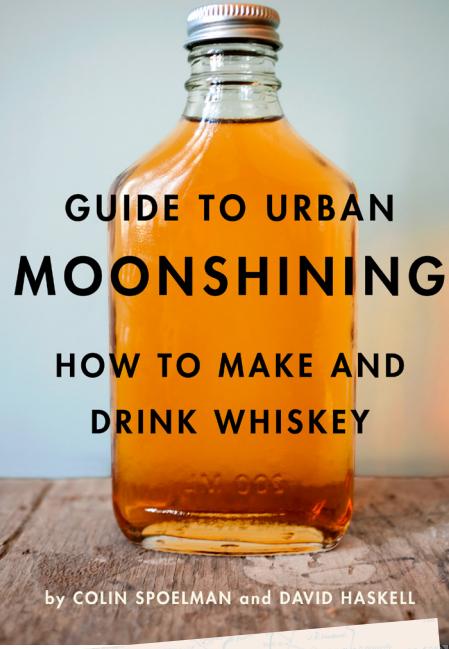
## 14. LEADERSHIP

KINGS COUNTY'S TEAM REPRESENTS the next generation of distilling talent, arguing that intelligence, taste, and creativity are as important as family lineage.

- Distiller Colin Spoelman and Co-Founder David Haskell have established themselves as thought leaders in the craft distilling world, writing books and providing quotes for articles on craft distilling.
- Colin grew up in Kentucky and became interested in distillation through visiting commercial distilleries and illegal bootleggers.
- David Haskell is now editor-in-chief at *New York* magazine and less involved in the day-to-day.
- Head Blender Ryan Ciuchta has been with Kings County for 10+ years, having left a career in graphics at the *New Yorker* magazine.



THE KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY



KINGS COUNTY DISTILLERY

# DEAD DISTILLERS

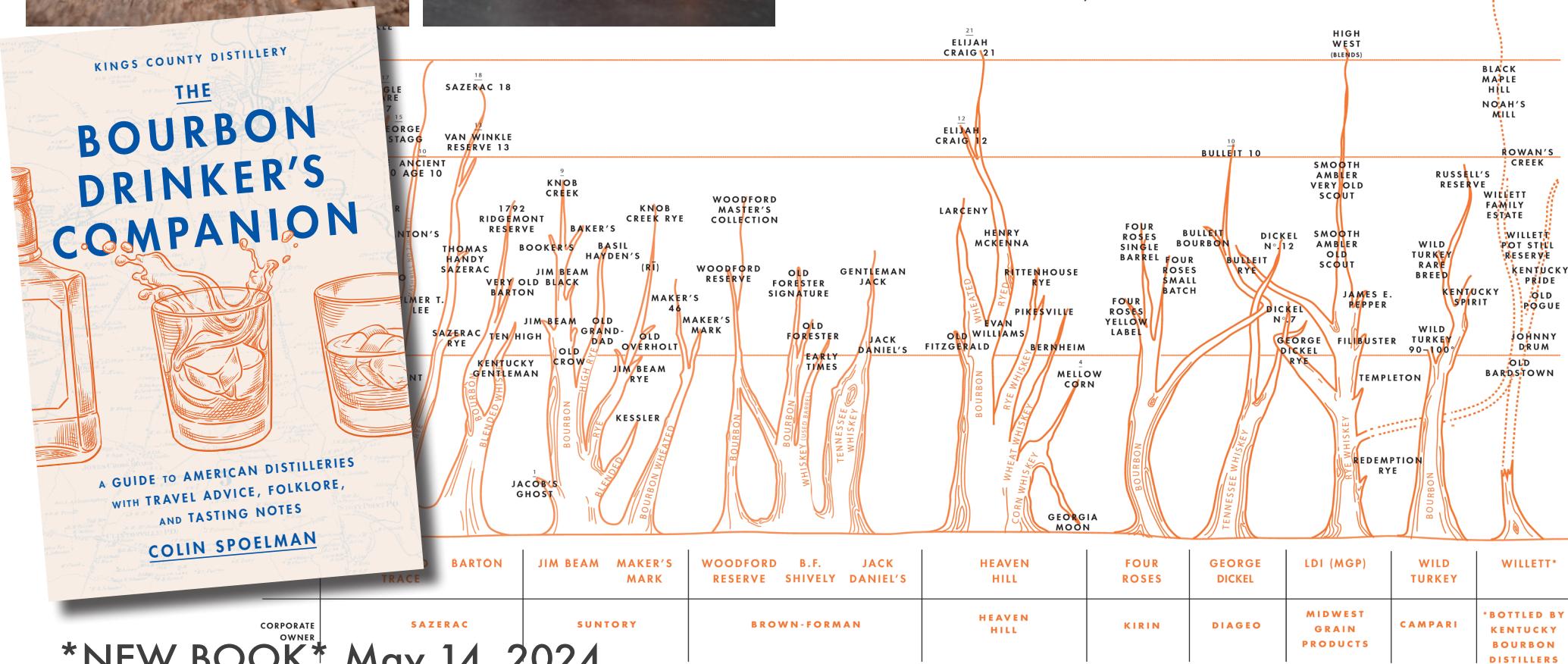
A HISTORY OF THE UPSTARTS AND OUTLAWS WHO MADE AMERICAN SPIRITS

COLIN SPOELMAN AND DAVID HASKELL

## 15. BOOKS

Nearly everyone in the spirits industry has seen the Family Tree of Bourbon Whiskey, which was excerpted from our first book, the *Kings County Distillery Guide to Urban Moonshining*.

- The *Guide to Urban Moonshining* became a best-seller after its release in 2013.
- The Family Tree of Bourbon Whiskey was published by GQ and went viral.
- A second book, *Dead Distillers*, came out in May 2016 and focuses on history.
- The *Bourbon Drinker's Companion* is a travelogue through American whiskey from a distiller's perspective, highlighting the best of traditional and craft whiskeys.



\*NEW BOOK\* May 14, 2024

\*BOTTLED BY  
KENTUCKY BOURBON  
DISTILLERS

## 16. AWARDS



TALES OF THE COCKTAIL/NOLA SPIRITS COMPETITION  DISTILLERY OF THE YEAR 2023

AMERICAN DISTILLING INSTITUTE  DISTILLERY OF THE YEAR 2016

New Orleans Spirits Competition Double Gold, Best in Category, Rye 2018

New Orleans Spirits Competition Gold, Best in Category, Barrel Strength 2023

Francisco World Spirits Competition  Double Gold, Barrel Strength Bourbon, 2022

San Francisco World Spirits Competition Double Gold, Barrel Strength Bourbon, 2022  
San Francisco World Spirits Competition Double Gold, Peated Bourbon, 2022

San Francisco World Spirits Competition Double Gold, Peated Bourbon, 2022

San Francisco World Spirits Competition Double Gold, Blender's Reserve Bourbon

San Francisco World Spirits Competition Double Gold, Best of Category, Bottled-in-Bond

American Craft Spirits Association Gold, Innovation Award, Peated Rye

American Craft Spirits Association Gold, Bottled-in-Bond, 2020

American Spirits Council of Tasters (ASCOT) Double Platinum, Barrel Strength

American Spirits Council of Tasters (ASCOT) Double Platinum, Barrel Strength Bourbon, 2021

American Spirits Council of Tasters (ASCOT) Double Platinum, Best Craft Rye, Empire Rye, 2021 Gold, Rye, 2019

American Craft Spirits Association Gold, Peated Bourbon, 2019

American Distilling Institute  Gold, Bottled-in-Bond Bourbon, 2019

San Francisco World Spirits Competition  Double Gold, Best of Category, Bottled in Bond

KINGS COUNTY'S WHISKEYS have won numerous awards. The moonshine and bourbon are celebrated nearly every year, and bourbon, rye and peated bourbon earned the highest accolades at San Francisco (double-gold). The barrel strength bourbon and brandy earned the highest at the American Craft Spirits Association (Best-in-Category). Kings County won Distillery of the Year from the American Distilling Institute in 2016.

# The New York Times

DRINK & DINE SPIRITS OF THE TIMES

## Bourbon's Masters of the Craft

The image shows the front cover of the Wall Street Journal. The title 'THE WALL STREET JOURNAL' is at the top in large, bold, serif capital letters. Below it, a sub-headline reads 'History of Prohibition Bottled Here'. A large, grainy black and white photograph occupies the center of the cover, depicting a dark, industrial interior, likely a still or distillery, with pipes and equipment visible. At the bottom, there is a small section of text and a logo for 'WSJ.COM'.

**L**IKEWISE, HUNDREDS of press outlets have covered Kings County, from the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Bloomberg*, *Fast Company*, *NPR*, *Vogue*, *GQ*, and several national and international radio and TV outlets.

Accordingly, Kings County's whiskeys are often more well-known *outside* the spirits industry than *inside*, bolstered by good press paired with word-of-mouth and social media.

Samples Tested:



Chemical spectrum analysis report

### GC HIGHER ALCOHOLS AND ESTERS PROFILES:

Sample (see Key above)	Kings County Moonshine	Kings County Bourbon	Jim Beam White Label	Blanton's Bourbon
Analyte (ppm.)				
Acetaldehyde	8.83	5.26	29.5	31.4
Ethyl Acetate	27.9	36.5	163.9	303.8
Methanol	5.06	5.70	26.0	58.4
n-Propanol	21.7	17.2	56.0	101.9
Isobutanol	88.3	56.5	275.9	150.5
1 Butanol	0.0	0.0	2.3	5.8
Ac + iso Amyl Alcohol	495.2	202.5	1261.3	1535.9
Furfuryl	4.59	11.5	21.7	64.1

These are "as is" ppm. values as determined.

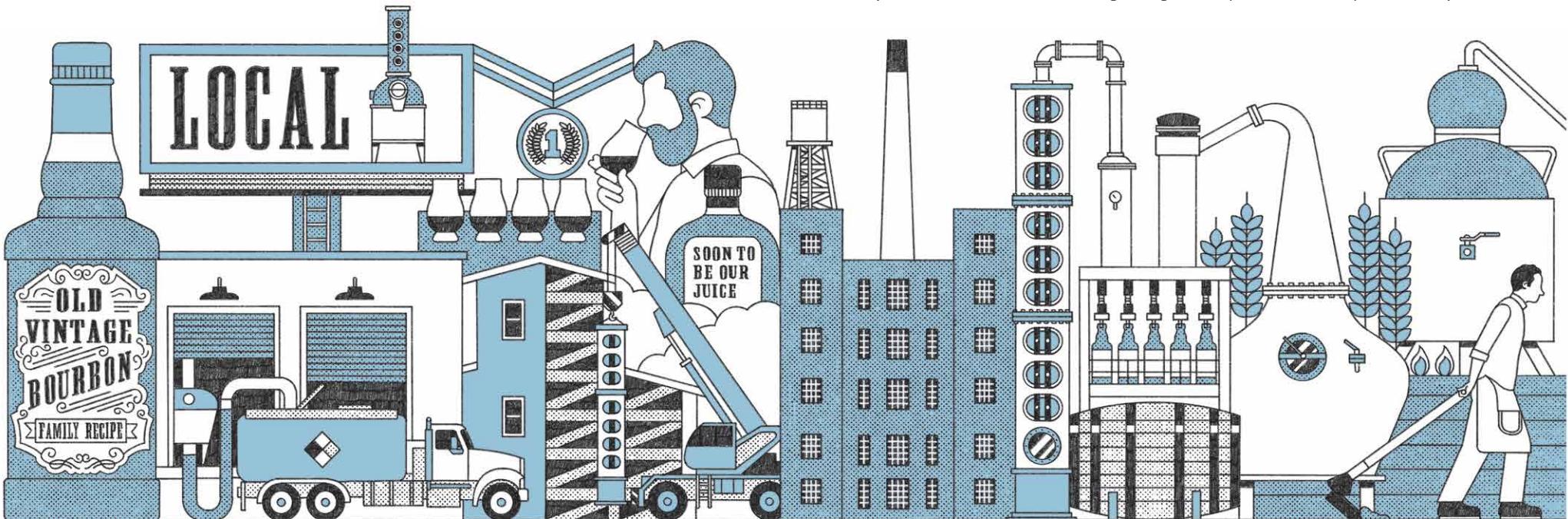
\*9280 was re-run in triplicate with similar yet slightly different results.

## 18. CHEMICAL PROFILE

AGE IS NOT THE ONLY measure of a whiskey. We sent our whiskey to a lab for chemical spectrum analysis (a requirement for an export filing), along with some of our commercial peers Jim Beam (classic, standard, mid-shelf bourbon) and Blanton's (top shelf) to see how we stacked up. As you can see on the chart, left, our whiskey is much cleaner than the commercial products.

- Chemical analysis offers a different way to understand a whiskey's flavor profile.
- Methanol, the chemical that people associate with moonshine and blindness, is lethal even in very small amounts. While all spirits have some methanol, ours is almost 10% of what is in Blanton's.
- Acetaldehyde is often associated with hangovers—again, we have a fraction of the amount of our peers.
- A clean chemical profile is evidence of a smooth whiskey.

*There is a pretty clear spectrum when it comes to whiskey that pits authenticity and idiosyncrasy at one end of the spectrum, with a generic product and deceptive marketing on the other. Yes, there are examples of crossover, but they are rare. In this business you were out to make the perfect whiskey, or a quick buck, and those end goals generally lead to wildly different places.*



## 19. THE BEST OF CRAFT

WHEN KINGS COUNTY was founded, there were a hundred bourbon brands and dozens of rye bands. Now there are thousands of brands of American whiskey. The possibilities are seemingly endless. But it is still true that most of those whskeys are made at only a dozen industrial facilities in Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee, and generally made in the same style: column-distilled, rye or wheat mash bourbon, aged in industry standard barrels.

- Our whiskey aims to replicate bourbon as it would have been 150 years ago before industrial agriculture, process engineering, and corporate finance took over American whiskey.
- We make bourbon more like scotch and pot still Irish whiskeys are made, countries that have protected their ways of making whiskeys since the 1800s.
- These choices aren't mere marketing, they serve to make a better product. Our whiskeys are rounder, more full bodied, and carry more flavor than our peers.
- But don't simply take our word for it, try it blind and see for yourself. With some brands charging astronomical prices for whiskeys that hide a lot of information about how they are made, we believe we offer a good value over much of the commercial landscape.

# 20. PORTFOLIO

## FLAVORS

*Creative whiskeys that expand the possibilities of the category. As balanced and refined as our aged offerings, these whiskeys are equally suited for sipping and mixing.*



Moonshine   Spiced Whiskey   Grapefruit Jalapeno Moonshine   Coffee Whiskey Moonshine

## FLAGSHIP

*Available widely, these 3 bourbon whiskeys push the category's boundaries beyond traditional commercial offerings as a classic American whiskey made more like a scotch single malt.*



Blended Bourbon   Straight Bourbon   Peated Bourbon

Kings County has whiskeys for everyone, in every price range. We make whiskeys for cocktails and for neat sipping and everything in between.

## LIMITED

*Usually released just once a year, these rare and meticulously blended whiskeys are outstanding examples of their type, and aim to represent the best of the modern craft movement.*



Single Malt Whiskey   Barrel Strength Empire Rye   Barrel Strength Bourbon   Bottled-in-Bond Bourbon

## DISTILLERY EXCLUSIVE

*Black label whiskeys are rarities or one-offs available only at the distillery that don't usually conform to house styles or are too limited for release.*



Distillery Exclusive

\$ entry SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICING	\$ mid-range	\$ premium	\$ luxury	\$ collectible
80 PROOF	86	90	94 BARREL PROOF	100 BARREL PROOF
0+ MINIMUM AGE	2+	3+	4+	7+

# 21. CORE WHISKEYS



## BLENDED BOURBON

RARELY ASSOCIATED WITH American distillers, blended whiskey usually calls to mind light-style, crowd-pleasing scotch or Canadian whiskies. We set about to create the American analog to those reliable and endlessly versatile spirits. Kings County Blended Bourbon is a whiskey for every occasion: complex enough for daily sipping, robust enough for cocktails, yet approachable as a neat sipper. Never sourced, it is always blended from a variety of aged whiskeys in our inventory. This whiskey is reflection of our exploration of world distilling traditions as well as a thoughtful revival of an all-but-lost category of American whiskey.

- our most versatile whiskey, cocktailable and for sipping.
- Find exact breakdown of component whiskeys by batch on our website.



## STRAIGHT BOURBON

KINGS COUNTY BOURBON is made with a mashbill of 80% New York organic corn and 20% English barley. It is aged for at least three years and forgoes the typical wheat & rye that are common in bourbon recipes for a high malt content. Smooth, spicy, and complex, this bourbon is a precocious whiskey, surprisingly robust for its age with notes of cinnamon, nutmeg, caramel, toffee, and vanilla. Our most popular whiskey, this won a double-gold from the San Francisco World Spirits Competition in 2019.

- A classic, our most well-known whiskey.
- Not like a Kentucky bourbon, but rich and complex in its own right.
- Pot distillation give our bourbon a buttery, rich mouthfeel.
- High malt mashbill distinct among wheat and rye bourbons.



## PEATED BOURBON

WHAT IS PEATED BOURBON? It is whiskey that conforms to American legal requirements for bourbon but incorporates malted barley that has been smoked with peat, a tradition common to some scotch whiskies. Our Peated Bourbon—the first we're aware of—is made from corn and Scottish peated malt. If bourbon and scotch had a baby, this double-gold medal winner is what it would taste like.

- Great for jaded bourbon fans who have had everything, crossover drinkers.
- Palate is bourbon, hint of scotch on the finish. More subtle than expected.
- Represents what craft distillers hope to accomplish: creativity within tradition.
- 75% corn, 25% Scottish malt exposed to peat.



## COFFEE WHISKEY

The lively, tropical top notes and creamy, chocolate undertones of Parlor's Cold Brew — made from a blend of uncompromisingly sourced coffees and roasted in Brooklyn — marry perfectly with the balanced sweetness and rich complexity of our own blend of house-made bourbon and corn whiskey. The resulting drinking experience is that of a true whiskey, but with an added depth of flavor that evokes the elegance of fine Madeira wines and Italian amari.

- Notes of graham, chocolate, complex coffee notes.
- Perfect substitute for vodka in common drinks, including the espresso martini.
- 14mg of caffeine per 1.5 oz pour.
- Plays well with vermouth, amari, and other popular modifiers.

# 22. SERVING SUGGESTIONS



## BROOKLYN PENICILLIN

2 ounces Blended Bourbon  
1 ounce ginger honey syrup  
3/4 ounce fresh lemon juice

shake & serve in a rocks glass  
with a lemon twist

Born out of the New York cocktail scene, the Penicillin is a best seller at our tasting room. The distinctive notes of our Blended Bourbon lend itself perfectly to this sophisticated favorite.



## KCD MARGARITA

2 ounces Grapefruit-Jalapeno Whiskey  
1 ounce fresh lime juice  
3/4 ounce simple syrup

shake & serve with a salted rim rocks glass & a lime wheel

Our most popular whiskey cocktail is in fact a margarita made with grapefruit jalapeno moonshine. Can a whiskey make a refreshing & delicious margarita? Try it for yourself and see why this works so well.



## KCD OLD FASHIONED

2.5 ounces Blended Bourbon  
1/4 ounce simple syrup  
3 dashes bitters

stir in a mixing glass and serve in rocks glass with a brandied cherry and an orange peel



## COFFEE BOULEVARDIER

1 oz Forthave Red Apertivo  
1 oz sweet vermouth  
1 oz Coffee Whiskey

stir with ice, strain, garnish with a citrus peel and serve.

A versatile vehicle for Kings County's Coffee Whiskey that marries the flavor-forward nature of the spirit with the sweetness of vermouth and the bitterness of the apertivo. A showpiece of a cocktail.



## ESPRESSO MARTINI

2 ounces Coffee Whiskey  
1 ounce cold brew espresso  
1/4 ounce simple syrup

shake & serve in a chilled coupe glass with espresso beans



2 ounces Straight Bourbon  
1/2 ounce sweet vermouth  
1/2 ounce dry vermouth  
3 dashes bitters

stir in a mixing glass and serve in rocks glass with a brandied cherry

A whiskey classic, we prefer the perfect build. At the Gatehouses, we use another NY producer (Little City) for our vermouth as we support like-minded brands. Though we prefer Brooklyn, our Straight Bourbon creates the best Manhattan we know.



## KCD PERFECT MANHATTAN

2 ounces Straight Bourbon  
1/2 ounce sweet vermouth  
1/2 ounce dry vermouth  
3 dashes bitters

stir in a mixing glass and serve in rocks glass with a brandied cherry



## 23. FUTURE WHISKEY

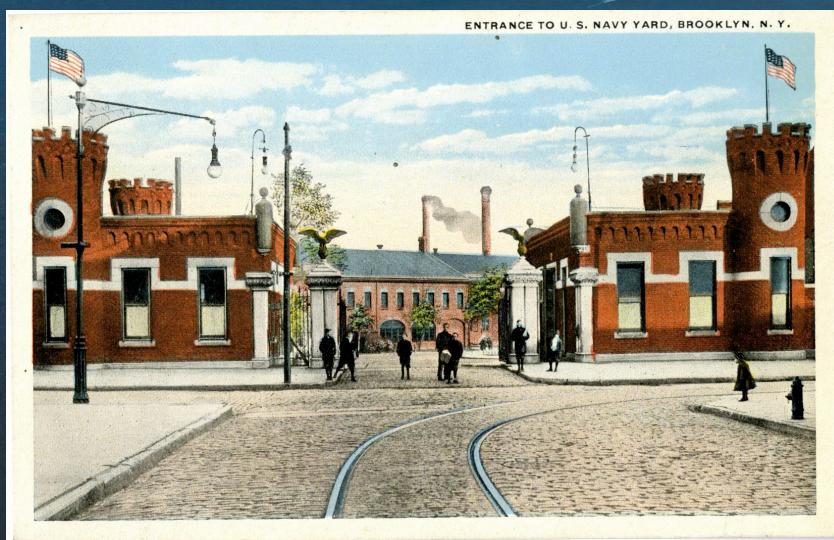
MOST PEOPLE ASSUME, wrongly, that because we got started by bottling a young bourbon that we aren't holding whiskey for longer aged releases. In fact, we hold 25% of our warehouse for 7+ year aging and that will only grow as our distillery matures.

- First limited release of 7-year whiskey came out in 2020, the oldest bourbon distilled outside of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana.
- First 10-year in 2024.
- Some barrels are set aside for even longer than with an 18-year on the horizon.
- Other whiskey experiments include a peated rye, a bonded rye, wheat whiskey, wine-finished bourbon, and applejack.
- Barrels age in 4 warehouses in Brooklyn, NY and Patchogue on Long Island.



## 24. WHISKEY CASTLE

WE ARE MORE THAN just a factory. In fact, we built a distillery that would serve as a global brand headquarters, a lab distillery for classes and experiments, and a world-class cocktail room that is one of the only bars in the world to make all of the ingredients in every drink. We host classes, tours, lectures, parties, weddings, and hundreds of other events each year—all contained in 3 historic buildings in the Brooklyn Navy Yard on the National Register of Historic Places and just four blocks from the Brooklyn Bridge.







## 25. PLEASE VISIT US!

WE WANTED TO BUILD a temple for whiskey lovers and an oasis within Brooklyn—a little bit of Kentucky or rural Scotland in the concrete jungle. Come visit us and take a tour: learn the history, science, and culture of distilling, or stop in at The Gatehouses, our tasting room for cocktails, whiskey flights, and seasonal specialties. We love sharing out whiskey with people from all over the world, and we put a lot of thought and care into making sure we have one of the best visitor experiences of any distillery, large or small. And take a little extra time to see other parts of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a rapidly changing place that is a forgotten part of American history.

See you soon...



kingscountydistillery.com  
Brooklyn Navy Yard Building 121  
New York City  
PH: 347-689-4211  
IG: @kingscountydistillery  
info@kingscountydistillery.com