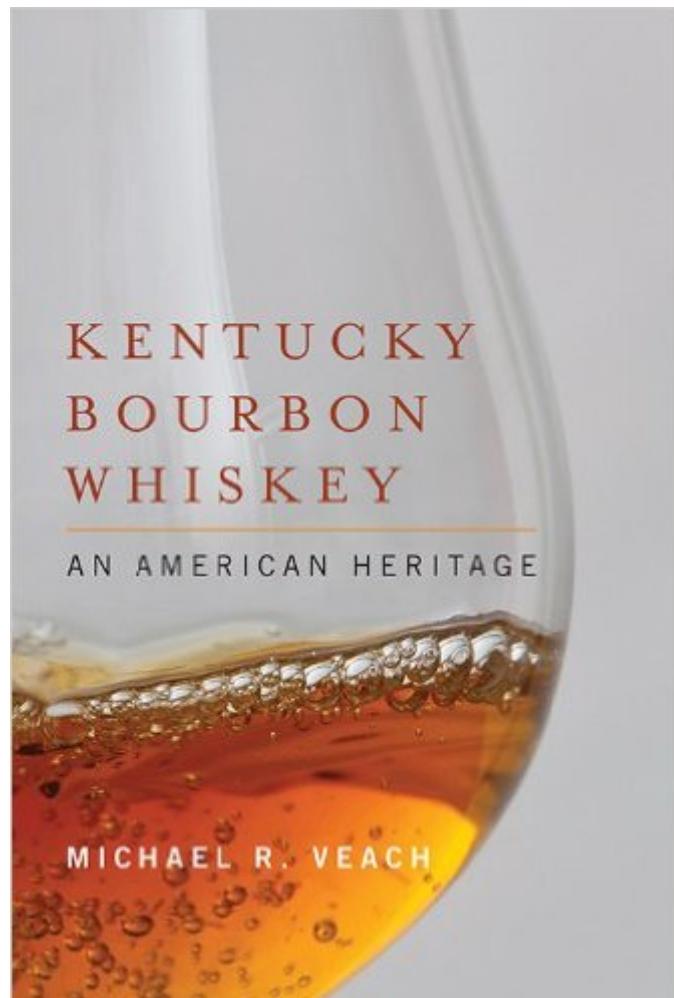


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Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey: An American Heritage



Synopsis

On May 4, 1964, Congress designated bourbon as a distinctive product of the United States, and it remains the only spirit produced in this country to enjoy such protection. Its history stretches back almost to the founding of the nation and includes many colorful characters, both well known and obscure, from the hatchet-wielding prohibitionist Carry Nation to George Garvin Brown, who in 1872 created Old Forester, the first bourbon to be sold only by the bottle. Although obscured by myth, the history of bourbon reflects the history of our nation. Historian Michael R. Veach reveals the true story of bourbon in Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey. Starting with the Whiskey Rebellion of the 1790s, he traces the history of this unique beverage through the Industrial Revolution, the Civil War, Prohibition, the Great Depression, and up to the present. Veach explores aspects of bourbon that have been ignored by others, including the technology behind its production, the effects of the Pure Food and Drug Act, and how Prohibition contributed to the Great Depression. The myths surrounding bourbon are legion, but Veach separates fact from legend. While the true origin of the spirit may never be known for certain, he proposes a compelling new theory. With the explosion of super-premium bourbons and craft distilleries and the establishment of the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, interest in bourbon has never been higher. Veach shines a light on its pivotal place in our national heritage, presenting the most complete and wide-ranging history of bourbon available.

Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: University Press of Kentucky (February 18, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813141656

ISBN-13: 978-0813141657

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 6.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (49 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #43,604 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Wine & Spirits > Whiskey #63 in Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > History #72 in Â Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Beverages & Wine > Wine & Spirits > Spirits

Customer Reviews

This book imparts a substantial bit of knowledge about bourbon and whiskey in general while being

a light and fun read with the statistics woven into the narrative. The author brings the history by explaining that whiskey became popular in America as the populace moved from the East Coast inland and found that rum and gin, the alcoholic beverages of choice at the time, were too expensive to transport, leading to small batch distilling on a far more local basis. The author also gives a nice discussion of how sweet and sour mash differ and why they yield slightly different end products. One of the bits of trivia included that I found interesting was what the difference in spelling of WHISKY and WHISKEY implied. The lore is that WHISKY spelling supposedly implied distillers who originally had ties to England as Canada and Scotland, while those allied with the colonists as the Irish spelled it WHISKEY. It turned out to be marketing lore, but it still makes for a good story. The manufacturing principles of distilling with many early recipes are given. What I found to be a most interesting section was on some of the early innovators in the business of making bourbon and even how bourbon supposedly got its name. For instance we learn that a Louisville physician named Jim Crow made several improvements to the distilling process and was credited with using a thermometer to record the temperature which allows greater accuracy in distillation and allows various cogeners to be included thereby affecting the desired end flavor; he also was credited with using a hydrometer to more accurately assess the true ABV level; and he used litmus paper at various steps in the process to prevent bacterial buildup from spoiling a batch.

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