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KENTUCKY BOURBON TRAIL CRAFT TOUR® EXPANDS WITH MORE DISTILLERIES, NEW LOOK & FINISHING PRIZE

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Seven years ago, the Kentucky Distillers’ Association created the nation’s first and only tourism attraction to showcase its flourishing artisan distilling movement - the Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour®.

Today, the KDA announced that the thriving, groundbreaking adventure is expanding to include new spirits producers and is rewarding visitors who tour all 20 distilleries with an enhanced Passport, regional itineraries and a “challenging” finishing prize.

“The tremendous growth of Kentucky’s craft industry has spurred local tourism with visitors looking for homegrown, intimate experiences around all kinds of boutique spirits,” KDA President Eric Gregory said.

“The KBT Craft Tour now welcomes innovative micro distillers who are making everything from flavored moonshine using locally grown ingredients to barrel-aged rums and vodka, brandy, gin, and, of course, our state’s signature Kentucky Bourbon.”

The expanded Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour® will break down into four regions -- Northern, Central, Western and Bluegrass -- to better help guests map out their distillery excursions to all corners of the Commonwealth.

Adam Johnson, Senior Director of the KDA’s Kentucky Bourbon Trail® Experiences, said each region will have streamlined itineraries and suggested stops, with visitors earning a collectible challenge coin after completing each territory.

Fans who tour all 20 KBTCT stops will earn a free, custom-designed barrel stave to display their coins and become the envy of friends and family, Johnson said.

The showpiece stave also comes with an official KBT® tasting glass engineered by Kentucky’s legendary Master Distillers specifically to savor the complexities of Bourbon whiskey.

“It’s a tougher quest to complete now, so we had to significantly up the bar on the finishing prize,” he said.

The Craft Tour® Passport has been redesigned as a souvenir guidebook, Johnson said, with nearly 70 pages of distillery information, cocktail recipes, suggested travel routes, maps, events and more.

Passports can be purchased at participating distilleries for \$3, with proceeds going to further the KDA's responsibility efforts against drunk driving and environmental sustainability initiatives.

The 20 participating distilleries are:

NORTHERN REGION

- New Riff, Newport
- Second Sight, Ludlow
- Old Pogue, Maysville
- Boone County, Independence
- Neeley Family, Sparta

CENTRAL REGION

- Kentucky Artisan, Crestwood
- Kentucky Peerless, Louisville
- Jephtha Creed, Shelbyville
- Willett, Bardstown
- Preservation, Bardstown

WESTERN REGION

- Boundary Oak, Radcliffe
- Casey Jones, Hopkinsville
- MB Roland, Pembroke
- Dueling Grounds, Franklin

BLUEGRASS REGION

- Limestone Branch, Lebanon
- Wilderness Trail, Danville
- Barrel House, Lexington
- James E. Pepper, Lexington
- Bluegrass Distillers, Lexington
- Hartfield & Co., Paris

Sam Rock, founder of Bluegrass Distillers, said, "This is an exciting new way to experience the diverse selection of distilleries all across Kentucky, and it strengthens our place as the one, true home of Bourbon and distilling craftsmanship."

Rock, who serves as chairman of the KDA's Craft Advisory Group, praised Lexington's OneFold and Balance Creative marketing firms that assisted KDA in redesigning the Passport, gift and KBT® website, www.kybourbontrail.com, to highlight the smaller members.

The simple and stylish iconography in the Passport and web portal will make it easier for visitors planning their trip, he said. "There are graphics to show which distilleries serve food, cocktails, their variety of spirits and more. The team did a fantastic job with the consumer in mind."

The KBT Craft Tour® tallied 340,000 distillery stops last year, the most since its founding in 2012 as a complement to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail® tour. The original tour logged more than one million visits last year for the first time since its creation by the KDA in 1999.

That means Bourbon tourists made a record 1.4 million distillery stops in 2018 – a 370 percent increase over the last 10 years.

Bourbon is one of the Commonwealth’s most historic and treasured industries, a booming \$8.6 billion economic engine that generates more than 20,100 jobs with an annual payroll topping \$1 billion, and pours more than \$235 million into state and local coffers each year.

Bourbon production has increased 115 percent over the last 10 years, and there are now 7.5 million barrels of Bourbon gently resting in warehouses across the state, the highest inventory level since 1972.

In addition, the industry is in the middle of a \$2.3 billion capital investment spree, from innovative new tourism centers to expanded production facilities, all to meet the growing global thirst for Kentucky Bourbon.

Distillers also paid a record \$23 million last year in barrel taxes that fund critical local programs such as education, public safety and health.

Paul Tomaszewski, co-founder and Head Distiller at MB Roland Distillery in Christian County, was one of the founding KBTCT members in 2012. He said Kentucky’s 200-year distilling history - and genteel hospitality - has been instrumental in growing tourism.

“Kentucky’s distillers are a welcoming, inclusive group, and we love to share that feeling of brotherhood with our guests,” he said. “They usually get a kick when we recommend that they visit our distilling friends nearby, even though they’re our competitors on the shelf.

“That’s what the Kentucky Bourbon Trail experiences are all about. No matter how large or small, we all understand that we’re part of a rich tradition, heritage and culture that makes Kentucky unique in all the world.

“We’re thrilled to be able to share that spirit.”

The KDA is a non-profit trade association founded in 1880 to promote, protect and elevate Kentucky's signature Bourbon and distilled spirits industry. Member benefits include media relations, international trade development, private sampling events, technical assistance, economic development support, networking, legal defense, marketing strategies, governmental and regulatory advocacy and innovative tourism experiences through the KDA's Kentucky Bourbon Trail® and Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour® adventures. The KDA maintains an open membership policy, champions a strong commitment to the responsible and moderate consumption of spirits, and fights to curb underage drinking and drunk driving. For more information about joining the KDA's distilling family, contact KDA President Eric Gregory at (502) 875-9351. Visit www.kybourbon.com and www.kybourbontrail.com to learn more.

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