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Bourbon SMALL BATCHES BIGGER TASTE!

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"Drinking less - but drinking better." That's what all the "gurus" are predicting for our future. Faith Popcorn, the "Nostradamus of marketing" as she has often been referred to, most prominently by Fortune Magazine is certainly touting that line. "Drinking better is evidenced in Clicking (her latest book) as Pleasure Revenge", she says. "With respect to their own behavior, people are now engaging in a backlash against all the abstinence that's currently in vogue. But they're doing it in a politically correct way: they're ordering the best beef, drinking the best bourbon and eating premium ice cream...all without pangs of conscience"

And Shelly Margolis, President and Managing Director of Margolis Southern Wines and Spirits is certainly thinking in a similar vein. According to Margolis' philosophy, "Wines and spirits are a joy to life. Used in moderation, they're good for people's health and add happiness to their daily lives." He continues, "Several years ago, people departed spirits for wine (particularly before dinner), but now they have returned and as they realize that spirits are no longer taboo, across America they are drinking finer quality liquors such as small batch bourbons and single malt Scotch whiskeys. They don't consider \$20.00 a bottle and up as 'expensive', but, rather 'fine' like a Mercedes."

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Bourbon

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So, it follows naturally that Jim Kokoris, recently appointed Executive Director of the Kentucky Bourbon Circle, a fan club of about 35,000 members, agrees with Popcorn and Margolis' assessments. He says he's seeing a move toward the top priced "small batch" brands that ring in at about \$30.00 a bottle — and up.

Jim Beam Brands sponsor of the Kentucky Bourbon Circle and one of America's earliest distillers of bourbon produces four of those "small batch" spirits: Knob Creek, Basil Hayden's, Baker's and Booker's — ranging from 80 to 127 proof! These are in addition, of course, to the popularly priced Jim Beam Bourbon that rings in at the Pennsylvania State Stores at \$9.99 a fifth.

In keeping with the demand for "tonier" spirits, other distillers are featuring top of the line "single barrel" bourbons, too. These are also considered "sipping" (as opposed to gulping) whiskeys. These upmarket bourbons are frequently served in brandy snifters to enable the people drinking them to enjoy their "bouquet" that offers rich, complex vanilla and caramel sensory overtones. Some bourbon purists, however, like Jim Bulger, owner of The Swan Hotel in Lambertville, N.J., serve their best bourbons in humble water tumblers. "Blanton's Single Barrel Bourbon and Booker's Small Batch Bourbon are American spirits and deserve to be drunk in an American-style glass, not in a fancy French snifter", he says, explaining his rationale.

Elijah Craig, Henry McKenna and Evan Williams are all reputable names in bourbon have joined the "single barrel" category, also... in addition to their standard bottlings. They are rather recent entries in the race to "better and better". All of them are far cry from the



Booker Noe
Master Distiller Emeritus

early raw, distilled spirits made by the original settlers who turned their abundant corn harvests into whiskey, both for their own consumption and as a practical cash crop.

Several American presidents were bourbon fans: Franklin Delano Roosevelt was known to make a Manhattan cocktail for himself and visiting dignitaries. Lyndon B. Johnson was also a fancier of bourbon and it was during his administration, in 1964, that Congress decreed bourbon to be America's "native spirit". Even Abraham Lincoln (while not a "drinking man" himself) had some association with the product: His father, Thomas, sold his farm in Knobb Creek, Kentucky for \$20.00 and 10 barrels of

bourbon. Harry Truman was also an aficionado.

Actually, while bourbon whiskey is indelibly associated with Kentucky, it need not (by law) necessarily be made in that state. However, the name "bourbon" stems from Bourbon County, a point of embarkation on the Ohio River from which the whiskey was shipped on its way south to New Orleans and other southern ports. Some was even shipped occasionally, to northern destinations, but, in truth, until the upmarket "small batch" and "single barrel" brands took hold in sophisticated circles in the northeastern states, bourbon was predominantly served in the south and midwest.

The stenciled name for the spirits being shipped from Kentucky in those wooden (oak) barrels responsible for many people referring to it and requesting it as "bourbon whiskey". Much of it was made by settlers who migrated west from Pennsylvania where the whiskey was distilled from other grains as well as corn. Tennessee makes several brands of "sipping whiskey" including Jack Daniel's and George Dickel that are often lumped together in people's minds with bourbon, but, more recently with the advent of the new "small batch" and "single barrel" that ambiguity is disappearing to some degree.

Actually, this new attention to the "upmarket" bourbons was preceded by single malt scotches that came into this country and captured the imagination of people searching for "the best, the very best" in keeping with the trend of the '80s. Now, as we move into the more abstemious "90s" and many people are looking for ways to conserve, it seems that "gurus" such as Popcorn and Margolis may well have hit on a very attractive way to achieve that goal. "Drink less" (certainly!)...but, drink the best." (Why not?) It is without question, politically correct for people to cut back on the quantity they're imbibing. They'll certainly make their colleagues and groups like M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) happy... to say nothing about the law enforcement officials. But, in keeping with Popcorn's theory of exacting pleasure revenge, why shouldn't those same people, at the same time, enjoy every nuance of every single sip?

P.S. I've been a bourbon drinker for more years than I care to admit...and I want to send Booker Noe (Master Distiller and Jim Beam's grandson) my vote for giving me my own brand of "pleasure revenge"

P.P.S. It's called Booker's and it's 127 proof!!

GLOSSARY OF BOURBON TERMS

Blended Whiskey: A blend of which at least 20% is 100 proof straight whiskey. The rest of the blend may include other whiskey and/or grain neutral spirits. A small amount of sherry may also be added.

Bonded Bourbon Whiskey: Bourbon whiskey that has been aged and bottled according to the requirements of the Bottled and Bond Act of 1897. It is Straight Bourbon Whiskey, made at one time and in one location, that has been aged in government-supervised warehouses for at least 4 years, than bottled at 100 proof.

Bourbon Whiskey: Made in the United States from a fermented mash containing at least 51% corn. It must be produced at no more than 160 proof, stored in new charred oak barrels at no more than 125 degrees, and bottled at no less than 80 proof.

Canadian Whiskey: The distinctive national whiskey of Canada. All Canadian Whisky sold in the U.S. contains a high percentage of rye, as well as barley, corn, and wheat.

Federal Excise Tax: A tax (FET) computed on the alcohol content of distilled spirits products and levied on the manufacturer or importer, and passed on through the distribution channel to consumers.

Irish Whiskey: The distinctive national whiskey of Ireland. Most Irish Whiskey is a blend of several whiskeys of different ages. Malted barley, unmalted barley, and other grains such as rye and corn are used.

Moonshine: Distilled spirits produced in an unlicensed, unregulated still and without payment of taxes, and hence, illegal. Seldom aged, and produced from anything that will ferment, moonshine is often a health hazard.

Prohibition: National Prohibition in the U.S. ran from roughly January, 1919 through December, 1933. During that period, beverage alcohol could not be legally produced, transported or sold. Limited exceptions were for medical purposes. Widespread defiance of Prohibition led to the growth of popularity in the U.S. of Scotch and Canadian Whisky, which were imported illegally.

Neutral Spirit: Any spirit distilled at 190 proof or higher; should contain no noticeable aroma, flavor or character.

Proof: A statement of alcohol content. Proof is two times the percentage of alcohol by volume. In other words, 100 proof whiskey is 50% alcohol by volume.

Scotch Whisky: The distinctive national whisky of Scotland. Single Malt Scotches are made entirely from malted barley and are the product of a single distillery. Blended Scotch Whiskies are a mixture of several different malt whiskeys, plus grain whisky.

Single Barrel Bourbon Whiskey: A bottling of bourbon whiskey from a single barrel.

Small Batch Bourbon Whiskeys: Marrying together bourbon whiskey from a small number of specially selected barrels. Because bourbon

ages differently at different locations in the rack house, the marrying together of whiskey from selected barrels assures the consistency of their unique flavor and character.

Sour Mash: A process developed by Dr. James C. Crow about 1840 to provide uniformity in bourbon production. A portion of the previous day's mash is added to new mash to ensure consistent quality and character.

Still: An apparatus, usually made of copper, in which the distiller's beer is purified by means of heating the liquid to at least 176 degrees Fahrenheit, but less than 212 degrees Fahrenheit. Because alcohol boils at a temperature lower than water, the alcohol can be evaporated, collected, and condensed.

Straight Whiskey: Whiskey distilled at not more than 160 proof, aged at least 2 years in new charred oak barrels and bottled no less than 80 proof. Straight whiskey includes mixtures of straight whiskeys of the same type produced in the same state.

Tennessee Whiskey: Straight whiskey distilled in Tennessee from a fermented mash containing at least 51% corn, then filtered through maple charcoal before aging. "Tennessee Whiskey" is recognized as a distinct whiskey type. It is not bourbon whiskey.

White Dog: Unaged distillate, just as it comes from the still, is colorless. Also known as "green whiskey" or "high wine."