



doors, if rain is predicted, bring along an umbrella or raincoat. Your tour group may include some international visitors. Along with the United States, Australia, Japan and Germany are bourbon-loving countries, according to the Kentucky Distillers Association.

**The Woodford Reserve Distillery (formerly Labrot & Graham).** All Kentucky distilleries are steeped in tradition; The Woodford Reserve Distillery, a restored historic distillery in Woodford County, is a showplace of the distiller's art and Kentucky bourbon heritage.

This small, picturesque distillery is nestled along Glenn's Creek at the site where Elijah Pepper, one of the famous early Bluegrass distillers, set up his distillery in 1812. The Labrot & Graham name goes back to 1878 when James Graham and Leopold Labrot bought the property.

Re-opened in 1996 by the Brown-Foreman Corporation, The Woodford Reserve Distillery gives visitors a sense of what bourbonmaking was like in the 1800s. With its small-scale production, old-fashioned copper pot stills, longer fermenting and distilling time, and hand-bottling, Labrot & Graham's Woodford Reserve bourbon is made much as Pepper's bourbon was in the 1800s.

The tour, leisurely in pace and sprinkled with fascinating distilling history and terms, covers the process from sour mash starter to "farewell" (the residue of aroma left in an empty barrel). A small bus transports you from the Visitors Center to the distillery buildings, minimizing walking and weather problems. The tour begins and ends at the Visitors Center, where exhibits explain bourbon making and bourbon history and a long porch offers a scenic overlook of the whole operation. The large gift shop includes a wide variety of Kentucky crafts.

The Woodford Reserve Distillery is open to visitors from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays with tours at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Open seasonally on Sundays with

**Blue Note:** Bourbonmaking is full of colorful terms.

The mash of fermenting grains is called "Beer." After distilling, but before it is barreled, bourbon is clear, like vodka. At Wild Turkey Distillery they call this "white dog." (The charring of the barrel adds the color through the aging process.) Legally, bourbon must be aged at least two years. Most distilleries age their products four to 12 years. Each year of aging, about 3 percent of the bourbon in the barrel is lost to evaporation or to leaching into the barrel itself; this bourbon that disappears before bottling is called the "angel's share."

tours at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Special tours that require a reservation are offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The Technical Tour is offered at 9:30 a.m. on those days and the National Landmark Tour is offered at 11:30 a.m. Admission for all tours is \$5. April through September, you can enjoy a gourmet picnic style lunch on the porch from 11:00 to 2:00 p.m. Set amid horse farms, Woodford Reserve is a scenic drive from Lexington via US 60 (Versailles Road). Shortly after passing the US 60/Ky. 1685 intersection, turn left onto Grassy Spring Road (3360); when the road dead ends turn right onto McCracken Pike. The Woodford Reserve Distillery is on the left. (859) 879-1812.

**Wild Turkey Distillery.** Although the Wild Turkey brand of bourbon wasn't introduced until 1952 (supposedly named because the hunting partners of then-company president Thomas McCarthy loved the bourbon he always brought along on their annual turkey shoot), the lineage of bourbon and bourbon making at this site at the Kentucky River near Lawrenceburg goes back to the mid 19th-century.

The tour you take today reveals an intriguing combination of tradition and modern mass production. In the fermentation room, for example, 70-year-old cypress tanks stand next to modern stainless steel ones (the old tanks will be used as long as possible, according to the tour guides). If you happen to run into Master Distiller Jimmy Russell in the warehouse and hear him talk about the time and personal effort that went into developing just the right mix of aging for the "Rare Breed" barrel proof bourbon -- "Jimmy's pride and joy," your guide explains -- you're reminded that many aspects of fine bourbonmaking will always be low tech.

Your visit begins and ends at a visitor center and gift shop located in a cottage across the road from the distillery buildings. You can take home everything from a keychain to an amusing T-shirt to collector decanters featuring the Wild Turkey turkey.

Tours are given Monday through Friday at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Closed major holidays, the first full week of January and the last two weeks in July. In the summer months, the tour might not include the fermentation room (like many distilleries, Wild Turkey shuts down production in the hottest months of the year). Call (502) 839-2182 for more information.

To get there from Lexington, take a scenic drive along US 60 West to Versailles, then US 62 West to the distillery near Lawrenceburg. The distillery is about 23 miles west of Lexington.



