Kentucky is the birthplace of Bourbon, crafting 95% of the world’s supply. Only the Bluegrass State has the perfect natural mix of climate, conditions and pure limestone water necessary for producing the world’s greatest Bourbon.

Bourbon is an $8.6 billion signature industry in Kentucky, generating more than 20,100 jobs with an annual payroll topping $1 billion. Spirits production and consumption pours more than $235 million in state and local tax coffers every year.

Kentucky taxes Bourbon and spirits highest among all 532 industries in the state. Nearly 60% of every bottle goes to taxes or fees, with seven different taxes on Bourbon – including an ad valorem tax each and every year on aging barrels. Kentucky is the only place in the world that taxes aging spirits.

KDA distillers are committed to growing responsibly. Over the last two years, they have delivered over 9,200 free rides to reduce impaired driving with Lyft and prevented underage access to alcohol by catching more than 1,000 fake IDs at their distilleries with Intellicheck software.

The total number of all aging barrels in Kentucky is nearly 10 million, the most ever in the modern era of American whiskey. This includes Bourbon, brandy and other spirits. There are now more than 2 barrels for every person living in the Commonwealth.

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Kentucky exported $570 million in Bourbon and other spirits in 2019 – but retaliatory tariffs and never-ending trade wars pose serious threats to global exports going forward. Japan, Spain, Canada and Australia are top export markets for Kentucky Bourbon, while the United Kingdom has slipped due to tariffs.

The KDA, a non-profit trade group founded in 1880, represents 40 companies, the most since the Repeal of Prohibition. Its ranks have swelled with new distilleries, strengthening Kentucky’s rightful place as the one, true, authentic home for Bourbon.

More than $2.3 billion in capital projects has been completed or is planned over the next five years, from new distilleries and aging warehouses to state-of-the-art bottling facilities and innovative tourism centers.

The KDA created the Kentucky Bourbon Trail® adventure in 1999 to give visitors a first-hand experience into crafting the world’s finest Bourbon, and the Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour® in 2012 to showcase the state’s emerging boutique distillers, the first of its kind in the nation.

Total Bourbon inventory was 9.3 million barrels as of January 2020. This is the first time since 1967 – when the KDA started keeping inventory records – that the number of aging Bourbon barrels has topped 9 million.

The KBT® and KBTCT® experiences are among the country’s most famous and hottest tourist attractions, with more than 1.7 million combined visits in 2019, including 1.3 million on the KBT® journey and an additional 444,000 visits to the KBTCT®.

There are now a record 37 KBT® tourism experiences across the state, with more on the way.

Bourbon production has skyrocketed more than 360% since the turn of the century with premium small batch and single barrel brands driving the Bourbon renaissance as America’s only and official native spirit.

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