

DID YOU KNOW?

Trees

- The average American oak tree harvested for barrels is 100 years old.
- A typical tree yields about two barrels.
- There are more white oak trees today than 50 years ago, and more white oak 50 years ago than 100 years ago.
- Most all other tree species would leak, but white oak is special because of a gummy substance called “tyloses” that clog the pores.

Barrels

- A barrel uses no glue, nails or fasteners – just six hoops to hold it together.
- An empty barrel weighs 105 lbs. A full barrel weighs 500 lbs.
- Barrels breathe. Oxygen goes through the wood and is absorbed into the wine/spirit. Not just through the joints or the bung hole.
- The average barrel soaks two gallons of wine/spirit into its wood. During the barrel’s second use, the previous wine/spirit will extract and marry with new wine/spirit.
- What does a barrel do?
 - Naturally provides an amber color.
 - Provides aromas and flavors – sweet, toasty, spicy, smoky.
 - Also provides textures – creamy, length, mid-palate weight, tannic, bitter.
 - Filters undesirable aromas and flavors through the char/toast layer.
- 99% of barrels are made from white oak. Very small volumes are made from cherry, acacia (black locust) and chestnut.
- A white oak tree is about 40% water, and barrels are about 12%.
- Wine barrels are generally toasted, while whiskey barrels are typically charred. This can be equated to the similar concept of toasting or charring a marshmallow.
- Charring a barrel takes about one minute. Toasting a barrel can take up to two hours.

Whiskey/Spirits

- Whiskey goes into the barrel clear as water, but comes out of the barrel with a dark amber hue.
- 60-75% of the flavor and aroma from bourbon is from the barrel.
- For early settlers and farmers, whiskey was a way to add value to their corn crop.
- The legal definition of bourbon: Produced in the United States, made from a grain mixture that is at least 51% corn, aged in a new charred oak barrel, distilled to no more than 160 US proof, entered into a barrel for aging at no more than 125 proof and bottled at 80 proof or more.
- Baptist minister Elijah Craig has been credited as the founder of bourbon.
- Angel's share is the term used to describe the portion of a spirit that is lost to evaporation during aging in oak barrels. 0 to 12% evaporates annually (10% in India, 2% in Scotland, and 4% in Kentucky).
- A brown colored spirit is generally barreled; a white/clear spirit is generally not aged.

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