01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Booker’s: a personal choice.



Booker’s begins with a distiller’s preference: whiskey tasted close to the way it came from the barrel. Booker Noe turned that personal choice into a public bourbon brand. Its story now moves between family memories, the practical work of selecting barrels, and experiments that ask how far a familiar name can travel.

Booker Noe

Jim Beam’s grandson learned under Carl Beam, working at Clermont and the Boston, Kentucky, plant. Those working years came long before the private holiday gifts of 1987 and the commercial launch dated to 1988. The brand’s origins are distinct from the Beam family’s 1795 heritage. [1,2,18]

Fred and Freddie

Fred carries the regular bourbon selection tradition. His son Freddie leads The Reserves and created the separate Little Book blending series. Jerry Dalton, a chemist and master distiller outside the family, also helped shape Fred’s understanding of the craft. [1,9,15,17]

How to read Booker’s

Start with the batch code, age and proof. A named batch combines selected barrels; barrel strength does not mean single barrel. A special rye or finished Reserves release needs its own category description. [5,10–13]

02 / THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

People, places, new directions.

Clermont and Boston, Kentucky
Clermont is the contemporary visitor home; Boston is central to Booker’s career. The Fred B. Noe Distillery, established in 2021, is a separate facility on the Clermont campus. For 2026, the company announced a pause at the main Clermont plant while continuing at Fred B. Noe and Boston. [2,3,8,18,20]



1952–1960
Booker learns under Carl Beam and takes responsibility at Boston.

1987
Private holiday gifts introduce his signature bourbon.

1988
Booker’s becomes a commercial brand.

1992
Three sibling brands complete the Small Batch Collection.

2014
The 25th-anniversary release arrives; Suntory acquires Beam.

2016
Big Time Rye brings Booker’s 2003 experiment to market.

2017
Freddie launches Little Book as a separate series.

2018
The 30th anniversary pairs nine- and sixteen-year bourbon.

2021
The Fred B. Noe Distillery adds a new facility at Clermont.

2022
Freddie is named its master distiller; Fred retains his role.

2024
Freddie introduces The Reserves with older barrel selections.

2025
The Reserves explores tequila-cask finishing.

2026
Big Easy and Milkshake continue the regular bourbon series.

September 2026
The Reserves adds apple-brandy-finished rye with cinnamon.

Timeline sources: [1–14,18]. Scenes are interpretive. Full research qualifications and the complete illustrated chronology appear in the companion profile.

03 / WHISKEY & STORIES

Selection, memory, experiment.

One brand, changing batches
The regular bourbon is presented uncut and unfiltered. Big Easy 2026-01 is 129.1 proof; Milkshake 2026-02 is 124.4. Their warehouse and production-date mixes differ. Read each release’s own notes. [1,11,12]



Beyond the regular series
The Reserves began in 2024. The next edition used casks that traveled from Booker’s to El Tesoro tequila and back to Kentucky. The 2026 release is rye finished in apple-brandy barrels and infused with cinnamon, documented in dated reporting. [9,10,13,14]

Little Book is a sibling
Freddie Noe’s separate blending project shares family history with Booker’s. Chapter 4 combines bourbon and rye; Chapter 6 explores a cooking-inspired approach to flavor. Keep each release’s actual whiskey category distinct. [15,16]

Linked research sources · Official sources and company releases; [13,14] are independent reporting and [20] reproduces the company’s statement. Full notes qualify conflicting dates and generic product-page headings.

1. Booker’s: origin and selection
2. Beam history and Booker Noe
3. Suntory Global Spirits history
4. 25th anniversary announcement, 2014
5. First Booker’s Rye, 2016
6. Little Book’s 2017 debut recalled
7. 30th anniversary announcement, 2018
8. Freddie Noe appointment, May 2022
9. The Reserves, 2024
10. The Reserves, 2025
11. Big Easy Batch, 2026-01
12. Milkshake Batch, 2026-02
13. The Reserves 2026: release and review
14. 2026 Booker’s and Little Book releases
15. Little Book Chapter 4 announcement
16. Little Book Chapter 6 announcement
17. Jerry’s Batch and Dalton’s contribution
18. Booker’s apprenticeship under Carl Beam
19. Official Booker’s batch archive
20. Company statement: 2026 distilling plan
21. Boston Batch: plant history