Trader Joe’s Kentucky Bourbon

The Bourbon Square name and the story behind the label.



The front of this bourbon bottle tells two stories at once. Trader Joe’s is the name a shopper recognizes. Bourbon Square Distilling Company is the name attached to the distilling statement. Kentucky’s business register connects that second name to Buffalo Trace Distillery, Inc. The three names explain the retail and legal relationships. They leave one question open: which physical plant made the whiskey in the historical bottle?

Joe Coulombe opened the first Trader Joe’s in Pasadena in 1967. The retailer dates its first private-label product, granola, to 1972. That history helps explain why a Kentucky whiskey can wear a California retailer’s name without the retailer operating the still. Neither milestone dates the bourbon’s launch. No individual blender or distiller is credited for the historical expression in the evidence reviewed.

Six moments, three places

The retailer, the company record and the historical bottle each tell a different part of the story.



1967 · Pasadena:

First Trader Joe’s opens.



1972 · Private label:

The retailer introduces its first private-label product.



1992 · Frankfort corporate context:

Sazerac acquires the distillery then known as George T. Stagg.



1999 · Frankfort site identity:

The facility is renamed Buffalo Trace and its flagship bourbon launches.



Historical bottle evidence:

The examined Trader Joe’s Kentucky Bourbon Straight Whiskey bears the Bourbon Square name, 90 proof and 750 mL. An exact release date has not been established.



Research checkpoint · October 31, 2026:

Kentucky’s assumed-name record identifies the registrant behind Bourbon Square. This is a verification date, not a filing or founding date.

Pasadena: retailer origins. Louisville: label attribution. Frankfort: related company site.

What the label tells us

Historical label: 90 proof / 45% ABV / 750 mL. Exact plant and age: unverified.

TTB’s category guidance explains that straight bourbon is made from a mash of at least 51% corn and aged at least two years in new charred oak, subject to the category’s proof limits. Those are category rules, not a recipe or aging record for this whiskey. The examined label establishes 90 proof (45% ABV) and 750 mL. Mash bill, distillation site and exact age remain unverified for that bottle.



The most useful distinction is between the name on the label and the location of the still. A state business record resolves a name. To resolve the plant, look for documentation that can be tied to this specific release. Trader Joe’s product page describes its listed bourbon as aged at least five years. Similar branding does not establish that the online age description applies to an earlier bottle.

SOURCE NOTES

1. Trader Joe’s official history transcript
2. Kentucky Secretary of State assumed-name record
3. Sazerac company history
4. Trader Joe’s product 097401
5. TTB category guidance
6. Historical front and back label evidence. Registry snapshot: October 31, 2026.