01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Rye at the heart.



BULLEIT / A MODERN KENTUCKY STORY

Bulleit built its identity around rye: first as a defining grain inside bourbon, then as a straight rye expression. Tom Bulleit established the modern business in 1987 after working in law. The Shelbyville distillery opened thirty years later. A brand founding and a production opening tell different parts of the story. [1,3,8]

The producer links its inspiration to Augustus Bulleit, a nineteenth-century ancestor. Its account of an old recipe and a mysterious disappearance is a family narrative, rather than independently verified evidence of continuous distilling. [2]

The makers extend beyond the founder. Dated announcements identify Pauline Rooney at the 2017 distillery opening, Delicia James for the first bonded release and Nicole Austin for the twenty-year rye. Selection, blending and production each contribute to the result. These are project-specific roles, not a current management roster. [8,14,18]

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

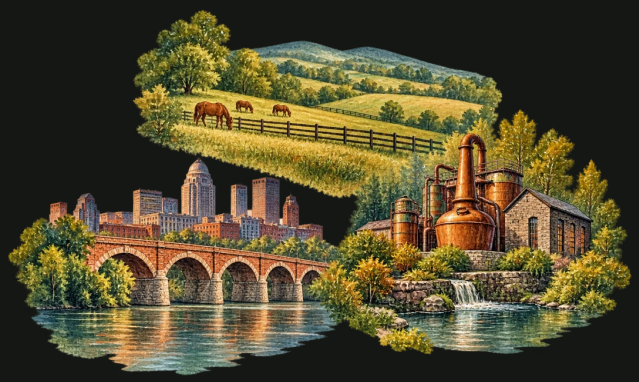
Different places. Distinct roles.

1987-2013
The modern company begins in 1987. A 95%-rye whiskey arrives in 2011; ten-year bourbon follows in 2013. [1,4,5]

2014-2019
A Stitzel-Weller visitor experience opens in 2014. Shelbyville production opens in 2017 and its visitor experience in June 2019. [6,8,10]

2021-2025
Lebanon adds electrically powered production. Single malt and ten-year rye arrive in 2024; Shelbyville’s first bonded edition follows in 2025. [11-14]

2026
A second bonded season, mesquite-smoked malt bourbon, twenty-year rye and the bourbon-and-rye blend ’87 broaden the range. [16-20]



Shelbyville
The modern production and visitor home. The first bonded release explicitly identifies distillation and aging here. [8,14,23]

Lebanon
A separate Diageo facility opened in 2021. A temporary production pause was reported in March 2025; a restart was not verified in this research. [11,15]

Follow the release
Stitzel-Weller is a historical visitor connection. The twenty-year rye names Indiana distillation and Kentucky aging. The original ’87 announcement names Plainfield, Illinois bottling. [18,19,24]

03 / WHISKEY & STORIES

Grain, season and chosen oak.

95 Rye uses rye and malted barley in a 95/5 recipe. American Single Malt uses barley alone; the smoked-malt bourbon explores a rye-free grain bill. These are different routes through the family. [4,12,17]

Bonded editions distinguish spring 2017 from fall 2018. For ’87, bourbon and rye mature separately before toasted-stave finishing and blending. The name recalls 1987, not an age. [14,16,19]



Read the barrel

Barrel strength can be a batch. A single barrel’s recipe and source require their own evidence. [7,25]

LINKED RESEARCH SOURCES

1. Founding and high rye
2. Attributed family legend
3. Diageo brand context
4. Rye launch / 2011
5. Ten-year bourbon / 2013
6. Stitzel-Weller / 2014
7. Barrel Strength / 2016
8. Shelbyville / 2017
9. Twelve-year rye / 2019
10. Visitor opening / 2019
11. Lebanon opening / 2021
12. Single Malt launch / 2024
13. Ten-year rye / 2024
14. First bonded release / 2025
15. Lebanon pause / 2025
16. Second bonded edition / 2026
17. Mesquite malt / 2026
18. Twenty-year rye / 2026
19. Original ’87 launch / 2026
20. Current ’87 listing
21. Current bourbon listing
22. Current rye listing
23. Current visitor location
24. Stitzel-Weller history
25. Single Barrel specifications
26. Single Malt process / legacy
27. Ten-year bourbon listing
28. Twelve-year rye return / 2024

Research: October 19, 2026. Historic releases and current listings are distinguished. Legacy single-malt page redirects; details use its dated launch. The original ’87 bottling location takes precedence over conflicting republication. Watercolors are symbolic.