01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Maker’s Mark

One red seal. An expanding world of flavor.

A red seal links a familiar bourbon to a much wider set of experiments. Classic Maker’s Mark, French oak, private selections, older cellar blends and wheat whisky offer different ways into the same distillery’s story. [4,7,21]

Home: Loretto, Kentucky. [22] **Classic:** 90 proof. [4] **Corporate family:** Suntory Global Spirits, a Suntory Holdings subsidiary. [19,20]



Two founders. One distinctive identity.

Bill and Margie Samuels pursued a softer bourbon using red winter wheat. The family’s recipe-burning account symbolizes that new direction. Margie shaped the name and presentation; the hand-dipped wax remains a visible signature. [13]

A continuing taste vision

Family stewardship passed through Bill Jr. and Rob Samuels. [1] Today Dr. Blake Layfield serves as master distiller, Beth Buckner as lead blender and Kim Harmon as general manager, connecting flavor, innovation and operations. [12]

Watercolors are symbolic interpretations, not exact buildings or documentary portraits.

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

The familiar, and what came next



1889 The older Burks complex takes shape, before this brand. [18]

1953–1958 The founding story leads to finished, hand-dipped bottles. [1,10]

2010–2016 Maker’s 46 precedes the Private Select pilot and retail rollout. [5,8]

2022–2023 B Corp recognition is followed by Cellar Aged’s debut. [10,11]

2025 Star Hill Farm introduces a distinct wheat whisky. [21]

2026 Age-labeled cask strength, new annual blends and World Wood expand the range. [13,15,16,17]

Read the place by its role

Star Hill Farm is the working homeplace and visitor address in Loretto. Check tours before visiting. [22] **Warehouses** and the **limestone cellar** offer different maturation environments. [11,26] The older **Burks site** explains the deeper industrial history. [18]

Selected moments from the complete illustrated website chronology. Watercolors are symbolic interpretations.

03 / WHISKEY, STORIES & SOURCES

Read the whiskey by its choices

Proof is one choice. Current Cask Strength is a barrel-proof expression with a minimum seven-year maturation. Batch age and strength vary; the label on the particular bottle matters. [6]

Grain is another. Star Hill Farm 2026 is wheat whisky, blending seven- and eight-year components. It is a different recipe family from classic bourbon. [15]



People and place matter too. Keepers 2025 honors warehouse teams. A certified regenerative barrel announced in 2023 describes newly filled spirit, not every older bottle. The label’s year and production claim deserve the same attention as its red seal. [23,26]

Research notes & linked sources

Checked October 17, 2026. Site history and brand founding are distinct. The 2015 program announcement separates pilot and retail dates. Edition specifications and source conflicts are detailed on the website. [8,18]

[1] Family chronology
[2] Founders & design
[3] Production process
[4] Classic bourbon
[5] French oak / 46
[6] Cask Strength
[7] Private Selection
[8] 2015 program launch
[9] 2019 RC6
[10] B Corp / 2022
[11] Cellar debut / 2023
[12] Flavor leadership
[13] 2026 Cask Strength
[14] Stewards / 2026
[15] Wheat whisky / 2026
[16] Cellar Aged / 2026
[17] World Wood / 2026
[18] Historic Burks site
[19] Corporate history
[20] Current portfolio
[21] Star Hill product
[22] Visit the homeplace
[23] Certified new barrel
[24] KDA / Margie
[25] 2014 cask report
[26] Keepers / 2025