

Ruddell's Mill Straight Bourbon

Editor's Note: This bourbon was provided to us as a review sample by Worldwide Libations LLC - the firm representing Ruddell's Mill Kentucky Bourbon. This in no way influenced our thoughts and opinions for this whiskey.

My family will attest that I love a good story, whether I'm reading a tale or spinning a yarn of my own. **Ruddell's Mill Kentucky Straight Bourbon**, while new to market, spins its own unique story from bourbon lore.

Ruddell's Mill is produced by the Covered Bridges Whiskey Company. Covered bridges were part of Americana, and provided a sheltered crossing - often adjacent to nearby grist mills and distilleries. Namesake to this bourbon is Isaac Ruddell, a colonial pioneer and early settler to what would later become the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Isaac was born in Pennsylvania, but later settled in Virginia and married Elizabeth Bowman (we discussed the *bigger than life* history of the [Bowman Brothers](#) earlier). In 1775, he and his new bride made the perilous journey to Boonesborough. There, he joined his brother-in-law John Bowman, himself an officer in the Virginia militia. Isaac was soon elevated to an officer, serving under Bowman and later General George Rogers Clark, participating in the Illinois campaign attacking British forces in Vincennes, Fort Kaskaskia, and Fort de Chartres.

For his service, Ruddell was awarded 3,234 acres in the new Indiana Territory. He settled in 1779 along the Licking River and Stoner Creek establishing a fortified settlement called Ruddell's Station. The war for American independence was still raging, and the frontier, while becoming settled, remained a vulnerable place. Not long afterwards, a raiding party of Shawnee Indians and British soldiers numbering in the several hundred, along with cannons, attacked the settlement. Leaving several settlers dead, and faced with the prospect of more bloodshed to come, Ruddell surrendered the fort and the 470 survivors, including his wife and family. In the days that followed, they made the long march from what is now Paris, Kentucky to Fort Detroit.

Following the war's end and their release from captivity, Ruddell and his family returned

again to Bourbon County in 1784. There, they built a home and began settling the area once again. Growing a surplus of corn, Isaac, along with son Abram, built a grist mill in 1795, with the resulting cracked corn finding its way into the mash bills of local whiskeys. The area remains today, and is called Ruddell's Mills. A generation later, the site also became home to the now defunct Ford & Bowen Distillery.

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The Tasting

The bottle is adorned with a handsome label bearing an etching of a gristmill. While there is no age statement, it is listed as *straight bourbon*, an indication that it is at least two years of age. There is no indication of the mash bill other than a "*high corn mash bill rounded out with rye and barley*". The finished product is bottled at 92.2 proof and is *non-chill filtered*,

allowing more oils and esters to remain in the bourbon for enhanced flavors. We're told this mash bill would be indicative of whiskeys found in bourbon's earliest days.

From the fact sheet, we're anticipating *amber color with aromas of vanilla, oak and spice along with notes of sweet toffee, caramel, orange citrus, well integrated oak and an assertive spice on the finish.*

Not much is known about the source of this bourbon, other than it is distilled in Bardstown, Kentucky. Likely sources could include nearby [Heaven Hill](#) Distillery or the [Bardstown Bourbon Company](#), with access to hundreds of mash bills and yeast strains. While I'd love to know more about where this bourbon comes from, that is part of bourbon's mystique. Many bourbon fans like to know who makes their favorite (or new favorite) bourbon and from where it hails. No one ever asks where their canned green beans come from, or if the generic brand of green beans comes from the same farm and cannery as the Green Giant brand.

Eye: Amber with thin legs lacing the sides of the Glencairn glass.

Nose: Vanilla and caramel. A drop or two of water opens up the bourbon, releasing caramelized brown sugar and butterscotch notes.

Palate: Vanilla, caramel, and summer fruit meet a rich, flavorful and spicy burst. The non-chill filtration yields a nice *chew* on the palate.

Finish: Medium-long with vanilla, followed with oak and pepper spice.

Overall: I shared this sample with my trusty sidekick and we were both favorably impressed. We've sampled several new, upstart distilled products, and if I had to cite a common flaw, it's the rush to get a product to market that could benefit from more time in the barrel. Ruddell's Mill doesn't have that flaw.

As mentioned earlier, I have no idea on the age of this product, but it did not come off *young* or *youthful*. There was a good balance and the flavors had sufficient time in the barrel to develop into a solid and delicious pour. The rich notes and the added chew from the non-chilled filtration give this a thumbs-up. This is one new brand that I recommend. I'll be watching to see what evolves from this new Kentucky gem with a nod to its historic past.