

KALAMAZOO, Mich. — Imperial Beverage to begin sales and distribution of Willett Distillery’s spirit portfolio throughout Michigan.

Starting March 31, 2025, Willett Distillery’s iconic Pot Still Reserve, along with 13 additional products from its world-renowned portfolio, will become available to Michigan retailers through Imperial Beverage.

“We are just so honored to welcome Willett Distillery to Michigan as our newest Bourbon brand,” said CEO of Imperial Beverage, Joe Cekola. “This partnership has been developing for quite a while, and similar to a well-aged whiskey, it has been well worth the wait! We are so excited to bring their legacy and unbelievable line of spirits to Michigan.”

Established in 1936 in Nelson County, Kentucky, Willett Distillery has spent nearly a century establishing a name for itself as a prestigious bourbon producer. From the induction of its executive director into the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame, to Pope Francis signing Willett Bourbon bottles for charity, this brand has achieved heights that far exceed the expectations of a humble family-founded distillery.

The full list of Willett Distillery products becoming available in Michigan include:

- Willet Pot Still Reserve
- Willett Estate Single Barrel
- Willett Wheated Bourbon
- Willett Family Estate Rye
- Old Bardstown Bourbon
- Old Bardstown Bourbon Estate Bottles
- Pure Kentucky Bourbon
- Johnny Drum Bourbon
- Kentucky Vintage Bourbon
- Noah’s Mill Bourbon
- Rowan’s Creek Bourbon
- Baardseth XO Cognac
- Harahorn Gin
- Hovding Aquavit

Willett Distillery rolled the first barrel out of its facility on March 17, 1937, a date still revered as the brand’s birthday. By the 1940s, the inaugural Willett Family Bourbon, Old Bardstown Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey, was in production and available to local consumers. In 1964, the same year that the United States Congress named Bourbon America’s Native Spirit, Willett Distillery was awarded a gold medal from then Kentucky Governor, Edward Thompson Ned Breathitt, for its Old Bardstown product.

Today, Willett Distillery produces several unique spirits, but the product that is easiest to identify is the iconic Pot Still bottle. The Willett Pot Still bottle is an exact replica of the patented Willett pot still built by Vendome Copper and Brass. Like the family business that crafts it, this small batch whiskey has evolved over time, carrying forward traditional flavors and adding the mark of the fifth generation.

Imperial Beverage is a long-standing member of the Michigan beverage distribution community. Established in 1933 after the repeal of prohibition and purchased by Kalamazoo’s Cekola family in 1984, Imperial has grown from a one county beer distributor to a top 10 statewide beer, wine, and spirits wholesaler. With 350 employees and four locations in Kalamazoo, Livonia, Ishpeming, and Traverse City, Imperial provides statewide coverage that serves every Michigan County, every week, all year long.

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