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## Stetson Bourbon: A Uniquely American Spirit

Bourbon whiskey is perhaps the most uniquely American of all drinks, and there is no finer example of this American spirit than **Stetson Bourbon**. Made from fine ingredients by expert craftsmen, this bourbon is smooth enough to drink straight-up or on the rocks and brings plenty of flavor to bourbon cocktails and mixed drinks.

According to legend, a Kentucky entrepreneur, Reverend Elijah Craig, invented bourbon by accident when he attempted to transport his whiskey to New Orleans in old barrels. Because the oak barrels were charred before filling, he found that his whiskey had taken on a light brown color by the time he arrived at market, the mark of the first true bourbon. Other stories hold that Scottish settlers in Bourbon County created the spirit thanks to a surplus of corn. Whatever its origins, bourbon is perhaps the most exclusively American of all spirits; indeed, Congress recognized it as a unique product of the United States in 1964.

Stetson is widely known as the leading provider of Western hats, boots, belts and other accessories, and the same craftsmanship and frontier spirit that goes into their apparel comes to the fore in Stetson Bourbon. The recipe starts with a rich mash made from pure Kentucky water, iron-free and passed through the dense local limestone, native American corn and locally grown rye, barley and wheat. The recipe also incorporates a sour mash. It's the purity of the water, along with the quality of the ingredients, that gives Straight Kentucky Bourbon its smooth texture. After the cook, brewers add the heirloom yeast that turns the mash into a sweet gold liquid for distilling into spirit.

The bourbon is double distilled in traditional copper pots and aged for four years. Charred oak barrels are used to age the whiskey to perfection, offsetting the sweetness of the corn with just a hint of a smoky flavor. The bourbon has a sweet, oaky aroma and is layered with woody flavors. It finishes with subtle hints of vanilla and caramel. The resulting spirit is a rich light amber, smooth enough to appeal to an Irish whiskey lover and has just enough bite to satisfy a traditional bourbon drinker.

The spirit's flavor strikes an excellent balance: It is simple and straightforward enough to appeal to whiskey beginners, yet singular enough to appeal to true bourbon aficionados. Hints of vanilla and a honey-like texture deliver enough complexity to at least match the other spirits on the same shelf, and overall, it is a fine choice at a mid-level price point. With its sweet aroma and rich appearance, it offers a complete bourbon experience from start to finish.

Stetson recommends a half-dozen mixed drinks that incorporate **Stetson Bourbon**, which offers just a hint of the spirit's versatility. Whether standing alone or as part of a mixed drink, this spirit is a stellar example of a classic American beverage. From a company whose name is synonymous with the Old West comes a little piece of American history, one that brings the flavor of the times right to the drinker's palate.

