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Bulleit Adds Its First New Core Whiskey Since 2011

Bulleit ’87 blends bourbon and rye in a permanent $30 release that reaches shelves in September

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Bulleit is adding a bourbon-rye blend to its permanent lineup, marking the brand’s first new core whiskey since Bulleit Rye was introduced in 2011.

The new release, called Bulleit ’87, blends Bulleit bourbon made, barreled and aged in Shelbyville, Ky., with rye whiskey distilled and aged at MGP in Indiana. The whiskey is named for 1987, the year the brand was founded. It is only the third permanent whiskey in Bulleit’s nearly 40-year history, after its flagship bourbon and Bulleit 95 Rye.

The company said both components are aged four years and then finished separately with toasted American oak and French oak staves for four to six weeks before blending. That finishing method is new for Bulleit, which has not previously used staves in this way for its whiskeys.

Phil Gelineau, the company’s whiskey research and development manager, described the blend as layered in construction, with bourbon providing the base, rye adding spice and the stave finishing rounding out the final profile. Bulleit said it recommends drinking the whiskey neat or on the rocks rather than using it mainly in cocktails, a notable shift for a brand whose core bourbon and rye are widely used behind the bar.

The bottle will retail for about $30 and is expected to reach shelves in September. To support the launch, Bulleit plans a sampling tour across 15 cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Austin, New Orleans and Louisville. The company said additional stops will be announced on its Instagram account.

The release comes as bourbon-rye blends have become more common in American whiskey. Once a niche category, the style now appears across a wide range of producers, from large Kentucky distillers to smaller independent blenders. Bulleit’s entry places one of the country’s most recognizable whiskey labels into a segment that has grown steadily over the past decade.

Bulleit built its identity on two mash bills that stood out when the brand was gaining traction: a high-rye bourbon and a rye whiskey made with 95% rye and 5% malted barley. The bourbon was the only permanent expression for the brand’s first 24 years. Rye joined the portfolio in 2011 and became a major part of Bulleit’s presence in bars and liquor stores in the United States.

In recent years, the brand has expanded beyond those two staples with limited releases, including age-stated bottlings. Earlier this month, it released a 20-year-old rye. But those editions were temporary offerings, making Bulleit ’87 a more significant move for retailers and consumers because it will remain part of the regular lineup.

The launch also reflects how Bulleit’s production footprint has changed. While its rye continues to be sourced from MGP in Indiana, the company expanded its bourbon-making capacity in Kentucky in the late 2010s with a distillery in Shelbyville capable of producing 3 million proof gallons annually and another larger facility in Lebanon designed for 10 million proof gallons a year. Production at the Lebanon site was temporarily paused last year.

For drinkers, Bulleit ’87 adds a new option at an accessible price point in a category that often leans on limited releases or premium positioning. For the brand, it is a rare permanent addition that connects its established bourbon and rye identities in one bottle at a time when American whiskey producers continue to look for new ways to broaden their portfolios.