



The Legacy of Brown-Forman begins with Old Forester
Old Forester Bourbon History & a Legacy of “Firsts”

- 1846 George Garvin Brown (GGB) was born in Munfordville, KY.
- 1870 GGB, a young pharmaceutical salesman starts J.T.S. Brown and Bro. with his half-brother with \$5,500 in saved and borrowed money.
- Old Forester becomes America’s First Bottled Bourbon™, the first bourbon to be sold exclusively in sealed glass bottles to ensure quality and consistency, an innovative approach at a time when whisky is commonly sold by the barrel.
- Their offices are housed at 322 W. Main Street
- Old Forester was blended from different distilleries, including Mattingly, Atherton and Mellwood to create a consistent flavor profile. Old Forester is originally presented at 90 Proof.
- Old Forester is named after a prominent physician and friend of GGB, Dr. William Forrester who endorsed Brown’s innovative concept of medicinal whisky sold only in sealed glass bottles. Old Forester, originally spelled with 2 “r”s to be associated with the doctor, drops the second “r” when Forrester retired.
- 1882-1919 Brown-Forman offices and bottling lines were housed at 125 W. Main Street (today 119 W. Main Street). Main Street was the hub of the bustling bourbon business in Kentucky, home to 89 distilling companies. Only one of those companies is still operating today – Brown-Forman and its founding brand, Old Forester.
- 1890 George Garvin Brown gifts first single barrel selection to then Governor of Kentucky, Simon Bolivar Buckner
- 1897 U.S. Bottled in Bond Act is enacted. Old Forester moves to 100 Proof to comply with regulations.
- 1901 George Garvin Brown moved from blender to distiller with the purchase of B.F. Mattingly Distillery.

- 1910 Fire on the bottling line, housed at 125 Main Street (today 119 W. Main Street) threatened the building and the business. (October 2, 1910)
- 1920 Prohibition begins.
- Brown-Forman applies for and receives No. 3 of only six federal licenses in the state of Kentucky to continue selling Old Forester for medicinal purposes.
- 1924 Brown-Forman and Old Forester moves its headquarters to Howard Street at Dixie Highway
- 1933 Prohibition repealed. Old Forester increases production.
- Old Forester is the only Bourbon sold by the same company before, during and after Prohibition.
- 1941 Old Forester begins producing industrial alcohol (ethanol) to help World War II efforts.
- 1951 Old Forester is the first to issue Holiday Decanters
- 1959 Old Forester 86 Proof introduced, 100 Proof retained.
- 1964 Old Forester The President's Choice introduced by then President George Garvin Brown II
- 1970 Old Forester celebrates its 100th anniversary
- 2002 Old Forester celebrates the 156th birthday of founder George Garvin Brown with a limited-edition Old Forester Birthday Bourbon™ on his birthday, Sept 2. Birthday Bourbon is the result of a single day's production and aged 12 years.
- 2014 Brown-Forman announces plans for Old Forester distillery on Whiskey Row
- 2015 Fire on Whiskey Row; 119 W. Main was not fire damaged, it becomes a vital piece of support while structural integrity was restored to the entire block, delaying completion by about one year. (July 7, 2015)
- 2018 Old Forester Distilling Co. returns home to Whiskey Row and opens at 119 W. Main Street, housed in the same building that the brand called home from 1882 – 1919.
- Old Forester is the only bourbon continually sold by the same company before, during, and after Prohibition.
- Old Forester distillery is the only downtown distillery which houses an active cooperage, charring barrels in the same facility where spirits are being aged.

2021

The new 117 Series, led by Master Taster Jackie Zykan, is introduced. This special product, released 2-3 times a year, is available only at Old Forester Distillery.