



JIMMY RUSSELL, MASTER DISTILLER
Wild Turkey® Distillery, Lawrenceburg, Kentucky



At A Glance: **Jimmy Russell**

- Wild Turkey Master Distiller
- Father of recently-appointed Master Distiller, Eddie Russell
- 60+ Year Whiskey veteran; Longest-tenured, active Master Distiller in the global spirits industry
- Creator of Rare Breed, Kentucky Spirit and Co-Creator of Russell's Reserve
- Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame™ member
- Lifetime honorary member for the Kentucky Distillers' Association
- Recipient of the Parker Beam Lifetime Achievement Award
- Whiskey Hall of Fame member
- Whiskey judge for the International Wine and Spirits Competition
- Anointed a Kentucky Colonel by three standing Commonwealth of Kentucky Governors, including former Governors Paul E. Patton and Ernie Fletcher, and current Governor Steve Beshear
- Honored with a Resolution by the Kentucky State Assembly and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky
- Received a special tribute from Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell that was entered into the Congressional Record
- Received the Key to Lawrenceburg, Kentucky from Mayor Edwinna Baker

Dubbed the “Buddha of Bourbon” and “The Master Distiller’s Master Distiller” by his industry peers, James C. “Jimmy” Russell knows Bourbon like he knows breathing. For more than 60 astounding years, Russell has been making whiskey at the Wild Turkey Distillery in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, and today, is the longest-tenured, active spirits Master Distiller in the world. Growing up five miles from the distillery, he followed his father, who taught him the traditions and techniques of Bourbon craftsmanship. From his first position at the distillery sweeping floors, he reached the apex of his career as Master Distiller in the 1960’s learning how to make Bourbon the right way – from the inside out and everything in between. No job too small, no task too tedious.

Jimmy’s passion for Bourbon led him to study under such Bourbon luminaries as Bill Hughes, Wild Turkey’s second Master Distiller, and Ernest W. Ripy, Jr., great-grandson of distillery founder James Ripy, Wild Turkey’s third Master Distiller. Even if his unparalleled tutelage wasn’t enough, his family history, impeccable knowledge of Bourbon, and possession of time-honored Bourbon-making secrets have led to his reputation as “the Master Distiller’s Master Distiller.” A part of an exclusive brotherhood, Jimmy is a member of the Kentucky Bourbon Hall of Fame™ and a whiskey judge for the International Wine and Spirits Competition. He’s involved through the entire

distillation and aging process of Wild Turkey Bourbon; his experience and wisdom shining through in every single bottle.

Over the past 60-plus years, Jimmy has been responsible for the launches of a number of new Wild Turkey brands and expressions, such as Tradition, Tribute, 17-year-old Wild Turkey for Japan, Rare Breed, American Spirit, Kentucky Spirit and Russell's Reserve, which he co-created with his son and distilling partner Eddie Russell. Jimmy broke new ground in 1976 with the first honeyed Bourbon, at the time called Wild Turkey Liqueur. Today, fans know the evolution of that product as American Honey. Jimmy is also responsible for making sure the legacy of Wild Turkey stays intact; overseeing the production of Wild Turkey 101, Wild Turkey's flagship brand. While waxing poetic about "aging techniques" and "grain selection," you can often find Jimmy enjoying his beloved Bourbon neat or with a touch of branch water.

In celebration of Jimmy's 60 years of service, the Wild Turkey global family decreed 2014 "The Year of Jimmy Russell," marked by a series of honors and accolades from family, local and national politicians, and distinguished members of the Bourbon industry. Most notably, Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell cemented Jimmy's achievements for posterity in the United States Congressional Record, while Kentucky Senator Julian Carroll and Representative Kim King sponsored a similar resolution in the Kentucky General Assembly. Furthermore, Jimmy was granted a Lifetime Honorary Membership to the Kentucky Distillers' Association's Board of Directors, an honor bestowed to only five other individuals within the organization's storied 134-year history.

As special as these honors have been, the most personal recognition came from Jimmy's son and fellow Bourbon Hall of Famer Eddie Russell. As an homage to his father, Eddie created Wild Turkey Diamond Anniversary, an outstanding limited-edition expression of 13- and 16-year-old whiskies.

When Jimmy is not at the distillery or on the road waxing poetic about Bourbon, which is a rare occurrence, he spends time at home with his wife Joretta, whom he met before he started working at Wild Turkey. They have three children – Eddie, Mike and Kathy; six grandchildren; and one great grandchild. A true Kentuckian and avid sports fan, Jimmy is a lifelong supporter of local Anderson County High School athletic programs for girls and boys.

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