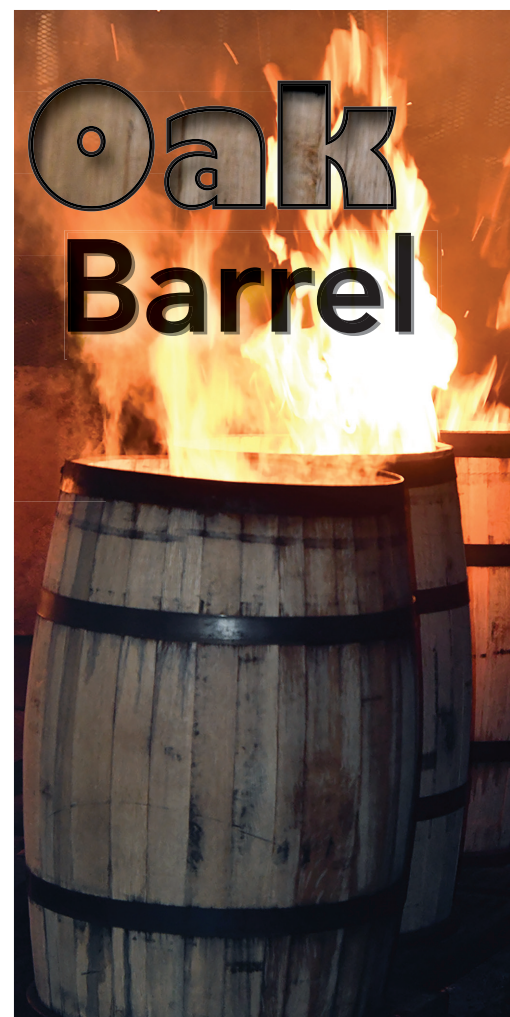




A Certified White

Oak Barrel



All photos courtesy: Renee Williams

What if bourbon, wine, and spirits could be aged in a white oak barrel that is certified? The end product consumer would be assured that each step of the entire pathway throughout the supply chain was certified. From the certified Tree Farm, where good forest stewardship is a priority, all the way to the distillery, the forest product can be tracked along all stages of processing and manufacturing by control systems set to document that the final product has a credible claim of chain of custody certified.

In one particular case, the white oak trees were harvested from the Taylor Tree Farm. As recent recipients of the Kentucky Tree Farmer of the Year award, the Taylors have a long history of practicing good forest stewardship. The farm was certified as a Tree Farm in 1972 with the goals of timber production and wildlife habitat management as well as recreation and aesthetics. There is also a specific focus on oak management, including oak regeneration and oak recruitment practices insuring healthy oak forests in the future.

This extensive effort in oak management, specifically white oak, is what attracted the interest of Irish Distillers. They could produce a white oak barrel using white oaks that were harvested from this certified Tree Farm where practicing good forest stewardship and maintaining the integrity of oak forests have been held in such high regard. The white oak trees were harvested and hauled to a certified mill, S & S Stave Mill, where they were processed into staves. The staves continued the journey to Kelvin Cooperage, where the certified product was assembled into white oak barrels. The barrels were then shipped to their final stop of Irish Distiller's "American Oak Project," as certified white oak barrels.