

All About Bourbon

Folks gather at 1861 Distillery for pop-up film and tasting event

BY CHELSEA WORKMAN

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Photo by The Workmans

Bourbon lovers congregated at Thomasville, Georgia's [1861 Distillery](#) on Feb. 1 to eat, drink and enjoy a documentary screening of *Neat: The Story of Bourbon*. Hosted in partnership with the Covey Film Festival — a [Thomasville Community Resource Center](#) (TCRC) fundraising organization — the pop-up event included a distillery tour, barbecue dinner and bourbon tasting with Buffalo Trace Distillery's Freddie Johnson.

TCRC is a nonprofit that empowers children through academic support, enrichment programs and other community resources. Executive Director Lisa Billups said the organization established the Covey Film Festival because “we didn't have something celebrating the film industry in our region, and the proceeds go directly to helping our children.”



Photo by The Workmans

Master distiller, brewer and owner of 1861 Distillery, Brian Higgins, hosted Thursday's sold-out event, where people crammed together to watch *Neat*. The documentary journeys through bourbon's history, celebrates its future and follows distillers from Wild Turkey, Jim Beam, Heaven Hill and more as they create unique products. Among those featured was Johnson, a third-generation Buffalo Trace employee who traveled from Frankfort, Kentucky, for the event.

Johnson grew up in and around the distillery; his father was a part of the team that tasted and selected the whiskey now known as George T. Stag from the Buffalo Trace Antique collection.

But despite Buffalo Trace being a big part of his life, it wasn't until his father got sick that he left his communications career to move home and jump in full time at the distillery.



Photo by The Workmans

“I enjoy seeing the reactions of people when they come to the distillery because they have preconceived notions of what a distillery must be,” Johnson said. “But they see family and different cultures. It’s a nice perspective for people that have different views. We offer sodas and bourbon creams and different expressions of products, so it’s a great time for the whole family.”

To watch the documentary, visit thebourbonfilm.com. If you’re in Thomasville, head over to 1861 Distillery to check out the space and the line of products that Higgins and his team are creating, including their smoked cherry malt and shine shed bourbons.



Photo by The Workmans