

AMERICAN INGENUITY

How A Popular Beverage Made Its Mark

(NAPSA)—It is the personification of the American success story. What started as the dream of one generation has become an American icon under the leadership of the next generation.

Described as “arguably the best bourbon in the world” by Michael Carlton, spirits columnist for the *Denver Post*, Maker’s Mark was conceived in 1953 by Bill Samuels Sr., a man described as the “Rembrandt of whisky.” However, his son, Bill Samuels, Jr., thinks it might be more appropriate to compare his father to the painter Vincent Van Gogh, who never sold a painting during his lifetime, because the legendary Kentucky distiller died before his creation made its mark as the world’s preeminent Kentucky bourbon.

“For most of the years my father ran our distillery, we were the best-kept secret in Kentucky,” said Samuels, Jr. But that was not to last for long. Within a few years of its first coming to market, Maker’s Mark became the rage in Kentucky and shortly thereafter, thanks in part to a story in the *Wall Street Journal*, achieved underground cult status throughout the rest of the country.

Over the last 22 years, Maker’s Mark has become an institution, not through marketing ingenuity, but as a result of popular demand by bartenders and consumers alike. It has also become the drink of choice among such celebrities as Sheryl Crow, Esai Morales, Tom Selleck and Kathleen Turner. Bill Samuels, Jr., credits the popularity of Maker’s Mark to its smoothness and flavor, which results from substituting soft winter wheat for harsher rye in the formulation, as well as its hand crafting, quality and authenticity.

Maker’s Mark, has won numer-



Every bottle is hand-dipped in the brand’s signature red wax, a symbol of handmade style.

ous awards and accolades, and is credited as pioneering the “premium” category in the spirits industry. *Worth* magazine described it as the “first premium bourbon to enter the market” and as “still the benchmark.” *Market Watch* magazine named it a “Hot Brand,” and *Connoisseur* magazine stated “In the current worldwide blind-tasting frenzy, Maker’s Mark bourbon is winning against aged single-malt scotches and the result—demand has gotten out of hand.”

Recently, the distillery in Loretto, Kentucky, the first distillery to be declared a national historic landmark, was additionally honored as “the oldest operating bourbon distillery in the world” by Guinness World Records.

The success of Maker’s Mark has spawned a host of so called “super-premium” bourbons, but this has had little effect on its ever-increasing popularity.