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**BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY ANNOUNCES THE GRAND OPENING  
OF THE JOHN G. CARLISLE CAFE**

*In celebration of the Distillery's first permanent dining destination, Buffalo Trace invites guests to explore a three-week lineup of daily experiences*

**FRANKFORT, KY (April 21, 2026)** - Buffalo Trace Distillery today announces the grand opening of the John G. Carlisle Cafe, a permanent dining destination located within the historic Elmer T. Lee Clubhouse. Opening nearly one year after historic floodwaters impacted the Distillery, the John G. Carlisle Cafe is a testament to the Distillery's resilience and enduring spirit of hospitality, inviting guests to gather and dine in a space that has been central to the Distillery for more than 90 years.

Primarily focused on lunchtime service, the 4,900-square-foot cafe offers seating for 70 guests with additional seats on the patio. The menu features made-to-order sandwiches, salads and desserts as well as Kentucky classics, including the iconic Kentucky Hot Brown. Buffalo Trace-infused flavors are incorporated into select cafe menu offerings, including bourbon bacon, barrel-aged coffee, bourbon-infused fudge topping and whipped cream, and more. Additionally, the John G. Carlisle Cafe will offer a rotating menu of select cocktails featuring Buffalo Trace spirits available for purchase, including a Buffalo Trace Old Fashioned, Wheatley Vodka Peach Mule and a Traveller Whiskey Lucky Penny.

Keeping with the Distillery's motto, "*Honor Tradition, Embrace Change,*" the John G. Carlisle Cafe features historic artifacts that connect guests to the people and moments that have shaped the Distillery's more than two centuries of history. On display is the only known bottle of Carlisle Whiskey, which has been preserved in the Distillery's archives, along with rare photographs of the original Carlisle Distillery and images of employees using the Clubhouse dating back to the 1950s. Visitors who look closely may also notice a subtle yet powerful design element inside the cafe – the flood line marking the historic high-water level reached during the April 2025 flood.

"For years, guests have asked for a dedicated place to enjoy a meal while spending the day with us," said Tyler Adams, General Manager, Buffalo Trace Distillery. "The John G. Carlisle Cafe is a meaningful addition to the Distillery experience, opening this historic space to the public for the first time and inviting visitors to slow down, settle in, and fully immerse themselves in the atmosphere that makes Buffalo Trace so special."

In celebration of the John G. Carlisle Cafe's grand opening, the Distillery is hosting a three-week lineup of daily offerings throughout May. Those visiting can enjoy:

- Monday (5/11, 5/18, 5/25): Kick off the week with *Free Meal Mondays*, complimentary for the first 100 guests (meal vouchers provided upon check-in).
- Tuesday (5/12, 5/19, 5/26): Explore Buffalo Trace Distillery history with *From the Archives* – an open house event from noon–2pm with Lead Archivist Nick Laracuenta, featuring John G. Carlisle Cafe historical highlights and a curated archives display on the second floor of the Elmer T. Lee Clubhouse.
- Wednesday (5/13, 5/20, 5/27): Enjoy *Whiskey Wednesdays* with complimentary samples of a new, soon-to-be-announced release served all day. Bottles will also be available for purchase in the Buffalo Trace Distillery Gift Shop (limited quantities available).
- Thursday (5/14, 5/21, 5/28): Connect with the Distillery’s craftsmen through *Meet the Masters* – a limited, one hour meet and greet opportunity happening inside the John G. Carlisle Cafe.
  - 5/14: Harlen Wheatley – Buffalo Trace Distillery Master Distiller
  - 5/21: Danny Kahn – Master Distiller & Distillation/Aging Operations Director
  - 5/28: Drew Mayville – Buffalo Trace Distillery Master Blender
- Friday (5/15, 5/22, 5/29): Savor *Freddie Fridays* featuring complimentary Freddie’s Old-Fashioned Soda products available in the John G. Carlisle Cafe, plus special appearances by Global Brand Ambassador Freddie Johnson.
- Saturday (5/16, 5/23, 5/30): Experience *Sippin’ Saturday* featuring seasonal, limited-time cocktails in the Carlisle Cafe from noon-2pm, plus a Buffalo Trace Bourbon-infused Rebecca Ruth’s chocolate pairing.
- Sunday (5/17, 5/24, 5/31): Delight in *Grain & Glass* featuring complimentary breakfast bites from 11am-noon, including complimentary tastings of *Colonel E.H. Taylor, Jr. Four Grain*.

“As we introduce the John G. Carlisle Cafe, our team is committed to delivering a terrific experience,” said Adams. “We encourage guests to plan extra time for their next visit and thank them for their patience as we welcome visitors into the space for the first time.”

Originally constructed in 1935, the Elmer T. Lee Clubhouse was designed as a welcoming gathering place for meals, celebrations and community at the Distillery. Over the decades, the lower level served as a cafeteria, breakroom and company event venue, hosting everything from holiday gatherings to visits from national dignitaries. Today, that spirit of connection continues through the John G. Carlisle Cafe, named in tribute of the influential politician whose leadership helped secure passage of the Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897.

To honor Carlisle’s support of industry, Colonel E.H. Taylor Jr. built two distilleries in 1879 – one of which he named the Carlisle Distillery. Situated alongside Taylor’s O.F.C. Distillery, the Carlisle Distillery produced Kentucky River Whiskey and Carlisle Whiskey until Prohibition. Although the Carlisle Distillery was demolished in 1936, its legacy – as well as the legacy of the namesake – lives on in the reimagined space.

The John G. Carlisle Cafe opens May 11, 2026. Hours of operation are Monday-Sunday from 11am – 3pm. For more information about the Carlisle Cafe, and the lineup of daily offerings, please visit [buffalotracedistillery.com/visit-us/cafe](https://buffalotracedistillery.com/visit-us/cafe).

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**About Buffalo Trace Distillery**

Buffalo Trace Distillery is an American family-owned company based in Frankfort, Kentucky. The Distillery's rich tradition dates back to 1775 and it is a National Historic Landmark, as well as listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its history includes such legends as E.H. Taylor, Jr., George T. Stagg, Albert B. Blanton, Orville Schupp, and Elmer T. Lee. Buffalo Trace Distillery is a fully operational Distillery producing bourbon, rye and vodka on site. The Distillery has won more than 40 distillery titles since 2000 and garnered more than 1,000 awards for its wide range of premium whiskies. Its William Larue Weller, Stagg, Eagle Rare 10, and Thomas H. Handy received Gold Awards at the 2025 International Wine & Spirits Competition and its flagship Buffalo Trace Bourbon received a Master Medal at the 2025 Global American Whiskey Masters. Buffalo Trace Distillery has a deep commitment to supporting charitable initiatives. Nonprofit organizations interested in learning more about the Distillery's efforts are encouraged to register their charity [here](#). To learn more about Buffalo Trace Distillery, visit [www.buffalotracedistillery.com](http://www.buffalotracedistillery.com). To download images from Buffalo Trace Distillery, visit [www.buffalotracedistillery.com/media-kit](http://www.buffalotracedistillery.com/media-kit).