

The Bourbon Trail

An Anniversary Drive



June 2020

Bob and Molly Hillery

Kentucky Bourbon Trail, June 2020

Saturday June 20

This is just a local weekend trip, but we are on our first trip beyond Cincinnati in five months, so it feels like a special occasion. We should have been in England celebrating our 55th wedding anniversary with family and friends but that (and four other trips so far) was cancelled.

It felt good to drive above 30MPH and to see the Kentucky countryside as we drove the 100 miles from home to Lexington. We are staying here tonight (Saturday) and plan to drive the Bourbon Trail tomorrow, perhaps sampling one or two along the way. Tomorrow night we will celebrate our anniversary at one of our favorite restaurants in Louisville.

This is just a two-night driving trip to get out for our anniversary and to see if we remembered how and what to pack. This is a precursor to another trip out west in two weeks when we will spend ten days in Utah, Nevada, Oregon and Idaho. Unfortunately, California is still "locked down" so we won't see our Sacramento family – unless things change quickly!

We are fortunate in Ohio that things are opening up reasonably well and we are able to dine out (in) at a number of restaurants and meet with our family for a meal. We have become quite proficient at drive-thru breakfasts and coffee and enjoyed a number of excellent "curbside pickup" meals before we were able to actually go inside restaurants again.

On Saturday evening we went downtown to a restaurant (Coles on Main St) that we had never before visited. In just about all of our previous to Lexington we have enjoyed dinner (either just the two of us or with friends) at the Merrick Inn but that venue is still closed for indoor dining. Hence, we looked around and found Coles which looked fine and had some good reviews.

We arrived at an older building in the middle of town that seemed to have about 50% of its tables available and all the staff were wearing masks. Many customers, too, walked to their tables wearing masks, as did we.

Other than the obvious changes, the meal and service were excellent, and we had a very pleasant 2 hour experience.

Sunday June 21 (Our 55th Wedding Anniversary)

We had breakfast at a local Bob Evans (slow service, but thankfully open) and then started our drive along the Bourbon Trail. The first two distilleries near Lexington were closed (one apparently "permanently", the other because we were too early) but the Four Roses gift shop (and tours) was open. We didn't take a tour but found a couple of bottles of interest - for us and for our son-in-law.





From Four Roses, we drove to Bardstown where we visited the Heaven Hills distillery, home to one of the oldest bourbons, Elijah Craig. Of course, we bought a bottle of that and enjoyed seeing the wide collection at this distillery that we had never visited before.



One interesting aspect of the drive was that every one of the distilleries appeared to be expanding and we saw many new huge storage buildings. We were glad to do our part!

We then went into the small, but interesting, town of Bardstown. Although this was a warm Sunday in

the height of summer, it appeared that Bardstown was almost a ghost town. Whether this was due to the pandemic or simply that business is suffering in general was not clear, but a number of businesses were closed or even shuttered.

We walked around the town for an hour and found a place for lunch at the oldest inn in the town; It wasn't the best meal ever but at least they were open.



Bardstown

We then drove on to Louisville for the night and our anniversary dinner at one of our favorite restaurants, Ruth's Chris on the 16th floor of the Art Deco Frank Lloyd Wright building overlooking downtown.

The meal was excellent (surprisingly quiet for Father's Day) and we had a good time. Our waiter was an interesting and amusing person and he took our photo as a memento - as well as giving us dessert.



55
Years



Monday June 22

We checked out of the hotel and had breakfast at iHop before starting our drive home. We went along Route 42 East from Louisville and eventually drove along the south side of the Ohio River until we left to join I-71 nearer to Cincinnati. It was, as usual, a very pleasant drive on another very warm day. We arrived home in the early afternoon after a very pleasant - and comfortable - "re-opening" weekend.

More to come!!

