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## Review: Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Bourbon Round Sixteen

Christopher Null March 23, 2015 0 Comments

This is it! The end! The last 12 bottles in the unfathomably ambitious Buffalo Trace Single Oak Project have arrived. I'll be offering some in-depth coverage of the lessons learned from the project in the months to come — more on this later — but for now it's time to consider this last dozen whiskeys on their own merits. Meanwhile, hats off and glasses raised to Buffalo Trace for putting on such an impressive and — likely — industry-shaping experiment.

Need a primer on the Project? Here's the *entire* Single Oak Project:

[Round One](#) (including all the basics of the approach to this series)

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This final round is a mixed bag of basically the leftovers in the project. The only constants are stave seasoning (6 months) and barrel char level (#4). Everything else — recipe, entry proof, wood grain, warehouse type, and tree cut varies. As always, all expressions are bottled at 90 proof.

There are no major standouts in this round, but there's plenty of intrigue in the mix. As for the field as a whole, barrel #82 remains the fan favorite among all the bourbons released to date, with #109 and #111 close behind.

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #7** – A melange of aromas here, but heavy on the mint. The body has more of a chocolate mint character to it, but some racy heat and a slightly odd oatmeal character underpins the finish. **B+** (rye, 125 entry proof, level 6 seasoning,

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tight grain, 15 rings/inch, concrete ricks, #4 char, top half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #20** – Well-rounded, with touches of cinnamon atop some traditional, lumber-heavy notes. The body heads strongly into sawdust territory, with some citrus notes on the back end. Fine, but undistinguished. **B** (rye, 105 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, tight grain, 17 rings/inch, wooden ricks, #4 char, bottom half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #39** – Gentle nose, heavier on lumberyard notes than anything else. There's some cola amidst the vanilla caramel notes and a touch of citrus oil on the very back end, but otherwise this bourbon comes off with a bit of a thud. **B-** (wheat, 125 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, tight grain, 18 rings/inch, concrete ricks, #4 char, top half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #52** – A racier expression on the nose, with peppery notes and some cereal character behind that, but it settles into a creamy caramel character as the body takes hold. Quite a pleasure, with two faces to consider. **A-** (wheat, 105 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, tight grain, 18 rings/inch, wooden ricks, #4 char, bottom half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #71** – A little raw on the nose, this whiskey seems like it will be a fire bomb on the palate, but that's not the case for the most part. Caramel, cinnamon, and red hots candies are all in the mix, and working well together. The finish is a bit hot, with some rougher granary notes dominating. **B-** (rye, 125 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, average grain, 13 rings/inch, concrete ricks, #4 char, top half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #84** – Engaging from the start, a little minty, with a little butterscotch character to it. Lovely and dessert-like on the palate, with an echo of that mint on the finish. **A-** (rye, 105 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, average grain, 14 rings/inch, wooden ricks, #4 char, bottom half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #103** – A fireside whiskey, almost smoky at times. The palate's a little thin, but it does offer some red fruit and curious berry notes to spice up the vanilla and lumberyard notes on the body. Particularly fruity on the finish. **A-** (wheat, 125 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, average grain, 13 rings/inch, concrete ricks, #4 char, top half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #116** – Chewy with cereal, but layered with menthol notes. Rounded on the palate, it's got fruitcake and nutty elements that fade with the arrival of a more grain alcohol character on the back end. **B** (wheat, 105 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, average grain, 12 rings/inch, wooden ricks, #4 char, bottom half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #135** – More citrus here than most of the other expressions in this round, with a bit of butterscotch to back it up. The finish is warming, and quite drying at times. **B** (rye, 125 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, coarse grain, 9 rings/inch, concrete ricks, #4 char, top half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #148** – Oaky, and a bit racy. Plenty of red pepper here but the dusty, vanilla-tinged caramel that makes up the core makes it both balanced enough and worthwhile on its merits. **B+** (rye, 105 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, coarse grain, 9 rings/inch, wooden ricks, #4 char, bottom half of tree)

**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #168** – Plenty of lumber at first, but a unique element of hazelnuts emerges if you give this whiskey some time, a bit of Nutella character that lingers for quite awhile before some cayenne pepper notes kick back up on the back end. A little weird, but worth sampling for its uniqueness alone. **A-** (wheat, 125 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, coarse grain, 8 rings/inch, concrete ricks, #4 char, top half of tree)

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**Buffalo Trace Distillery Single Oak Project Barrel #180** – A simpler whiskey, without a lot of classic bourbon character to it. Here I get more simple lumberyard notes, some cereal, and mixed fruit, but it's missing that vanilla slug, particularly on the rustic back end. **B** (wheat, 105 entry proof, level 6 seasoning, coarse grain, 10 rings/inch, wooden ricks, #4 char, bottom half of tree)

\$46 each (375ml bottle) / [singleoakproject.com](http://singleoakproject.com)

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