

# expanding the herd

## BEAM GLOBAL WELCOMES ITS LATEST “BREED”: RED STAG BY JIM BEAM

By Alia Akkam

**red manhattan**  
2 PARTS RED STAG  
1/2 PART DRY VERMOUTH  
1/2 PART SWEET VERMOUTH  
*PREPARE IN A SHAKER OVER ICE. STRAIN INTO A  
MARTINI GLASS WITH LONG-STEM  
BLACK CHERRY. GARNISH.*



**W**hile the vodka and rum categories are brimming with flavored varieties, bourbon has shied away from the trend. Without sacrificing the quality and tradition synonymous with the iconic Jim Beam brand, Beam Global Spirits & Wine, Inc. decided to boldly introduce something new to the category: Red Stag, four-year-old Jim Beam bourbon infused with natural black cherry flavors.

Skeptics concerned that a flavored bourbon might detract from the spirit's true essence have nothing to worry about. On the nose, there is no mistaking this is a bottle of your classic Jim Beam, albeit with the addition of a subtle fruitiness. Likewise, there is no unwelcome aftertaste, just a burst of black cherry that lends some sweet smoothness.

"This isn't a flavored bourbon, it's a flavor-infused bourbon," points out Kelly Doss, Beam Global's director of whiskies. "Red Stag is great for drinking either straight, with ice or to add a twist to any cocktail you're mixing; it's very versatile."

### knowing your target

Given the novelty of Red Stag, Doss knew there might be some apprehension among bourbon drinkers about the product. What does it taste like? How do I drink it? "When you're infusing a flavor into bourbon, there is a need for more education," she says.

In order to successfully introduce Red Stag to the market, Beam underwent extensive research. Doss personally spent much time inside the homes of the core target demographic, 25-34 year-old males. "I dug through their fridges, figured out which

magazines they read and learned which websites they turned to for information."

More importantly, she also uncovered their drinking habits. She would often see them mixing Jim Beam with cherry Coke, so she knew Red Stag was a concept that could really work.

Not only is Red Stag a great addition for current bourbon drinkers "adding a fresh taste profile to how they consume it," but Doss also thinks it's such an approachable product that it has the potential to attract a demographic who doesn't currently drink bourbon. "It's also great for women to drink when they're out with the guys," she points out.

### in the mix

Bobby "G" Gleason, Beam Global's Las Vegas-based master mixologist, loves working with Red Stag. "First off, it is a premium quality spirit and you can't make great cocktails if you don't have a great spirit base to work with," he explains. "Given that Red Stag is 80 proof, it provides the alcohol needed for properly balanced cocktails. Black Cherry goes so well with many different fruit flavors that it is hard to find something that

doesn't work with it." Currently, he makes a lot of classic bourbon cocktails, like the Manhattan and Old Fashioned but also inventive creations like the "Red Hot Stag" with mango, fresh sour and Tabasco. In the midst of summer, Gleason is also whipping up pitcher-ready cocktails that can easily be batched and enjoyed poolside.

Letting the target audience know about these cocktails through social media is essential to Beam's education strategy. They've aggressively reached out to the blogging community to help spread the word about Red Stag; Red Stag's website, [www.theredstag.com](http://www.theredstag.com), is extensive, packed with helpful consumer info; and they have a strong presence on Facebook, where consumers of legal drinking age are engaged, asking where they might be able to find Red Stag on shelves.

### kid rock

Another way of building the brand is a collaboration with Kid Rock; Red Stag is the sponsor of his summer *Rock n' Rebels Tour* taking place across the country. In addition, 50 cents from every ticket sold for these concerts will be donated to Operation Homefront, a non-profit organization devoted to providing assistance to America's military veterans who return home to their families. "Kid Rock is a natural fit for us," Doss notes. "We love him because he's so authentic; he truly loves bourbon and has been a Jim Beam fan for years. It is those core values that meld with our brand." ■