



Read about Lisa Foust Prater's first visit to Century Farms Distillery.



Tom and Linda Bindner bottle the family's bourbon.



Legacy in a Bottle

After nearly six decades of farming, Tom Bindner's final corn crop can be enjoyed by generations to come. **By Lisa Foust Prater**

Top: The finished product: a bottle of Bindner Farms Bourbon Whiskey on display at Century Farms Distillery. Bottom: Diane Williams and Lisa Foust Prater fly to Century Farms Distillery to bottle Diane's family's bourbon.

Three years ago, I introduced you to the Bindner family from Marcus, Iowa.

My friend Diane Williams is Tom and Linda Bindner's daughter. When Diane and her brother, Dean, visited the Century Farms Distillery booth at the Iowa State Fair in 2021, they knew they had found the perfect Christmas gift for their dad: bourbon whiskey made from corn grown on their 130-year-old western Iowa family farm. Siblings Don and Dennis agreed, corn was delivered, and the distilling process began.

Diane and I drove to the distillery in Spencer, Iowa, about an hour northeast of the Bindner farm, in July 2022. I watched as her family bottled and sealed several bottles of whiskey that had been quick-aged using wood chips. Four sealed oak barrels containing what would become bourbon were left to age at the distillery.

Two months ago, we made the trip to Spencer again. Diane's husband, Tim, flew us in their single-engine Cessna plane. Iowa was so beautiful below us, as the wooded, rolling hills of the south gave way to vast fields and windmills in the north.

Tom, Linda, Dean, and Don met us at the distillery, where owners Ryan and Amanda Bare led the family in bottling, sealing, and labeling 110 bottles of the 39-month-aged

bourbon, which went home with the family (full disclosure — minus one bottle they gave me!). The beautiful labels feature a photo of the farm's founder along with his trusty mules, and a QR code linking to the Bindner Farms story on the distillery's website, cfdistillery.com.

The Bindners are leaving one barrel to age in the distillery's warehouse; they'll bottle it for the farm's 150th anniversary celebration, in 2042. "Our great-grandchildren will be able to toast with our farm's bourbon at their weddings," Diane said.

Any whiskey not purchased by clients is sold to the public by Century Farms Distillery. The two and a half barrels of remaining Bindner Farms Bourbon Whiskey will be bottled and distributed to retailers around Iowa.

The Bindner family knew this gift was special, but they had no idea how serendipitous the timing would be. Due to some health concerns, after 58 years of planting and harvesting, Tom had to step back from farming with Dean in 2022.

The corn that made Bindner Farms Bourbon Whiskey was from Tom's last harvest.

Whether dealing with health issues or running a farm, some days are better than others. As Tom worked alongside his family bottling their bourbon, he looked around the room and said, "Today is a really good day." •