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## Elijah Craig Barrel Proof A123 Bourbon Whiskey Review

Jim Casey • 03/23/23



(photos by Brandon Chesbro: Outsider)

Heaven Hill Distillery has been releasing one of its high-octane offerings—Elijah Craig Barrel Proof (ECBP)—for more than a decade. Since 2013, the distillery has dropped three batches per year with high-yielding proofs that have ranged between 118 and 140.

We got our hands on ECBP's 31st batch (A123) from January 2023. Let's pour a sip of Elijah Craig Barrel Proof, which we picked up at Nashville's Total Wine & More.

### At a Glance

- **Distillery:** Elijah Craig Distillery (Heaven Hill)
- **Location:** Bardstown, KY
- **Style:** Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey
- **Batch:** A123
- **Age:** 12 Years
- **Mashbill:** 78% corn, 12% malted barley, 10% rye
- **Proof:** 125.6
- **MSRP:** \$70
- Website | Insta | Twitter



## Elijah Craig Barrel Proof: What We Say

<b>Nose</b>	caramel, lumber yard, toasted marshmallow, dark chocolate
<b>Palate</b>	viscous, melted butterscotch, vanilla ice cream, charred oak, cherry, cayenne
<b>Finish</b>	long, rich butterscotch, lingering cayenne
<b>What You Can Expect to Pay</b>	\$80-\$90
<b>Buy It: Now, Soon, Later, Never</b>	Soon
<b>Outsider Rating</b>	89/100

I usually don't focus too much on a bourbon's color (in the sense of trying to pinpoint the exact shade), but this batch of Elijah Craig Barrel Proof is a stunning deep amber that warrants a mention. If you "drink" with your eyes first, this is a beaut.

On to the nose, which opens with—Wow! Warm, dark caramel hides any semblance of a high-proof sniff. There's just a hint of light alcohol. There's also a waft of rich oak and fresh-cut pine sawdust, like you're strolling through a lumber yard with nary a care. A deeper dive yields toasted marshmallow and dark chocolate. We've got s'mores on the nose. I could smell this all day.

The palate opens with melted butterscotch, like a high-end butterscotch poured over a vanilla-bean sundae. It's viscous and rich—and notably butterscotch (as opposed to caramel) with notes of buttery, brown sugar. And the barrel shows some of its 12-year age with a balanced kick of charred oak. A bit of chewing brings out some dark cherry . . . and then it's fire-breathing time as cayenne pepper spice roars forward.

The long finish hits with a one-two punch of rich butterscotch and lingering, lip-numbing cayenne. Truly an outstanding sip, especially for a high-proof patron like myself. We paid \$82.99 for our bottle (\$70 MSRP), and that's only reason it scores an 89 (Buy Soon) instead of a 90+ (Buy Now).



## What Elijah Craig Says About Barrel Proof

Uncut, straight from the barrel without chill filtering, the nose, taste, and finish created by 12 years of aging are preserved in their simplest form. At full barrel proof, you can enjoy Elijah Craig much the same way our Master Distillers do when they sample straight from the barrel in our Kentucky rickhouses. Elijah Craig Barrel Proof is a bold and honest expression of what charred oak barrel aging can do for Bourbon, from the man who originated the process.

## Recommended Sip

Give ECBP a neat sip first, just to experience its full, balanced force. But the addition of an ice cube is welcoming in a full glass.

## Want to Try Another Heaven Hill High-Proof Punch?



- **Distillery:** Heaven Hill
- **Location:** Bardstown, KY
- **Style:** Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey
- **Batch:** A123
- **Proof:** 125.8
- **Age:** 6-8 years
- **Mashbill:** 68% corn, 20% wheat, 12% malted barley
- **MSRP:** \$60
- Outsider Full Review of Larceny Barrel Proof A123.

Larceny Barrel Proof utilizes wheat instead of rye, so there's a bit more "fruity" sweetness than ECBP. On the palate, it's immediate cola. The cocoa powder and raspberry from the nose coalesce with baking spices into a chocolate-raspberry cookie. And then there's definite cinnamon sweetness and heat in the form of Hot Tamales candy, with some charred caramel.

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