

# New 'Free The Spirit' Campaign Launched to Cut Bourbon Tariffs

*The Bourbon Alliance is calling on the hospitality sector to pledge support on their website, engage on social media, and join the fight to Free the Spirit.*

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, June 25, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Jim Beam, Maker's Mark, and Brown-Forman have joined with The Bourbon Alliance - an army of distillers, restaurants and pubs, retailers,

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*Founder of the Bourbon Alliance, Martha Dalton*

wholesalers, and US Whiskey fans - to urge the British Government to remove the 25% tariff on imported US Whiskey caused by a trade dispute over steel. The Bourbon Alliance is calling on the hospitality sector to join the campaign by pledging support on their campaign website, engaging on social media, and joining the fight to Free the Spirit - <https://www.bourbonalliance.com/>

The Bourbon Alliance is a coalition of industry stakeholders whose livelihoods depend on being able to import US Whiskey into the UK. Supporters of the campaign to

#FreeTheSpirit include some of the best known, household names, as well as an army of independent distillers, hospitality venues across the UK, retailers, distributors, festival organisers, and Bourbon fans.

UK and the US have been able to trade their whiskies tariff free across the Atlantic for over quarter of a century. In recent years, the market for Bourbon and Whiskey imported from the United States has grown exponentially, with the UK becoming the US' largest export market for these products, a demand that saw the UK import over £121m worth of US Bourbon and Whiskey in 2017.

However, in 2018, a controversial 25% steel 'rebalancing tariff' was imposed by the EU on all imported Bourbon and other Whiskey from the USA. The UK has chosen to maintain these tariffs since leaving the EU, resulting in UK imports of Bourbon dropping by 53% since June 2018. Given the size of the market for US Bourbon and Whiskey, British consumers were footing the bill for Europe, fronting 22.8% of the total EU whiskey tariffs (on €203m of US exports) and continue to be collateral damage in the ongoing UK-US dispute over steel.

On 24 May, the UK Government launched a public consultation into the tariff, stating it was looking “at ensuring any future tariffs applied are shaped to UK interests.” International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss MP said: “We want to deescalate these disputes so we can move forward and work closely with the US on issues like WTO reform and tackling unfair trade practices by non-market economies.”

The Bourbon Alliance’s campaign has united the hospitality sector on both sides of the Atlantic, calling for decisive action to further support the industry in its time of need. The campaign says the future of its supporters depends on their ability to import US Whiskey, and at present, the financial burden of the tariff presents a threat which has already seen many businesses collapse and has slashed the revenue of those who have survived.

The Free The Spirit campaign has support from over 40 Bourbon brands, hospitality venues, retailers and trade associations, including;

- Jim Beam
- Brown-Forman
- Maker’s Mark
- Never Say Die Bourbon
- The Wine and Spirits Trade Association
- The British Bourbon Society
- 10 Bourbons
- Wilderness Trail Distillery
- Bramble
- Discount Suit Company

Founder of the Bourbon Alliance and Director of Never Say Die Bourbon, Martha Dalton said:

“The Free The Spirit Campaign has already galvanised the hospitality industry and shown the united call for the Government to cut the tariff. The hospitality industry has been hit harder by the pandemic than almost any other sector in the UK; venues have been closed for the majority of the year with 10,000 licensed premises shutting their doors for good. On top of this, UK consumers have paid over £55m in tariffs on imported American Whiskies. This has hit investment in the hospitality industry when it needs it most, deterred new customers from exploring the world of Bourbon and prevented fans of quality American Whiskey and Bourbon from enjoying their favourite drinks, with a devastating knock-on effect to the revenue of venues, retailers, and wholesalers across our industry. We were delighted to see the Department for International Trade negotiate the resolution of the Boeing – Airbus dispute and are now calling on the Government to continue the momentum in trans-Atlantic trade discussions, and to remove the tariff on US Whiskey at the time when the sector needs it most.”

Co-Founder of the British Bourbon Society, Andrew Watson said:

“We’re delighted to be involved in the Free The Spirit campaign and to have the opportunity to see the back of these tariffs. Since the introduction of these tariffs in 2018, our members have seen the prices of their favourite Bourbon soar and the choice of Whiskey shrink – this has driven down their ability to support distillers in the US, and has had an alarming knock on effect for UK based retailers who specialise in US Whiskey. As we look to recover from the pandemic, our members are resolute in their commitment to support the sector which has been hit hardest by 12 months of restrictions, but to do so, we need to see these tariffs lifted.”

Co-Founder of American Whiskey distributor, N10 Bourbons, Nathan Dawes said:

“These tariffs have been disastrous for the UK economy. As a business, we’ve taken a huge hit on our imports and have seen many of our long standing distillery partners in the US either step back from the UK market, or go out of business altogether. The UK has become the largest external market for US Whiskeys, and we have been proud to be a part of the diverse community of consumers and distributors as this demand has grown. But these tariffs have seen imports stagnate, and consumer demand shrink at an alarming rate. The Bourbon Alliance and the Free The Spirit campaign has highlighted just how vital this trade is for the UK economy, across a number of sectors who desperately need support from the Government in our time of need. Cutting the tariff is a simple and efficient mechanism to provide this urgent relief.”

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