

[Go Back](#)

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VAIL—Just as Fat Tire replaced Budweiser in beer coolers across the state, Colorado-made whiskey and rum is beginning to appear on spirit shelves lining bar-backs and liquor stores.

Two craft distilleries are in the works for Eagle County, with owners moving their way through the many approvals required to make hard liquor and sell it.

808 Distillery will be located on Eagle's Fairgrounds Road near the rodeo grounds on the two-acre property of owner Claude Seeman.

A former Vail Village chef, and more recently a building contractor, Seeman said he was drawn to the idea of whiskey making as an artisan craft that fell out of favor with society's modernization.

"I really like old-time kinda stuff, and this seemed like the type of thing that everybody used to do and now nobody does," said Seeman, who is starting the distillery with business partner Jeff Leonardo.

Seeman is a do-it-yourself kinda guy, but unlike beer, liquor making as a hobby is illegal. He started doing research to find out what it would take to distill spirits under the letter of the law.

"Similar to building houses, you take some first steps and find out, is this possible, and then start looking at how much things are going to cost. You take some more steps and pretty soon that's the path you're on. And then you're taking an entrepreneurial leap of faith," he said.

Local and artesian products of many kinds have grown in popularity as consumers came to view them as a more sustainable and patriotic choice than imports. Buyers also want to make purchases that have a personal connection, rather than a faceless corporate seal.

The 808 Distillery partners plan to begin construction of a warehouse this spring, then sell spirits to local restaurants and liquor stores shortly afterward. They'll start with whiskey and move on to bourbon and the Italian liqueur Limoncello.

A second distillery is planned at 4600 Highway 6 in Dotsero. Owners Jim Benson and Max Vogelmann, calling their operation Stone Yard Distillery, plan to focus on small-scale craft distilling of rum with outside sales to bars, restaurants and stores.

Both sets of owners say they would like to open tasting rooms in the future.

Craft distilleries are cropping up everywhere in the US, and Colorado is at the forefront of the movement, according to [The Hooch Life](#).

Flying Dog Brewery owner George Stranahan opened Colorado's first craft distillery in 2004. The state since then issued more than 30 licenses to distillers from Palisade to Buena Vista.

The American Distilling Institute predicts there will be 450 craft distilleries in the US and Canada by 2015. Planning to hold its next annual event in Denver, its most recent conference grew by 30 percent.

The Vail Valley's closest operating distillery is in Summit County, where the [Breckenridge Distillery](#) markets itself as the "world's highest," with hooch made from Rocky Mountain snowmelt. The company operates a 4,000-square-foot facility in the town's industrial district but sells its products in a highly visible tasting room on Main Street.

The Breckenridge Distillery has found quick retail success, as well as accolades from the industry with medal awards in microbrewery-style product competitions.

Their glass bottles displaying snowcapped mountain scenes are works of art themselves. They give tours and sell barware, apparel and edibles, as well as bottles of their bourbon, vodka, spiced rum and spiced whiskey. Liquor orders more than doubled in 2012.