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New Springhurst Liquor Barn will focus on customer engagement

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BY LIQUOR BARN ([MAILTO:LEO@LEOWEEKLY.COM](mailto:LEO@LEOWEEKLY.COM))

When the new location of Liquor Barn opens in Springhurst, just a few doors down from where the former store was located, long-time customers will be in for a surprise. And a different, more interactive experience. Liquor Barn Chief Operating Officer Chris Edgerton said the store is transitioning into a new customer-centric concept that will focus not on having the biggest selection, but the best. In addition, the store will be less of a basic retail store and more of an experience.

The new, 20,000-square-foot store is just under half the size of the former location, but the stock will be the best of the best – the wine, beer and spirits people ask for and buy most – so that customers aren't sifting through excessive stock.

“Retailers in general are going smaller and finding you can optimize service and customer experience with less space,” Edgerton said. “And it’s a more engaging experience for the customer. When you squeeze your footprint down like that, it just gets more intimate and shopper-friendly for everyone.”

More than that, the amenities at the new store will make it less like a standard retail store and more like an experience. Actually, it will be the kind of place you may want to meet your friends for happy hour, and will be designed with a bar and a patio. The bar area will have seating for about 35, including eight bar seats, while the patio will have five tables with umbrellas. The store already has a number of cigar and bourbon pairing events on the calendar.

The full-service bar will offer flights of bourbon, whiskey and other spirits, monthly cocktail specials, a 12-tap growler station and wine by the glass. The bar will offer the opportunity to potentially try a spirit before buying a bottle. It also will at times offer the opportunity to try rare or special-release bourbons and whiskeys.

“Some bottles are so hard to get your hands on, this way our customers can at least get a shot at tasting these rare spirits,” Edgerton said.

Special events will be held in both spaces at times, but usually they will be open to the public. Both spaces are also available for private events.

“We might even fire up a grill occasionally,” Edgerton said of the patio. “This outdoor patio space will enable us to do lot of things that I think our customers will appreciate.”

There will be several stations in the store where customers can engage with employees, including a training and education space in the back of the store. This will be used for employee training, but also will be utilized for intimate learning and tasting experiences for customers.

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In the center of the store, customers will find a tasting center where they can taste new products and learn about them from employees and industry experts such as the winemaker or master distiller themselves.

The crown jewel of the new Springhurst Liquor Barn will be the Kentucky Bourbon and World Whiskey Rickhouse, with the centerpiece being a walk-in area constructed of repurposed rickhouse beams that will be the exclusive home of Kentucky bourbons in the store.

Around the rickhouse will be selections of other whiskeys from around the world; in staying with the Kentucky theme, the area occupies roughly 20 percent of the store's footprint.

In addition, Edgerton said, people should appreciate the "openness" design of the new store. Rather than having rows and rows of eight-foot-tall shelves full of products, customers will be able to scan the entire store as soon as they walk in, making it more navigable and inviting, and less like a warehouse.

And even though the new store is smaller, Edgerton said the selection is still going to be stellar.

"We're still going to have a huge selection," he said. "We're always going to be innovative with our products, we're always going to be first to market with products, and we always will have the best availability."

Also, Edgerton wants to assure customers that custom gift baskets, as well as the custom-engraved bottles, will still be available at the new Liquor Barn. In short, it's all about the customer's experience.

“We are a Kentucky-owned and operated business,” Edgerton said. “We want to evolve and get better in the marketplace. This has been a huge focus for us. It’s something we embrace and are excited to take on. I think the customer is going to see we’re serious about continuing to improve and provide a better experience.”

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