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How to Drink Bourbon — and Experience Texas Hill Country — Like Matthew McConaughey

The actor loves the rural Texas region for a quiet escape, and you can experience it his way at Longbranch Ranch.

By [Mariah Tyler](#) | Published on November 30, 2022

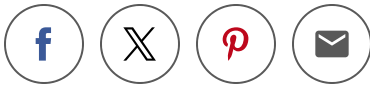


PHOTO: COURTESY OF LONGBRANCH

There is no one who embodies the Texas spirit quite like Matthew McConaughey. Some would say he is a living Texas legend, and his love for the state runs deep. So it's not surprising that when he launched [Longbranch bourbon](#) with Wild Turkey in 2018, he refined the award-winning blend with

Now, McConaughey is partnering with [Texas Hill Country's luxury campsite, Walden Retreats](#), to take things to the next level and create a retreat for lovers of bourbon and the Lone Star State alike. Here, at Longbranch Ranch, guests are inspired to get outside, quiet their minds, and set their spirits free.

When guests book the Longbranch Ranch room, they will stay in a tented suite that comes equipped with everything they'll need to get into a McConaughey state of mind, from a bottle of Longbranch to a signed copy of his book, "Greenlights." They can also take a mixology course and an audio-guided hike in the stunning Texas wilderness, enjoy a private string concert with classically trained artists in their tent, and experience fly-fishing under the big and bright starry night skies along the Pedernales River.

The bourbon brand will match the price of each Longbranch Ranch package booked with a donation to The Trail Conservancy, an Austin-based non-profit that preserves the widely loved Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail. McConaughey believes that trails are a way for people to "check out" and "get back in time with Mother Nature," which he admits "is hard to do in the busy lives that we lead."



"So the money we're matching for people that get a room here at Walden Retreat, [for that] to go to The Trail Conservancy, it all just lines up," he said.

the item he always packs for a trip.



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER



T+L: What led you to the idea of creating Longbranch Ranch and why choose Walden Retreats?

Matthew McConaughey: "Walden's got a really nice place out there, it's engineered for you to go out and engage in nature. I think that's important. I think everyone works harder now to try and find time out. Find time to check out so they can check in. So we wanted to partner with them and say look, your place... it's nice, it's luxurious, and it's comfortable, but it's not overly insulated. It's easy to walk out and deal with the beautiful Hill Country out there. And I guess I think that's good for people wherever they are."

T+L: Yeah, I agree. I like how unmanicured this property is — and the Hill Country in general.

Matthew McConaughey: "You know, it's a good way of putting it when I say not overly insulated. Not always do you need/want a proverbial vacuum cleaner on everything. Sometimes you wanna go, 'Can you just use a rake or



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

T+L: There is some serious beauty out here in Texas Hill Country. What do you love and admire about this part of Texas?

Matthew McConaughey: "Well, that you still get your horizons. One direction you still get the flat earth to the horizon and then you turn around you've got the Hill Country behind me where you've got a depth of field, perspective with the hills. Great hiking country! A lot of aquifers, a lot of fresh spring water around there. The wildlife is great. The clouds are another thing that people not from around there point out to me... I'd always take them for granted. My wife is in love with the clouds there. And you'll see here shortly... what the sunsets are like, it's pretty spectacular."

T+L: It's nice to see that your bourbon is blending the best of both Texas and Kentucky. Do you hope to bring more of Texas to the world, whether through more iterations of bourbon or new products?

Matthew McConaughey: "We've talked about it. Nothing concrete yet. We believe we really like that juice that's in that bottle right there, Longbranch,

amendment or a new version."

T+L: You've said before that you like your bourbon neat, but if you had to do a cocktail, what would you mix together in a glass?

Matthew McConaughey: "No, I'll go neat, but for the first one, put a couple of rocks on. Chill it up just a hair but not watered down too much. And then, towards the end of the night, *then* go neat. I don't like to mix stuff in. I know, some people do. But I really just appreciate what it is, exactly what we put in that bottle. Exactly what we worked for years to get in that bottle."



PHOTO: COURTESY OF LONGBRANCH

T+L: What would you hope future guests get out of this bespoke Longbranch Ranch experience? Any tips for how to disconnect and escape into nature?

Matthew McConaughey: "Check in with yourself. Check out to check in. It's hard to find places where we don't have stimulation coming in from the outside world from our devices, phones and work and people. It's a place to say anything or to say nothing at all. I hope people don't go there to try and

out, the answer for that, wait for it, it'll probably just come dancing on across your mind... We don't find most of the answers when we try to figure them out. We find them when we put ourselves in a place, like [Longbranch Ranch], for the answer to land on us. So this place... the experience is designed for that to let the answer come to you. Or let the idea come to you. And I like having a sip of my Longbranch out there looking around a big backyard with Mother Nature in it and letting those answers and ideas come across my mind."

T+L: It is really nice to have the peace and quiet.



PHOTO: MARIAH TYLER

Matthew McConaughey: "You know what, that quietness at the beginning can be loud. Some people are gonna get there and be very uncomfortable. But no – stay. Let the quietness be loud. Let it settle. It'll get quiet. Once it gets quiet you can enjoy that without having to fill the moment with words or fill it with noise. That's usually when it's like OK, I got something from this. It's OK for me to re-engage with my busy, busy life."

Matthew McConaughey: "Yeah, one's out there in Marfa, west Texas. Another one is Malawi, Africa. And, you know, the jungles in Peru as well. And the desert — the Sahara desert has been one of those places for me."

T+L: When you're on the road or in the air, what's the one thing you always pack?

Matthew McConaughey: "I've always got a journal. Always. I love putting pen to paper. I type a lot of things out now more than I used to. But I still write because that original thing I'll write down to me a lot of times looks like art itself much more so than the typed word. Or the way the font that I wrote it in or what I drew or what I misspelled or whatever it is, it becomes, for me, a little bit art on its own more so than a typed word."

Longbranch Ranch rooms start at \$425 per night. To book, visit waldenretreats.com.

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