



Kentucky Derby Museum

OPEN DAILY | DERBYMUSEUM.ORG

THE ONLY PLACE WE DERBY EVERY DAY

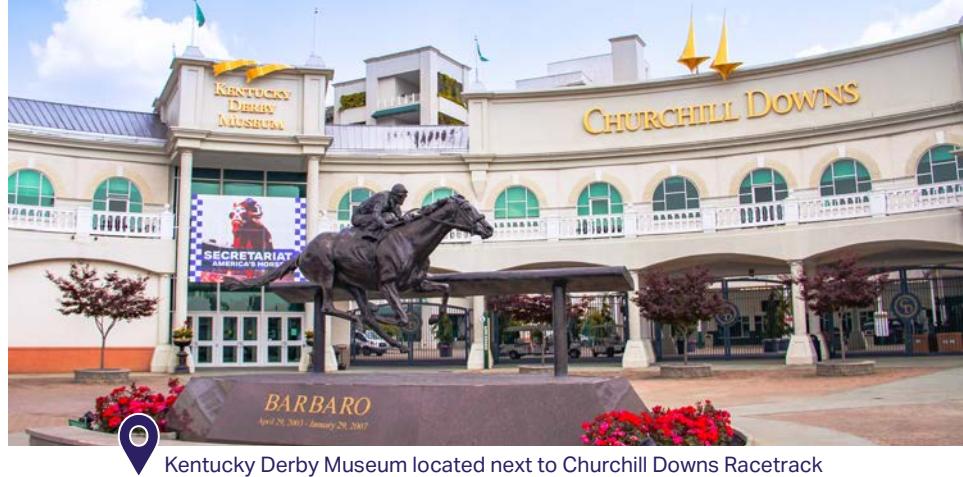
Kentucky Derby Museum is one of Louisville, Kentucky's beloved attractions, celebrating the world-renowned Kentucky Derby®. Derby is more than a world-class horse race. Every year on the first Saturday in May, the city is filled with an indescribable feeling of anticipation and magic that spans more than 150 years of fashion, celebrities, traditions, athletes, culture, history, and Southern hospitality.

You can get that Derby Day feeling all year round at Kentucky Derby Museum, which welcomes 255,000+ visitors annually. Located next door to Churchill Downs, the Derby Museum is the track's exclusive public tour provider. The museum offers an immersive experience and behind-the-scenes access that bring the history of the iconic horse race to life. It's a truly unique experience you can't find anywhere else!



Our Mission

Kentucky Derby Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity organization, established in 1985 by a significant grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation and several private donors. The Derby Museum's mission is to engage, educate, and excite everyone about the extraordinary experience that is the Kentucky Derby!



Kentucky Derby Museum located next to Churchill Downs Racetrack

TOURS • EXHIBITS • 360° THEATER



STABLE • FIELD TRIPS • SIP & SHOP



RENTALS & MORE!

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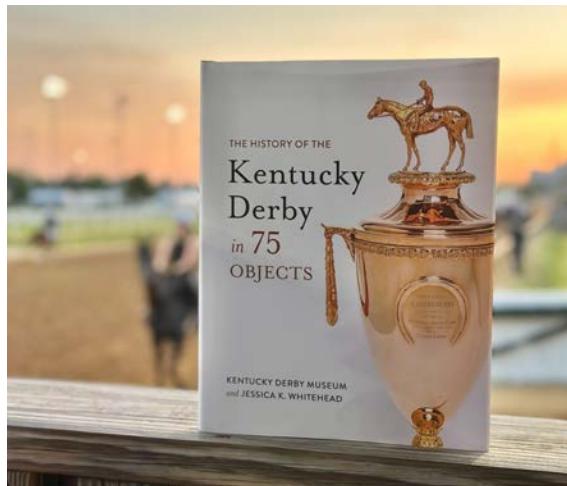


FAST FACTS

(Data updated annually)

🌹 KDM attendance for the last six years:
2020: 108,014 2023: 251,514
2021: 136,425 2024: 258,382
2022: 204,004 2025: 255,065

- 🌹 KDM made it onto USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice List in 2018, 2023, 2024, and 2025.
- 🌹 The Helen B. "Penny" Chenery Stable was dedicated in 2018, which is a live stable exhibit housing a retired Thoroughbred and a miniature horse.
- 🌹 At least 50% of the vendors in KDM's Store represent local businesses.
- 🌹 With more than 180 bourbon selections, the KDM Bourbon Bar is a stop on the Urban Bourbon Trail.
- 🌹 The 360-degree movie theater and the jockey simulator exhibit are one-of-a-kind experiences that can't be found anywhere else in the world.
- 🌹 KDM's annual gala, the unofficial kickoff to Derby week, is the museum's largest fundraiser of the year.
- 🌹 KDM published a book in 2024 titled *The History of the Kentucky Derby in 75 Objects*.



255,000+

Visitors to
Kentucky Derby Museum

40,000+

Students on KDM
field trips

10,000+

Mint juleps served in
the KDM Derby Café &
Bourbon Bar

5,357

Authentic Horseshoe
souvenirs sold in the
KDM Store

45

Bales of hay used by the
KDM Stable

300+

Event rentals



MEET OUR HISTORIAN

Chris Goodlett is KDM's resident historian. With a tenure at the museum spanning more than two decades, he is an expert on Derby history and has helped curate nearly every exhibit in the museum. His team is also in charge of protecting and presenting the silver Kentucky Oaks Trophy and the gold Kentucky Derby Trophy each year.

**FUN
FACT**
20,000+

Items in the KDM
permanent collection





NEED A STORY IDEA?

The race is on for the Kentucky Derby, held the first Saturday in May, and the Kentucky Derby Museum Communications Team is ready to help you uncover and share unique Derby stories. Made up of former journalists, our team knows what it takes to meet deadlines and craft one-of-a-kind stories with expert interviews, compelling visuals, and archival photos. Whether your story is digital, print, social, broadcast, or nontraditional media, just send us a request — we'll make sure you get the content and support you need.

DERBY HISTORY & TRADITIONS

HOW IT ALL STARTED

We can thank the grandson of famous explorer William Clark and a trip to England for the inspiration behind the Kentucky Derby. Now, the Derby is the longest continuously running sporting event in America, surviving wars, bankruptcy, floods, and a global pandemic. You can find some of the earliest Derby artifacts on display in the museum.

A SPOTLIGHT FOR THE OAKS

2026 will be a monumental year for the Kentucky Oaks. For the first time, the fillies will get the spotlight in Prime Time. However, this is not the first time Oaks Day has seen big changes. Oaks Day and Derby Day weren't always the first Friday and Saturday in May. Our experts can help you dive into the evolution of the race.

INTO THE VAULT

As the keepers of Derby history, the museum is honored to have an expert Curatorial Team tasked with protecting, cataloging, and preserving a collection of 20,000+ items. From the museum's protected vault to a newly published book of important artifacts, there's an infinite number of story possibilities.

THE FASHION RUNWAY OF THE SOUTH

Fashion has been an integral part of the Derby experience for over 150 years. The museum's newest fashion exhibit showcases ensembles from the late 1800s to today, highlighting the evolution of Derby style and the cultural significance of this annual spectacle.

MINT JULEPS AND COLLECTIBLE GLASSES

Why is the mint julep iconic at the Kentucky Derby? And why are people obsessed with the collectible glasses? The history involves some fun racetrack folklore. The museum's archives include every single official glass ever produced.

ROSES, LILIES, AND TROPHIES

Roses, lilies, a gold cup, and silver trophy are now synonymous with the Oaks and Derby. These winning traditions evolved over time and are now some of the most coveted prizes in the sport of horse racing.

WAGERING

Everyone hopes to win big on the Derby. From the very first purse to the rules of pari-mutuel wagering, the Derby can trace much of its history to European horse racing traditions. The museum houses dozens of artifacts tracing the history of betting.

WEATHER

Rain or shine, Derby draws a crowd. And historically, there's about a 50/50 chance of rain on Derby Day. Throughout the years, Derby Day has seen highs pushing past 90° and lows near freezing, impacting everything from track conditions to last-minute outfit decisions.

DERBY ANNIVERSARIES IN 2026

- 20 Years: Barbaro (2006)
- 25 Years: Monarchos (2001)
- 50 Years: Bold Forbes (1976)
- 75 Years: Count Turf (1951)
- 100 Years: Bubbling Over (1926)
- 150 Years: Vagrant (1876)



©Churchill Downs Racetrack



©Churchill Downs Racetrack





NEED A STORY IDEA?

KDM highlights powerful stories of resilience and triumph through exhibits that shine a light on athletes and legends who broke barriers and shaped racing history.



The **Black Heritage in Racing** exhibit uncovers the history of Black jockeys who dominated the early years of the Kentucky Derby, winning over half of the first 28 races. These athletes shaped the sport before being systematically pushed out, and their contributions continue to inspire today.



The **Right to Ride** exhibit tells the groundbreaking story of the women who fought for the opportunity to compete in the male-dominated sport of horse racing. It wasn't until the 1960s that women jockeys were finally granted the right to race professionally, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations, including trailblazing Diane Crump, whose legacy and artifacts are honored in the museum following her passing in January 2026.



The **A Las Carreras** exhibit, presented in both English and Spanish, celebrates the rise of Latin and Central American jockeys who left an indelible mark on Derby history. From Panama to Puerto Rico, these trailblazers overcame obstacles to achieve greatness, paving the way for contemporary champions.



The **Secretariat: America's Horse** exhibit was created in 2023 in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Secretariat's legendary Triple Crown sweep. This immersive experience highlights his extraordinary athleticism, larger-than-life celebrity, and the trailblazing vision of his owner, Penny Chenery.



The **D. Wayne Lukas: The Modern Trainer** exhibit chronicles the remarkable life and career of one of horse racing's most transformative figures. The exhibit draws from Lukas' own personal collection, entrusted to the museum in 2017, featuring trophies, fine art, and artifacts from his Hall of Fame career, offering a powerful tribute to his enduring legacy following his passing in 2025.

(Photos courtesy ©Churchill Downs Racetrack)


**Kentucky
Derby
Museum**

BOOK AN INTERVIEW!

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#DerbyEveryDay

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