

# BREWING & DISTILLING BIOGRAPHY

## DR. PEARSE LYONS

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling Co.

Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling Co. is a passion and a legacy for Dr. Pearse Lyons. Born and raised in Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland, Lyons hails from five generations of coopers who supplied barrels to distilleries in Ireland for a quarter of a century. Lyons went on to become the first Irishman to achieve a formal degree in brewing and distilling from the

British School of Malting and Brewing. While at university, he interned at both the Guinness and Harp Lager breweries and later worked as a biochemist for Irish Distillers, makers of the beloved Jameson whiskey.



Original Makers Club

### **Moving to the United States and success with yeast fermentation and alcohol education**

Lyons moved to the United States in 1976 when he accepted an invitation to help ethanol distillers in Kentucky improve their processes. In 1980, Lyons launched Alltech – the parent company of Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling Co. – that built its success upon the application of yeast technologies in animal health and nutrition. That same year, he established The Alcohol School in Lexington, Kentucky, one of the few schools at that time for the distilling industry, and ran it for 25 years. Lyons also published and co-authored *The Alcohol*

*Textbook*, a text that evolved over four editions and soon became a key source for the beverage, fuel and industrial alcohol industries.

### **Launch of Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling Co. in Kentucky**

In 1999, when the former Lexington Brewing Company in downtown Lexington was closing its doors, Lyons purchased it and resurrected the brewing and distilling tradition of Lexington that dates back to 1794. The first beer from Lyons' new brewery was launched with Kentucky Ale®, a blend of two classic beer styles – an Irish red ale and an English pale ale. A breakthrough came several years later when Kentucky Ale was placed into freshly emptied bourbon barrels from nearby distilleries to soak up the fresh bourbon and oak flavors. Thus, Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Ale® was born in 2006 and soon became the brewery's flagship brew. It is often considered to be one of the forerunners of the bourbon-barrel aging trend in craft beer – truly a product of bourbon country.

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### **Establishing Town Branch Distillery on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail®**

Lyons introduced Town Branch Distillery in 2012, built across the street from the brewery, making the downtown Lexington site one of a handful in the world to house both brewing and distilling operations. The distillery was also the first craft distillery to be inducted into the Kentucky Distillers' Association. Town Branch Distillery produces a line of spirits, including a malt whiskey named after Lyons, Pearse Lyons Reserve®, which was introduced to the world on his birthday, bringing to life his dream of one day having his own whiskey. The distillery is on the world-famous Kentucky Bourbon Trail® experience and welcomes visitors from across the globe.



### **Building Entrepreneurs in the Craft Brewing Industry**

Lyons is passionate about building further growth in the craft brewing and distilling industry and helping entrepreneurs. He is the founder of two major craft brew festivals and professional craft beer competitions that bring brewers and craft beer enthusiasts together each year in Dublin, Ireland, and in Lexington, Kentucky. He also is behind the Kentucky Ale® Brew-Off, an annual pro-am competition hosted by Alltech Lexington Brewing & Distilling Co. that provides an opportunity for homebrewers to showcase their brews to a wider audience. Several winners of the brew-off have gone on to establish their own successful breweries or pubs.

### **Presenting a New Phase of Excellence in Brewing and Distilling Education**

In 2015, the Alltech Brewing & Distilling Academy was born, a new phase of The Alcohol School, which is designed to foster new ideas, encourage entrepreneurship and help improve quality controls in a booming craft brewing and distilling industry. Today, Lyons serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Institute of Brewing* and *Critical Reviews in Biotechnology* and wrote a chapter on North American whiskies in *Whisky, Second Edition: Technology, Production and Marketing*, published in 2014.

### **Offering a "Cup of Hope" to Haiti**

Giving back is also a passion for Lyons, so he established Alltech's ACE Involvement Foundation, a charitable foundation to help fund the company's philanthropic efforts. The company's beverage division is a key component of this philanthropic strategy, thanks to its Haitian coffee that offers a "cup of hope" with Alltech Café Citadelle. Lyons aimed to create a sustainable Haitian enterprise after the devastating 2010 earthquake there, and resurrected a gem with the country's 100 percent mountain-grown, organic Arabica coffee. Alltech provides a sales and marketing channel for these coffee beans and all profits from the coffee's sale are reinvested into two primary schools in northern Haiti. The coffee is sold across Kentucky and at the Town Branch Distillery Visitor Center, and is used in brewing the company's Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Stout®.

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