

Snapshots From the Kentucky Derby

Luann and I just returned on Sunday from our first trip together to the Kentucky Derby. I can't bore you with our photos in person, but I'll bet I can do it with just the descriptions:

- During the Iowa Voyagers opening reception at the Lexington Hyatt, the featured speaker (pictured here) said that 98% of the workers in the horse industry are not owners, jockeys or trainers, which is all that you tend to see on TV. His job at a horse breeding farm is writing advertising copy, which he described as "pimping for stallions."
- This is a photo of the 85 Kentucky Bourbons - no kidding - stocked on the shelf behind the bar at the Desha's Restaurant and Bar (\$38.50 per drink for the most expensive). I'm not a big Bourbon drinker, although I could have fooled a casual observer that evening.
- After visiting a couple of breeding farms on Friday we drove past this large paddock with some odd-looking horses barely visible at the far end. When I asked LuAnn (a horse person) what breed she thought they could be, she glanced up and replied, "Cows."
- Next, we toured the Buffalo Trace Distillery, which is one of the oldest continuously operated distilleries in the country. Its tasting room served unusually generous portions, which largely accounts for this \$300 Visa charge at the gift shop 30 minutes later.
- The Kentucky Derby could be described as Hawkeye Tailgating meets the Royal Wedding on Halloween. Here's a photo of a guy in cargo shorts and flip flops standing behind a guy in a bright orange zoot suit behind a guy wearing a helmet with circling motorized racehorses on top, all in line at the lobster sandwich booth.
- I hadn't expected to place a bet on Saturday, but in the sixth race there was an entry called Miss Luann as you can see on this racing guide. I took this as a Sign From God and was going to place a large

wager after the 5th race ended. Unfortunately I was confused and the race I watched was actually the sixth. Fortunately, Miss Luann ended up finishing dead last.

- Everyone at the Derby is expected (if not required) to drink at least one \$10 mint julep. This lady sitting next to me complained at length about how much she disliked hers. When her husband brought her another one an hour later, I said, “I thought you didn’t like these things.” She replied, “I don’t.”
- This line to one of the women’s restrooms was the longest I’ve seen anywhere, including Kinnick Stadium. On two of my trips to the men’s room there were a half-dozen (mostly young) women in there using the men’s stalls. One woman on our tour reported a drunk girl in a long line who simply dropped her designer-label drawers right there on the concourse and peed in full view of a hundred people.
- Here’s a photo of the Jumbotron in the infield, which was our sole source of live race information. Despite our seat upgrade in the stands, we couldn’t see very well, couldn’t hear the loudspeakers over the crowd and didn’t know who had won the featured race for several minutes afterwards because we couldn’t read the horse’s number on the video replay.

Are we glad we went? Absolutely. Will we go again? Probably not, unless we are invited up to the private suite of Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Deputy Ruler and Finance Minister of Dubai. He has a pretty good view.

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