



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SSP America Announces Opening of Multi-Award-Winning Central Standard Tavern at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport

*Milwaukee-born distillery and hospitality brand brings craft spirits, local character and a true taste of the city to Concourse C*

**MILWAUKEE, Wis., April 16, 2026** — SSP America, a division of SSP Group, a leading operator of food and beverage brands in travel locations worldwide, today announced the opening of **Central Standard Tavern** at **Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport (MKE)**, bringing a distinctly Milwaukee concept to Concourse C. Rooted in craft, community and an unmistakable sense of place, the new tavern gives travelers an inviting, locally inspired experience built around the city’s spirit in every sense of the word.

Developed with the Central Standard team, the new airport location introduces passengers to a concept inspired by the story and spirit of **multi-award-winning Central Standard Distillery**. Born from friendship, bold ambition and a shared belief that better spirits begin close to home, Central Standard has become one of Milwaukee’s defining craft success stories — built on locally sourced ingredients, hard-working local talent and a passion for making spirits with real character. That commitment comes through in a concept that feels proudly of its city: warm, creative, approachable and deeply rooted in Milwaukee.

The new **1,069-square-foot tavern** features **51 seats**, including seating around a signature four-sided bar and an adjacent drinks rail designed to encourage connection and conversation — hallmarks of the Central Standard hospitality culture.

“Central Standard Tavern enhances the overall experience for travelers by offering a distinct, locally crafted option they can’t find anywhere else. This partnership strengthens the Airport’s mix of amenities, supports local business, and gives travelers an authentic sense of Milwaukee,” said **Airport Director Brian Dranzik**. “We showcase the very best of our city to travelers from across the world, and we’re excited to continue elevating the MKE Airport experience with our valued partners at SSP America and Central Standard.”

At the heart of Central Standard Tavern is a beverage experience that celebrates Milwaukee craftsmanship with style and substance. The tavern’s cocktail program is anchored by Central Standard’s celebrated spirits, giving travelers an immediate taste of the distillery’s quality, creativity and local character in a setting designed for the rhythm of the airport journey.

The space itself is designed to feel polished, layered and unmistakably local. Drawing on a refined industrial palette, the design incorporates salvaged Cream City brick, warm woods, blackened metal, rich red accents and barrel-inspired details, creating an atmosphere that reflects both Milwaukee’s industrial legacy and Central Standard’s modern craft identity. The result is a space that invites travelers to settle in, raise a glass and experience a genuine taste of the city before takeoff.

**Kyle Phillips, Vice President, Concepts & Development, SSP America, said,** “Central Standard Tavern is exactly the kind of brand we love bringing into airports—deeply local, full of character, and genuinely

reflective of the city it calls home. This opening gives travelers at MKE a true taste of Milwaukee through a concept that blends craft, hospitality, and a strong sense of place. We're proud to partner with MKE Airport and Central Standard to create an experience that feels authentic to the region and memorable for every traveler passing through."

"MKE Airport has been an incredible partner to work with, and we couldn't be more excited about showcasing our second Crafthouse & Kitchen to the world," said **Evan Hughes, co-founder & CEO of Central Standard**. "Whether travelers are arriving or departing, we want to create a memorable first impression of Milwaukee and to share the craft quality that defines Central Standard."

Founded in 2014, Central Standard has built its reputation by turning a bold idea into one of Wisconsin's fastest-rising distilling brands. Today, the distillery handcrafts award-winning bourbon, whiskey, vodka and gin from locally sourced ingredients, including cherries grown in Door County and honey harvested in Germantown. In the terminal, that same spirit comes to life in a concept that offers travelers a first or last impression of Milwaukee that feels grounded, memorable and true to place.

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### **About Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport**

Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport is celebrating 100 years of flight in 2026. Since 1926, MKE Airport has been serving Milwaukee with nonstop flights, nonstop innovation, nonstop employment, and nonstop adventures. The complete list of nonstop cities can be found at [flymke.com](http://flymke.com). MKE is owned by Milwaukee County and operated by the Department of Transportation, Airport Division, under the policy direction of the Milwaukee County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. The Airport is entirely funded by user fees; no property tax dollars are used for the Airport's capital improvements or for its day-to-day operation.

### **About Central Standard Distillery**

Central Standard Craft Distillery, a small-batch, craft distillery in Milwaukee and the fastest-growing top-10 Wisconsin-based distiller, handcrafts award-winning bourbon, whiskey, vodka and gin from locally sourced ingredients, including cherries grown in Door County and honey harvested in Germantown. Founded in 2014, Central Standard spirits have won 40 medals across multiple craft distilling categories. As part of their commitment to sustainability, Central Standard is certified by the USDA-recognized Grown Climate Smart program, which ensures grains are grown using environmentally responsible practices. Learn more at [thecentralstandard.com](http://thecentralstandard.com), or by following them on Instagram or Facebook.

### **About SSP America**

SSP America is a division of SSP Group plc (LSE:SSPG), a global leading operator of food and beverage outlets in travel locations employing 49,000 colleagues in around 3,000 units across 38 countries. We specialize in designing, creating, and operating a diverse range of food and drink outlets in airports, train stations, and other travel hubs across six formats: sit-down and quick service restaurants, bars, cafés, lounges, and food-led convenience stores. Our extensive portfolio of brands features a mix of international, national, and local brands, tailored to meet the diverse needs of our clients and customers.

Our purpose is to be the best part of the journey, and our focus is on making every journey taste better – bringing great food and welcoming hospitality to travelers across the globe. Sustainability is crucial for our

long-term success, and we aim to deliver a positive impact for our business while uniting stakeholders to promote a sustainable food travel sector.

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