01 / ORIGINS & PEOPLE

Old Elk

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO / Custom recipes. A patient cut.

Curt and Nancy Richardson founded Old Elk in 2013. [1, 4] Its Colorado identity meets custom recipes and distilling relationships beyond the state. [3, 7]

At a glance
Founded: 2013 [1]
Bourbon launch: December 2017 [4]
Brand home: Fort Collins [1]
Joined Middle West: May 2025 [1]



A recipe before a release

The Richardsons commissioned Greg Metze to develop their bourbon recipe in 2013. [3] Its unusually large malted-barley share became a defining feature. Metze joined Old Elk in 2016, before the bourbon's wider introduction in December 2017. [1, 4]

Experience, then continuity

Metze's 38-year Lawrenceburg career connects Old Elk to Indiana's distilling tradition. [2] Melinda Maddox later helped develop its finishing program and became master blender. [14, 15] Luis Gonzalez, previously Old Elk's CEO, became Middle West Spirits' chief commercial officer in August 2025. [17]

Watercolors are symbolic interpretations, not exact buildings or documentary portraits.

02 / HISTORY & PLACES

Colorado roots. Wider connections.



2013-2017 Custom recipe development leads to the bourbon's public launch. [3, 4]

2018 Expanded distribution follows the opening of The Reserve in Fort Collins that August. [5]

2021-2022 Sour Mash Reserve introduces a distinct New York distilling connection. [8] Four Grain and Double Wheat expand the blending conversation in 2022. [10]

2023-2024 Rum-finished rye, Island Blend and Cognac-finished wheat extend the finishing program. [12, 14, 15]

2025-2026 Middle West acquires Old Elk in 2025. [1] The next year's ten-year collection brings the brand's long-maturing recipes into focus. [19, 20]

Read the place by its role

Fort Collins is the brand's home, not a universal distillation claim. The Reserve belongs to its hospitality history. [5, 6] Indiana's custom-recipe relationship and New York's Sour Mash Reserve project have different roles. [7, 8] Middle West's acquisition does not change the provenance of earlier whiskey.

The complete website follows seventeen illustrated milestones and the wider producer story.

03 / WHISKEY, STORIES & SOURCES

Recipes, patience and a wider family.

Slow Cut is a proofing method
Old Elk describes adding water gradually over weeks to preserve flavor and texture. This concerns proof reduction, rather than a long fermentation or an age statement. [22]



Read the particular release
The 2025 flagship blends a four- to seven-year high-malt foundation with selected straight bourbons. [16] The 2026 ten-year recipes include 34% malted barley in the high-malt bourbon and 96% wheat in the wheat whiskey. [19, 20]

Blending as a continuing conversation: Infinity Blend makes continuity tangible through successive editions. [11] Barrel finishes and Cigar Cut offer other paths through the range, with specifications belonging to the expression rather than the whole brand. [23, 24]

Research notes & linked sources

Research: October 14, 2026. Company, launch and venue dates have distinct meanings. The Reserve is described historically; a current public opening is not asserted. Recipes and ages are release-specific. Acquisition does not establish where older whiskey was distilled. The website preserves the complete history, qualifications and additional context.

[1] Middle West acquisition, 2025
[2] Greg Metze biography
[3] Recipe and award, March 2024
[4] Bourbon launch, December 2017
[5] Distribution and Reserve, 2018
[6] The Reserve design project
[7] Luis Gonzalez interview, 2020
[8] Sour Mash Reserve, 2021
[9] Whiskeysmith launch, 2021
[10] Four Grain / Double Wheat, 2022
[11] Infinity Blend, 2022
[12] Rum-finished rye, 2023
[13] Single Barrel program, 2023
[14] Island Blend / Maddox, 2023
[15] Cognac wheat / Maddox, 2024
[16] Flagship evolution, 2025
[17] Gonzalez appointment, 2025
[18] Barrel Global agreement, 2025
[19] Ten-year collection launch, 2026
[20] Ten-year collection recipes
[21] Current whiskey lineup
[22] The Slow Cut process
[23] Cask Finish Series
[24] Cigar Cut
[25] Folds of Honor partnership