

Red Newt Cellars

Visionaries and “untrammelled lovers” of New York’s Finger Lakes wine region (according to Wine Spectator), David and Debra Whiting founded Red Newt Cellars in 1998 and Red Newt Bistro in 1999 along the East bank of Seneca Lake. Today, Kelby Russell—Red Newt’s winemaker since 2014 and a native to the area—sources grapes from select vineyards whose dramatically varied altitudes and soil types create a wide array of unique terroirs in a relatively small area. Red Newt’s white wines include Riesling, Gewürztraminer, and Pinot Gris while the red varieties include Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon. None of the wines have any yeast or sugar added during *élevage*.



All of the vineyards Red Newt work with for their vinifera program are located on and around Seneca Lake. To the northwest, Nut Road is comprised of limestone and sandstone and produces an aromatic, delicate Loire Valley-style Cabernet Franc used for Kelby’s rosé. To the West sits Lahoma Vineyard, Red Newt’s largest vineyard. This land is all sandstone and is one of the highest vineyards in the area. At the top of this vineyard, 1,600 ft above sea level, sit The Knoll, a parcel that is used to grow the benchmark Riesling for Red Newt. Nearby, lower-lying vines provide grapes for some of the other wines including the Circle Riesling and the Dry Riesling. Closer to the lake is Tango Oaks, a flood plain offering a mix of silt and loam on top of the bedrock. This site features Riesling planted to Alsatian clones, as opposed to the more typical German style Geisenheim ones, which brings a tropical fruit finish to wines from this spot. The East bank of the lake is called the “Banana Belt,” a reference to its warm climate that farmers used to joke was well situated for a different kind of fruit growing. This microclimate is where you’ll find Red Newt’s Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

Riesling



Varietal/Blend: Riesling

Farming Practices: pristine vineyard run by Kenny and Harlan Fulkerson; manicured, weeded, and hedged

Elevation / Exposure: mostly 1,400–1,600 ft / E

Soil: decomposed sandstone

Vine Training: Guyot

Harvest Technique: fruit thinning in early June / second drop before harvest / mechanical harvest on Oct 23 at an average of 20.5 Brix / Lahoma Vineyard’s 8^{er} Block (70%) and GC Block (30%)

Yeast: ambient

Fermentation: chilled overnight / crushed and destemmed with SO₂ addition / returned to bins for overnight / pressed to tank the following day / cold settled for 72 hours / spontaneous fermentation over 2 months / drier GC Block wine blended to adjust final RS

Maturation: 7 months in stainless steel on lees

Sulfur: small amount added at crushing

Vegan: yes

RS: 1.8%

Alcohol: 11.1%

Acidity: 3.05 pH // 7.4g/L TA

Fined: no

Filtered: yes

Country: United States

Region: Finger Lakes

Subregion: Seneca Lake

Vineyard: Lahoma Vineyard

Production #s: 650 cases (12x750ml)

91 points - Wine Advocate

91 points - Wine Enthusiast

90 points – Wine & Spirits; Year’s Best 2020 Rieslings, “Best Buy”

“The Red Newt Riesling is our expression of the richer style of Finger Lakes Riesling, a style that we believe ages spectacularly well. Just off-dry in the style rather than overtly higher in sugar, our Riesling plays on the same tropical and orange fruit that are echoed in the Dry Riesling. For us, this is a hidden gem in our portfolio that we hope rewards Riesling fans everywhere.”

Winemaker’s Notes

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