

Red Newt Cellars

Visionaries and “untrammled 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.

Cabernet Franc



Varietal/Blend: Cabernet Franc

Farming Practices: minimalist / manual weed control

Soil:

Vine Training: Guyot with high trellising to improve ripening

Harvest Technique: hand-picked on Oct 26 at 21.6 Brix

Yeast: ambient

Fermentation: field sorted / 25% of fruit placed in tank as whole clusters / remaining fruit destemmed and lightly crushed with SO₂ addition, part of which when to tank and the rest to bins / 3 days cold soak followed by spontaneous fermentation / malolactic inoculation 48 hours into fermentation / punch downs up to 4 times a day

Maturation: sealed in tank with dry ice for 3 weeks / pressed off of skins and returned to tank for cold stabilization till spring

Sulfur: small amount added at crushing and after fermentation

Vegan: yes

RS: 0.1%

Alcohol: 12.7%

Acidity: 3.6 pH // 5.2g/L TA

Fined: yes

Filtered: yes

Country: United States

Region: Finger Lakes

Subregion: Seneca Lake

Vineyard: Glacier Ridge Vineyard

Production #s: 355 cases (12x750ml)

90 Points – Wine Enthusiast

“The 2018 ‘Cream Label’ Cabernet Franc aims for a pure expression of Cabernet Franc in the Finger Lakes by using only stainless steel rather than oak. Bright cherry and violet fruit on the nose underlaid by mineral tension in the midpalate, in many ways this wine uses Cru Beaujolais as a touchstone. Refreshing to drink, it stands as a joyous counterpoint to the influence of oak that our single vineyard Cabernet Franc requires.”

Winemaker’s Notes