

Chertok 'Shekhina' 2022

Who: Max Rose & Family

Producer Summary: Chertok Wines is a family farm-winery growing apples and grapes in one of New England's premier apple terroirs. Chertok is a family name meaning 'little cherti' referring to the folkloric Russian spirits that were believed to inhabit the world alongside us. The winery focuses on producing natural country wines with an emphasis on fermenting their two crops in tandem.

Where: Champlain Valley, Vermont

Varietals: 40% Muscat Valvin, 10% Noiret + 50% blended Maccoun and Empire apples

Farming Practices: Farmstead apples are no spray, no-till organic. Grapes are conventionally farmed without herbicide.

Vintage Notes: "The growing season was wickedly hot and dry; a stark contrast to 2021's endless rain. Our plants were riding the struggle bus all year but damn if the fruit wasn't awesome!"

Vineyard & Orchard:

Grapes come from Folts Family Vineyard (Vineyard View Winery) overlooking the banks of Keuka lake located on an East facing slope with silty, loamy soils.

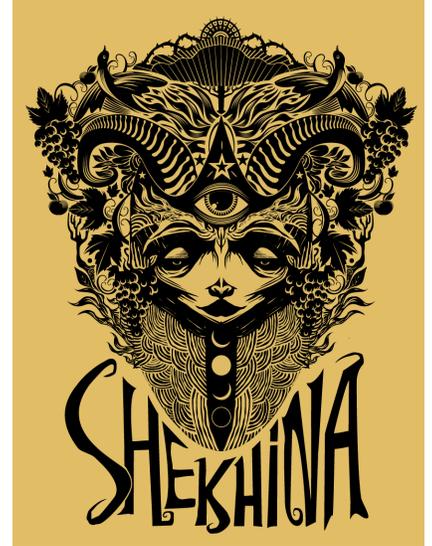
Apples come from Belmont Orchard, the Chertok-Rose family's 19th century orchard with calcareous clay soils on an East facing slope.

Vinification: The grapes were gently foot crushed and co-fermented in whole clusters with sulfite added between 4-7 days after crush. After 3-4 weeks fermentation, lots are split in half and the bins are filled back up with freshly milled apples for another 1-3 weeks of maceration. Pressed into polypropylene eggs for 6 months aging on gross lees.

Production: 94 cases

Tasting Notes: Aromas of rosewater and grapefruit zest with bright acidity balanced by savor, surprising concentration and a lengthy finish marked by a pleasing botanical bitter quality.

Fun Fact: "Shekhina is an abstract Talmudic and Kabbalistic concept. Translating literally to 'dwelling' or 'eminence,' Shekhina has many meanings to many different people but we like to think of it as representing the encompassing, queenly aspect of the divine that enfolds the mortal world. Mystic bad bitch energy for a pink wine with attitude!"



Further Reading:

Chertok focuses extensively on co-fermenting apples and grapes using a distinct method they have been refining since 2018. Beginning with whole clusters of grapes, the lots are very lightly foot crushed so that most berries are left unbroken. The remaining, unbroken fruit is slowly crushed over the 3-4 maceration resulting in lower fermentation temperatures and a substantial amount of the whole bunch, intracellular conversion associated with carbonic maceration. Once the grape fermentation is nearly complete, the lots are split in half and the bins are filled back up with milled (rather than pressed) apples resulting in 1-3 more weeks of fermentation. As a result of adding apples into a nearly completed wine, ethanol extraction of apple solids occurs, drawing out otherwise inaccessible flavor compounds from the mash. Max believes this is the best way to produce an authentic, New England country wine that captures the storied apple traditions of the region as well as the exciting viticultural future created by American hybrid varieties.

