

CHERTOK

Mazik 2022

Our younger, crunchier apple wine made by fermenting apple millings in vats for 2 months before draining the juice into glass demijohns to ferment slowly up through the middle of summer.

The apples: No-spray farmstead Empires from 50 year old trees grown on an east facing slope of calcareous clay supplemented with heirloom cider varieties from Windfall Orchard in nearby Cornwall, VT

Winemaking: Apples were milled into harvest bins with the top layer turned over daily for 2 months. Drained into 54L glass demijohns for 6-7 months of slow fermentation on the lees.



what's the name?

A Mazik is a Yiddish word used to describe an impish, mischievous figure, often used to refer to a puckish youngster. While we absolutely love the effect we get from our long macerated apple wines, the actual winemaking is a fairly awful experience. The lots are so decomposed by the time we press that it's inevitably messy and challenging no matter how careful you try to be. As the younger, fresher echo of our long-aged apple wine, Mazik seemed the right title for a wine that causes so much trouble!

the farms?

Windfall Orchard is our source for cider apples and we are so thrilled to be working together! Brad is a chef-educator turned orchardist that dotes over his 2 acre orchard with extreme attention to detail. Located 20 minutes inland from us, he has a crazy array of apocryphal varieties and trees as old as 120 years! We cannot overstate how carefully he manages these trees and the quality of the fruit puts everything around us to shame. We get a grab bag of all sorts of things from him with an emphasis on russeted varieties.

The remaining Empire and Maccoun apples all come from Belmont Orchard, our family farm in the Champlain Valley less than a mile from the lake. This region is defined by the influence of Lake Champlain and its prevalent calcareous clay soils. Belmont Orchard lies primarily along an East facing hillside overlooking a tiny valley with abutting woods on the southeastern edge.

the winemaking?

Our apple wines are made by milling apples into harvest bins and allowing them to break-down over the course of months until the lots have reached an apple-sauce like texture. We turn over the top, oxidized layer of apples every day as we watch the vat slowly ferment. In late December, after 6-8 weeks fermenting, the mash has broken down into the consistency of apple sauce. With the apples so broken down, applying almost any pressure in the press results in apple mush squirting across the winery. As a result we're barely 'pressing' our apple wines but rather loading them into the press and very gradually draining them over a period of weeks. This part of the winery is left unheated all year and by late December the ambient temperature is so low that we can afford the kind of time these apple lots need to drain freely without fear of spoilage microbes. It takes 3-5 days to fully drain a single press load and we are often still working this process in the last few days leading up to the new year. The juice is pressed to 54L glass demijohns where it will continue to slowly, slowly ferment until June or July. In the late summer we rack the wine together and bottle without fining, filtration or added sulfite.

Of all the things we do in the cellar, the apple wines demand the most labor and endurance by far. Stirring super cold lots by hand every day is a brutal affair and draining the mash takes what feels like a geological epoch. Honestly, it's not much fun. BUT! Here's the thing: it brings something truly special out of the apples while allowing us to account for the fact that we don't have a curing space for our fruit. There are many, many truly fine cider producers in New England making traditional cider and we realized we needed to find our own, distinct way of showcasing pomme fruit. The technique we arrived at is extreme but imbues the still wine with a more glyceric, satisfying texture and a more vinous drinking experience.

