



Our Sustainable Mission:

We founded Shelburne Vineyard with a commitment to sustainability, not only in terms of our farming practices and environmental ethic, but also as active responsible members of our community. These values are evident in the choices we make in each phase of our operations, from our land and farming practices, to our environmental footprint to the role we play in the greater community. We are honored to have been recognized for these commitments by being named 2009 Sustainable Agricultural Farm of the Year by the University of Vermont and winner of the 2010 Historic Preservation Award –Commercial Category by the Chittenden County Historical Society.

Our Land and Facility

Most of our vineyard acreage is located on lands actively protected either by deed or by third party conservation organizations, to remain in agriculture in perpetuity. Our Winery and Tasting Room, located on RT 7, the region's busiest traffic artery, preserves a piece of the agricultural heritage of VT and is unique among VT farms by being accessible on the public bus line and within minutes of the Champlain Bikeway. We selected this site for the combination of its excellent soils and this ideal location. Then we chose to build a tastefully designed structure, architecturally devised to nestle in the traditional agricultural landscape, yet incorporating the strictest environmental and energy efficiency standards, to house our production facility and attract a retail trade.

Our Philosophy: Vermont Viticulture

Commercial grape growing in Vermont is a recent development. Most people would not equate a cold, northeastern state like ours with a thriving viticultural region. The winters are long and harsh, the summers short and wet, and the pressures from weeds, pests and disease are great. Challenges abound! But then again, is this not why we do it? Greater challenges carry greater rewards.

Our philosophy for overcoming such challenges is an integrated approach. Conventional farming is out of touch with our ecological sensitivity and completely organic practices have proven economically unsustainable. Therefore, we routinely evaluate our viticultural techniques and aim to strike a balance between the two schools of thought. A portion of our grapes retain organic certification while we use integrated pest management strategies to manage the challenges organic techniques will not. This is a labor intensive process that includes hand and mechanical weeding rather than intensive herbicide use, addition of locally produced natural compost as a soil supplement, planting cover crops to enhance rather than deplete plant nutrients between our grape rows, careful pruning and leaf pulling to allow the wind and sun to reach the grape clusters and a strategically timed schedule of spraying to minimize the need for pest control.

Our Environmental Footprint

Our winery building was designed to be "green" with locally produced 8" thick insulated walls to maximize energy efficiency. Lighting is achieved with high-efficiency fluorescents and our wine processing room is equipped with motion sensors that turn lights on only when in use. Hot water is provided by an on-demand heater and waste water is treated through municipal sewer. Natural ventilation and air exchange minimize the need for heat or air-conditioning. Finally, we use recycled and post-consumer packaging materials, eco-friendly cleaning materials and carefully recycle or re-use other post-consumer waste.

In constructing the Winery we used local and natural materials wherever possible, resulting in a space that is light and welcoming and rich in warm, natural color. Our Tasting Room is framed by a high ceiling bathed in natural light from its high cupola and large windows with vineyard views. The terrazzo floors abound with color achieved by mixing an aggregate of local stone in the cement structural material, while paints and finish materials were chosen for their environmental friendliness. Our central tasting bar, crafted from rich Cherry wood harvested at near-by Shelburne Farms (home of one of our 3 acre vineyards) provides

a warm glow and soft background to the rich colors of the wines. The copper lighting fixtures illuminating the space were created by a local craftsman, as was the tasting bar. Appliances, where available, are Energy Star rated. Our parking lot is constructed of permeable local stone to minimize run-off. We are also one of the few VT farms accessible to employees and visitors via public transit.

We bottle our wines using eco-friendly lightweight glass bottles that are less resource intensive to produce and transport, and cork them using high-quality natural cork.

Our Community Identity

All of us at Shelburne Vineyard have a strong commitment to agriculture, viticulture and community. We manifest these values in many ways. The Vineyard regularly plans or hosts events to benefit community organizations that share these values, contributing a portion of our proceeds to those organizations. In our Tasting Room we feature the art and specialty products produced in our region and support those artists and producers by inviting them to show their wares at our special events. We are members Vermont Fresh Network, NOFA VT (Northeast Organic Farming Association), Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility and the Vermont Gay Tourism Network as well as the Vermont and Lake Champlain Regional Chambers of Commerce.

As active members of the Vermont Grape and Wine Council, we work hard to promote and support not only our own, but our fellow Vermont winemaker's products and to educate our customers on the quality and uniqueness of what we all produce. We encourage aspiring vintners and winemakers with mentoring and other support and try to share what we've learned as we have learned from those who came before us.

Each year at harvest, we are joined by a flock of community members and customers who join us for the harvest experience, and each semester we also welcome students from local colleges and universities studying in fields as diverse as Plant and Soil Science, Environmental Studies or Business and Marketing to intern and learn with us as we learn from them. Several of our former interns have gone on to successful careers in the field.

Shelburne Vineyard
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