

# BEST WINERIES



## Larkmead Vineyards in Calistoga

**The Estate Shines Bright in its Fine Wines.**

Larkmead Vineyards is one of the most historic wine estates in the Napa Valley, based along Highway 29 between the towns of St. Helena and Calistoga in a beautifully appointed open-air farmhouse setting surrounded by its own vines.

The wines are predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon-based and are sourced from the estate, with Merlot and Cabernet Franc also featured in many of its wines. The soils found here include gravel, clay and sand; each block is farmed and vinified separately.



*Wine tasting. Photo Courtesy: LarkmeadVineyards.*

The Larkmead Lillie Sauvignon Blanc, its main white wine, pays homage to its original founder, Lillie Hitchcock Coit—an honorary member of the San Francisco Knickerbocker No. 5 Fire Company.

Today, Avery Heelan continues the tradition of strong female leadership at Larkmead, making wines of great intensity, focus and elegance. She is joined by vineyard manager Nabor Camarena, who has tended Larkmead's grapes since 2009.

# BEST WINERIES



Winemaker Avery Heelan. Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.



Vineyard Manager Nabor Camarena. Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.

*"Positioned in the narrowest part of the valley, our soils and terroir are heavily influenced by the junction of the Mayacamas and the Vaca Range and the intersection from the Napa River."*

*- Winemaker Avery Heelan*

*"Our farming practice utilizes a 'systems' approach, meaning that we treat the vineyard as a single component of the larger surrounding ecosystem."*

*- Nabor Camarena, Vineyard Manager*

The winery has been owned by the Solari-Baker family since 1948; today, Kate Solari-Baker, her children and grandson are guiding Larkmead's continual pursuit of excellence. The Howard Backen-designed state-of-the-art winery has separate vinification tanks for each vineyard block, a reflection of its meticulous viticultural attention to detail that follows through in the high-quality wines.

## The Wines of Larkmead Vineyards

Larkmead Vineyards produces several red wines from a range of blocks, blending all of the many soil types and clonal selections together into several bottlings: Cabernet Sauvignon (\$125), Firebelle Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon blend (\$100), flagship Solari Cabernet Sauvignon (\$200), LMV Salon Cabernet Sauvignon-Cabernet Franc blend (\$150), Dr. Olmo Cabernet Sauvignon (\$150), and The Lark Cabernet Sauvignon (\$300). Its flagship white wine is the Lillie Sauvignon Blanc (\$75).



Wine Portfolio. Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.



The private Lark Room features views of the Mayacamas and Vacas mountain ranges. Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.

# BEST WINERIES



The 2021 Napa Valley Lillie Sauvignon Blanc “has an abundance of juiciness that balances the mineral and citrus-driven acidity that linger long after you take a sip.”

The 2019 Napa Valley Firebelle is “incredibly powerful and expressive yet pleasingly feminine and elegant on the approach.”

The 2020 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon “perfectly captures the beauty and resilience of the historic estate.”

The 2019 Napa Valley Solari is “the pinnacle of power... consistently the most complete and persistent on the palate, broad in both force and length.”



*Wine tasting. Photo Courtesy: LarkmeadVineyards.*

The 2019 Napa Valley LMV Salon “captures the aromas of summer on the estate, redolent of fields of wild violets, cedarwood, bramble fruits and cassis.”

The 2018 Napa Valley Dr. Olmo “coats your mouth with a dense core of blue fruit and the slightest touch of brown sugar.”

Larkmead’s 2018 Napa Valley The Lark is “the most brooding, inky and voluptuous of the single-parcel Cabernets.”



# BEST WINERIES



## Tasting the Wines at Larkmead Vineyards

The tasting room is open daily by appointment, with tasting appointments between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and tastings may take place indoors or outdoors.



*Stunning view of Larkmead Vineyards as fog lifts over the Vaca Mountain Range.  
Photo Courtesy: @vinfabula (Instagram)*



*The Salon Tasting. Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.*

The Salon Tasting (45 minutes, \$90) is the perfect introduction to the estate with a focus on three current-release red wines. The Estate Tasting (75-90 minutes, \$125) is more in-depth, includes a walking tour of the vineyards and winery and tasting of four red wines, including library selections, accompanied by bites of cheese and charcuterie.

## The History of Larkmead Vineyards

Larkmead Vineyards was founded in 1895 by the Coit family. Daughter Lillie Hitchcock Coit—a lifelong patroness of San Francisco firemen thanks to having been rescued from a fire by Knickerbocker No. 5 Fire Company—became known for holding salons at the Larkmead estate with artist and intellectual friends. She is responsible for planting the three palms nearby later made famous by Duckhorn Three Palms Vineyard Merlot, and for planting Riesling and Zinfandel.

After her death in 1929, she left a third of her fortune to the city of San Francisco; Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill is a tribute to her and all firefighters.

The Salmina family leased Larkmead from Coit in 1895 and bought it in 1903, turning it into a successful winery that survived even through the Prohibition years.

The Solari family came along in 1948. Larry and Polly Solari turned Larkmead into an even greater success, selling grapes to Italian Swiss Colony, Inglenook and Beaulieu Vineyard. Larry served as chairman of the Wine Institute for many years and is a legend of California wine history.

# BEST WINERIES



*(L-R) Larry and Polly Solari with Kate Solari Baker and Cam Baker circa 1962.  
Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.*



*Proprietor Kate Solari Baker and her late husband, Cam Baker.  
Photo Courtesy: Larkmead Vineyards.*

The Solari daughter Kate Solari-Baker took over the family winery with her husband Cam Baker in 1992. Together they transformed it to even greater heights, replanting much of the historic vineyard in 1995 and introducing modern hospitality spaces, production facilities and barrel rooms to the property. After serving as sought-after grape growers for many decades, they released the first Larkmead wines of the modern era in 1997.

## **Final Thoughts**

Larkmead Vineyards is making some of the best Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines in the Napa Valley from their well-farmed estate vineyard. The winery and vineyard are peaceful, and offer a sense of quiet luxury while the winemaking and viticulture teams continue to innovate in the cellar and vineyards to make better wines and farm more sustainably.