

Wine of the Week: Larkmead Solari Cabernet Sauvignon

Kate Dingwall - July 21, 2023

This new-school Napa Valley Cab is a standout of the Valley's northern wineries.



Drive through Napa Valley's Southernmost Carneros region, up through Yountville (wave at the French Laundry), and head up to Calistoga, until trees start popping up outside the window and you see a sign for Larkmead Lane. While the southern half of the valley is flat and hot, the north is blanketed in trees and hugged by mountains.

It's a cooler-than-expected example of just how diverse the Napa Valley is weather-wise. Larkmead Family Estate captures snapshots of the valley through a range of Bordeaux-style red wines that bottle specific soils and areas within the valley.

The Solari, made from grapes grown on a mix of Cortina (sandy loam with lots of gravel) and Pleasanton (grayish brown clay soil) then aged for 18 months in 78% new French oak. On the nose, it's all expressive cherry and black plum.

As far as the palate, it's full of a velvety lushness, with notes of cassis and plum balanced out with sage, tarragon, and earth on the finish. Grippy tannins and lifted herb linger, along with a wildly elegant finish.