

Holiday Gifting Guide 2023: The Best Napa Red Blends

by Matthew Kaner - 12/11/2023

Because everyone we know loves a good red blend. "You know what I'm really into lately...? BLENDS!"

I cannot count the amount of times I've heard that line in the last 10 years, so I knew I had to follow up my Napa Cab gifting guide with Napa Red Blends! Silky, expressive, juicy on the palate, and amazing on the table with food. Napa Valley does more than just grow excellent Chardonnay and Cabernet, and here's the proof. You'll find the hottest and most desired Bordeaux blends and beyond hailing from the Napa Valley. Here are my picks for the best Napa Red Blends to give as gifts in 2023:

Larkmead Vineyards Firebelle 2019 (SRP: \$100)

Calistoga has long been famous for its Merlot production and Larkmead gladly continues that legacy. Historically a multi-variety blend, Firebelle has the soft, plush texture of Merlot, but with some added structure from its companion Bordeaux varieties. Merlot at Larkmead, planted on rich loam soils full of clay and gravel, is allowed to express its density, weight, and power while maintaining its attractive aroma and flavor profiles.

The Firebelle, like its namesake Lillie "Firebelle Lil" Hitchcock, is both incredibly powerful and expressive yet pleasingly feminine and elegant on the approach. On the palate, the wine lifts and coats all of the corners of your mouth with incredibly supple tannins that make the wine linger long after it is gone.



This wine is incredibly fragrant, a signature of the warm yet moderate growing season. The winter rains replenished our vines and allowed the Merlot to stride through the growing season without missing a step. This vintage is great year for Merlot in general, offering gorgeous aromatic complexity and elegance. The 2019 Firebelle is ready to drink now but would be best from 2025-2035. If enjoying now, please decant for one hour upon opening.

57% Cabernet Sauvignon + 43% Merlot | 854 Cases Produced