



## Larkmead Vineyards, Calistoga

*Featured in the Slow Wine Guide USA - 2024*

**People** - Buzzing with biodiversity, this historic estate is let by second generation vintner and President Kate Solari Baker. Winemaker Avery Heelan is now in her second vintage and working much in the same as her mentor Dan Petroski while guiding the transition to organic certification. "Heat is our biggest stress here in Calistoga." In response to smoky conditions in 2020, Heelan developed an anaerobic method of draining and racking the tanks that helped insure against taint.

**Vineyards** - The Calistoga estate is bisected by the Napa River and spans benchland to benchland in a narrow part of Napa Valley between the Mayacamas and Vaca mountain ranges. They have begun phase one of a major replanting project with 20+ acres on the Mayacama side and are moving to a different irrigation protocol. The research vineyard now includes eight varieties: Aglianico, Carbon, Chenin Blanc, Petite Sirah, Syrah/Shiraz, Tempranillo, Touriga Nacional, and Zinfandel. Nabor Camarena leads the full time vineyards crew.

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**Wines** - Two estate white wines were produced in 2019 and the reds continue to defy the Napa stereotype with vibrant freshness, polished tannins and evidence of perfectly honed oak.

**Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2020** - 2,400 cases; \$125. The only wine produced by the estate in 2020 showing red and black plums, scented fig, sandalwood and cocoa nibs with characteristic polished tannins and lift. The quality defies the vintage conditions.

**Napa Valley Lillie Sauvignon Blanc 2021** - 299 cases; \$75. Aged nine months in French oak (47% new). White blossoms, lychee, white peaches and zippy citrus illustrate the variety's affinity for Larkmead's gravelly terroir and appetite.

**Napa Valley The Lark 2019** - 124 cases; \$300. Aged 18 months in French oak (100% new). 2019 is a swan's song for The Lark which has long been the estate's wine of concentration, finesse and depth. With darker blue and black fruits and the wine benefits from and is worthy of a decade in the cellar.

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**Acres:** 115

- **Cases:** 5,050
- **Fertilizers:** compost
- **Plant protection:** sulfur, organic
- **Weed control:** mechanical, manual
- **Yeasts:** selected indigenous yeasts, commercial cultures yeasts
- **Grapes:** 100% owned
- **Certification:** California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)