

Summer Sips

By Carolyn Jung - June 27, 2025

When the weather heats up, all thoughts turn to refreshing white wines, preferably sipped al fresco swinging in a hammock or at least basking in the comfort of A/C.

2023 Larkmead Chenin Blanc

If Chenin Blanc isn't a wine prominently on your radar, it should be pronto. Complex, versatile for pairing, and high in acid, it's a white wine that really shines in summer.

Lucky for us, one of the oldest family-owned wineries in the Napa Valley recently released its first Chenin Blanc, too. Calistoga's [Larkmead Vineyards](#), originally founded in 1895, has been owned by the Solari family for three generations. Its 115-acre vineyard is certified organic, too.

It debuted its 2023 Chenin Blanc made with grapes harvested from its Research Block, three acres planted with different grape varieties to study their blending capabilities, especially from climate changes.

I had a chance to try a sample bottle of this elegant wine that tastes of bright green apple, pear, and lemon meringue pie that's balanced by a hint of minerality. There's lively acidity, too, making it a go-to for many summer foods, including oysters on the half shell, grilled fish, green salads, and spicy Thai, Sichuan or Indian dishes.



The only downside? With only about 100 cases produced, the Chenin Blanc (\$75) is available only to Larkmead's wine club members.

Cheers: On the upside, the winery's wine club has three levels for joining, the smallest of which commits you to six bottles a year, with shipments that are fully customizable so that you get the wines that you prefer. You also receive complimentary tickets to winery events, as well as two complimentary estate tastings per year at the contemporary California farmhouse-like winery, designed by the late-great Wine Country architect Howard Backen.