



Larkmead Vineyards 2005 'Firebelle' Merlot Blend, Napa Valley

The 2005 Larkmead 'Firebelle' is the first vintage to have been crushed, crafted and bottled at the new Larkmead Vineyards Winery on Larkmead Lane.

Winemaker Notes:

Alcohol 14.7%

100% Estate grown fruit at Larkmead Vineyards

48% Merlot, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

Aged for 18 months in 50% new French oak barrels

2,100 cases produced

“Deep ruby-red color. Highly aromatic nose of bright cherry, redcurrant and flowers darkens to sweet blackberry, licorice and dried herbs with aeration. The palate opens with spicy red licorice and cola notes then unfolds and broadens to feature typical Larkmead flavors of cassis and black cherry with an elegant underpinning of stony minerality. The tannins are long and elegant and bring forth a smoky cedar/mocha finish.

The product of an unusually long and cool growing season, we can admire the intriguing aromatic complexity and subtle nuance that these growing conditions, in tandem with our rocky upper-valley site, conferred on this bottling. In strong contrast to the voluptuous, warm-season 2004 release, the new vintage features an array of ‘cooler’ Bordeaux-like red and black fruits with tobacco and underbrush complexity, and as such is more soil- than fruit-driven. An increase in the concentrated Cabernet Sauvignon component and the introduction of a small amount of nuanced Cabernet Franc, both darkens and enlivens the spicy red fruit nature of the dominant Merlot.

The wine’s inherent balance of site, fruit and structural elements offers natural development potential of four to six years in bottle.”

-Winemaker Andy Smith

Robert Parker Wine Advocate 91 POINTS

“The 2005 Firebelle has a Bordeaux-like personality in this vintage. Revealing some spicy black cherry and cedary notes intermixed with some forest floor and subtle barrique, the wine has excellent ripeness, a touch of licorice in the mouth, and a medium-bodied, stylish, but long finish with hints of white chocolate. This is a beauty to drink over the next 12-15 years.”

12-28-07, Issue 174.

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