



## “BRILLIANCE IN NAPA VALLEY” THE 2016 & 2015 CABERNETS

ANTONIO GALLONI, MARCH 2018

Dan Petroski continues to bring greater clarity and precision to the Larkmead wines. The 2015s are terrific, but the 2016s are even more expressive and layered. As always, these Calistoga wines pack a serious punch.

VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE	DRINKING WINDOW
2016	Tocai Friulano	Larkmead's 2016 Tocai Friulano is soft, open-knit and textured in feel, with lovely depth and nuance. Creamy and inviting, the 2016 is impeccably balanced. A few months of skin contact and a touch of French oak bring out the wine's natural richness.	90	2018-2023
2016	Lillie Sauvignon Blanc	The 2016 Sauvignon Blanc Lillie has terrific textural richness to play off the more typical varietal notes, which is the result of long aging on the lees. Peach, apricot, chamomile and dried flowers shape the mid-weight, silky finish. The 2016 is pure class.	90	2018-2023
2015	Cabernet Sauvignon	The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Larkmead has come together beautifully. Dark, sumptuous and inky, the 2015 offers serious fruit density and power, and yet retains terrific freshness. Succulent blue/purplish fruit, spice, lavender and menthol are all pushed forward in this succulent Cabernet. This is a fabulous entry-level Cabernet from Larkmead.	92	2020-2035
2015	Firebelle	The 2015 Firebelle shows the challenges of the growing season in its slightly roasted flavor profile and brooding, potent tannins. Just as it was from barrel, the Firebelle is decidedly virile. More importantly, the tannins feel not fully ripe. It will be interesting to see if the 2015 gains more polish over time. I have my doubts.	90	2018-2025
2015	LMV Salon	A dense, powerful wine, the 2015 LMV Salon exudes class. A rush of black cherry, plum, chocolate, spice and leather fills out the wine's ample frame effortlessly. The 2015 is a big, rich wine that needs time to soften, but all the elements are in the right place. This is a decidedly virile, imposing wine, but time in the glass bring out the wine's aromatic dimension, which is heavily marked by the 40% Cabernet Franc in the blend.	95	2022-2040
2015	Cabernet Sauvignon Dr. Olmo	The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Dr. Olmo has really come together since I last tasted it from barrel. Graphite, smoke, crushed rocks, spice and rose petal overtones give the 2015 Dr. Olmo its distinctive aromatic signatures. The 2015 finishes with remarkable tension and energy. What a gorgeous wine it is.	97	2012-2035
2015	Cabernet Sauvignon Solari	The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Solari emerges from clay-rich soils on the estate. Pliant, supple and enveloping, the 2015 possesses stunning textural depth and resonance. Soft contours (for a young Calistoga Cabernet) and plush fruit add to the wines considerable sexiness and allure.	96	2025-2040
2015	Cabernet Sauvignon The Lark	The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon The Lark is showing beautifully today. Linear and powerful, the 2015 is going to need time to be at its best. Next to the other wines in this range, the Lark is unusually reserved. Floral and lifted, with terrific purity and plenty of structure, the 2015 needs time to be at its very best. The Lark emerges from some of the sandier soils at Larkmead.	95	2022-2040



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VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE
2016	Cabernet Sauvignon	The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Larkmead is dark, pliant and powerful, with tremendous aromatic to balance out the dark Larkmead fruit. Savory herbs, leather, smoke and grilled herbs give the 2016 striking aromatic nuance and myriad shades of dimension. This is a wine with tremendous promise.	(90-93)
2016	Firebelle	The 2016 Firebelle, Larkmead's Merlot-based blend, is fabulous. Sweet floral and spice notes give the wine freshness and vivacity. Soft and pliant, but with good structure, the 2016 is shaping up to be a jewel of a wine. It is also quite a bit more refined than the 2015 tasted alongside it. There is lovely density here.	(91-94)
2016	LMV Salon	The 2016 LMV Salon is the first vintage that is Cabernet Franc dominated. The new emphasis on Franc has resulted in a wine with tremendous aromatic lift and bright, red-toned fruit in place of the darker, richer expression the LMV had when it was Cabernet Sauvignon-dominated. Bright and nuanced, with tons of power, the 2016 is absolutely brilliant.	(92-95)
2016	Cabernet Sauvignon Dr. Olmo	The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Dr. Olmo is powerful, dense and savory. It is also raw and not fully put together. I don't think that will be much of an issue for the future, but today, the Dr. Olmo is very hard to taste. Today, the Dr. Olmo is the most reticent of the three Black Label Cabernets. I have seen this wine blossom with time in bottle, so I will not be surprised if that is the case here as well.	(92-95)
2016	Cabernet Sauvignon Solari	A huge, ample wine, the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Solari possesses notable volume and textural resonance in every dimension. Super-ripe black cherry, plum, chocolate, licorice and exotic spices are some of the many notes that flesh out. The Solari is super-expressive today. What a wine!	(94-97)
2016	Cabernet Sauvignon The Lark	The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon The Lark is precise, beautifully layered and nuanced, with all of the muscle and power that are such Larkmead signatures. In 2016, the Lark deftly balances intensity with finesse. Striking aromatic notes develop in the glass, adding lift and myriad shades of nuance.	(93-96)