

**JULY 28, 2015**

I did a small report on my Top Napa Reds of 2012 a few months ago on the site, and that list has changed very little. However, a few top wines did creep in, namely: Bryant Family Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley, 99 points; Larkmead Napa Valley The Lark, 98 points; Realm Cellars Napa Valley St. Helena Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard, 98 points; and Schrader Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard RBS, 98 points.

I am sure the Bryant Family comes as no surprise along with Schrader, and I was happy these two producers pulled back on the octane drive to these wines in 2012. However, Realm Cellars was a new name for me and I love the tension and beauty to these small-production wines that number only in the hundreds of cases. Larkmead continues to be a favorite producer in Napa, and its wines remains underrated by many.

## **2012 THE LARK – 98 POINTS**

You can smell the blueberry and gravel character. Full body with great depth of fruit and structure. A wonderful inner sense of form and agility. A blend of Larkmead's two best vineyard parcels. Only made in the best vintages. This follows the 2009. No production in 2010 and 2011. Pure Cab. 270 cases made. Available in Fall 2018.

## **2012 SOLARI – 95 POINTS**

A wine with sliced mushroom, bark and spice plus berry and dark chocolate. Full body with forest flower, bramble, and light earth. Powerful and rich. A wonderful expression of Cabernet Sauvignon from here. Pure Cab. Available in November. Give it two or three years to soften. Try in 2017.

## **2012 LMV SALON – 95 POINTS**

What a finish on this with great fruit intensity. Full-bodied, firm and velvety. Lots of fruit and tannin tension. It has a fabulous finish. Wonderful elegance. 67% Cabernet Sauvignon and 23% Cabernet Franc.

## **2012 CABERNET – 94 POINTS**

Aromas of currant, blueberry and brick character. Some dried herb too. Full body, firm and racy tannins plus dark berry, dark chocolate and mahogany. Wonderful finish. 94% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Petit Verdot. Drink or hold.

## **2012 FIREBELLE – 94 POINTS**

This is about half Merlot with Malbec and Cabernet Franc. A velvety yet fresh red with plum, currant and berry character. Full body, round tannins, and a crisp finish. Fantastic finish. Love the texture. Drink or hold.