



## LARKMEAD VINEYARDS PROMOTES ASSOCIATE WINEMAKER AVERY HEELAN TO WINEMAKER

WINE INDUSTRY ADVISOR, JULY 26, 2021



*After Two Years Working Under Winemaker Dan Petroski, Heelan Opens New Chapter for Historic Estate's Winemaking Legacy*

**Calistoga, Calif. July 26, 2021** – Larkmead Vineyards is pleased to announce that Associate Winemaker Avery Heelan has been promoted to Winemaker. Heelan will be taking over from celebrated winemaker Dan Petroski, who joined Larkmead in 2006 and has been the winemaker since 2013. “We are thankful to Dan for what he has done to preserve and expand the Larkmead legacy over the last 15 years,” says proprietor Cam Baker. “Our wines have been lauded by critics and our members alike, and Dan has initiated some projects for the estate and Napa Valley at large. We are eager to welcome the next generation and chapter with Winemaker Avery Heelan.”

Avery Heelan joined the Larkmead Vineyards team in July 2019 after positions as Cellar Master at Screaming Eagle Vineyards in Napa, Vintage Assistant Winemaker at Domaine Yves Boyer Martenot in Meursault, France, and as a Vintage Enologist at Capel Vale Winery in Western Australia. Heelan holds an M.S. in Agricultural and Environmental Chemistry, with a specialization in Viticulture & Enology from the University of California, Davis. “Now that Larkmead has reached 125 years, I am excited to usher our wines into the next era of our history, focused on climate change research, organic farming and approaching the 150-acre estate as a contained microcosm that has the potential to produce the world’s finest wines,” comments Heelan.



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In her new role at Larkmead, Heelan will oversee all winemaking and vineyards, continuing climate action and research initiatives with the Larkmead Research Block and working closely alongside viticulturist Kelly Maher and vineyard manager Nabor Camarena to manage the 150-acre estate. Heelan will also start producing wines from the Hillside vineyard, Larkmead's most recently completed vineyard development.

Larkmead proprietors Cam and Kate Solari Baker welcome the next chapter of winemaking leadership under Winemaker Avery Heelan. "We are thrilled to announce Avery Heelan as our next winemaker at Larkmead," notes Kate Solari Baker. "When Cam and I took ownership of the property in the early 1990's, we had the vision and goal to recapture the historic place Larkmead has held in the Napa Valley. We are excited for Avery to manifest that vision and make excellent wines for a new generation that truly reflects the stature, personality, and history of this world class site."

Petroski leaves Larkmead to focus on his own brand, Massican Wines, which he started at Larkmead, and has been increasing production along with sales, marketing and distribution.

His tenure at Larkmead includes receiving multiple 95+ scores from the top wine publications, introducing various sustainability initiatives including the Larkmead Research Block, and beginning the estate's conversion to California Certified Organic Farming (CCOF).

### **About Larkmead**

The historic Larkmead estate is one of the oldest family-owned establishments in Napa Valley. Originally founded in 1895, Larkmead is now under the stewardship of proprietors Cam Baker and Kate Solari Baker. Kate's parents, Larry and Polly Solari, purchased Larkmead in 1948. Kate spent her childhood in the valley, exploring a bygone Napa dominated by prune and walnut orchards, hayfields, cattle ranches, and acres of empty fields. Her parents were aware of Larkmead's storied past, and sought to honor its legacy, a philosophy they passed down to Kate and her husband. The Bakers have been the force behind Larkmead's transformation from a historic vineyard into a world-renowned wine estate. During the first 10 years of their ownership, they directed a complete replanting of the property, tailoring the selection of varieties, clones, and rootstock to suit the special characteristics of each individual block. In 2005, they built the Tasting Salon and Cellar as the first phase of a state-of-the-art winery on the property so that each vineyard block could have its own dedicated vinification tank and in 2012 built the barrel hall and hospitality center. Designed by architect Howard Backen, an old family friend, the farmhouse and production facility are both classic and comfortable, providing a place for peaceful reflection away from a busy and demanding world.