

vinous

This is a stunning set of wines from Larkmead. The 2012s are big, powerful Cabernets that will require quite a bit of patience. They are among the most structured wines of the year I tasted. The 2013s are even more intense. After a little bit of a hiccup with 2011, the winemaker transition from Andy Smith to Dan Petroski seems to have occurred pretty smoothly. Petroski has a decidedly Old World-leaning palate, which seems very well suited to the kinds of wines that seem to emerge pretty naturally from this historic Calistoga site. Longtime Larkmead fans will note a few changes in the wines, such as a move to make Cabernet Franc an important component in the LMV Salon and the evolution of the flagship Lark to a single-parcel wine, rather than a field or cellar selection. Personally, I very much like what is coming out of Larkmead these days, and that is no way a critique of prior vintages, but rather an observation of what looks like a very bright future here.

From New Releases from Napa Valley: 2012 and 2013, Part I (Dec 2014) by Antonio Galloni

VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE	DRINKING WINDOW	RELEASE PRICE
2013	The Lark	The 2013 Lark is an utterly magnificent, complete wine that brings together power, density and finesse. Graphite, lavender, crushed rocks, cassis, blueberry jam, and mint all blossom in the glass. Savory overtones add freshness and complexity. The Lark shows the pedigree and stunning beauty that is the signature of this great Napa Valley vintage.	(95-98)	2023-2043	Not Available
2013	Solari	Massive and structured to the core, the 2013 Solari is another totally captivating wine from Larkmead. Lavender, blackberry jam, cassis, mint, new leather and smoke saturate the palate as this dramatic, full-bodied wine shows off its captivating personality and huge sense of structure. Today the tannins are searing an intense, but there is more than enough fruit to go the distance. I sincerely hope readers will have the discipline to forget about the 2013s for a good 7-10 years, and even that may not be enough	(94-97)	2023-2043	Not Available
2013	LMV Salon	The 2013 LMV Salon is quite backward at this stage, even with the addition of 30% Cabernet Franc to the Cabernet Sauvignon. Intensity and overall power rule the day, although hints of iron, smoke, new leather and licorice gradually begin to emerge from the glass. The explosive, resonant finish bodes quite well for the future, but the real question is how far off that really is	(93-95)	2020-2040	Not Available
2013	Cabernet Sauvignon	Readers who want to get a sense of the 2013 Cabernets at Larkmead would do well to check out the straight Cabernet Sauvignon bottling. A distinctly gamy, savory profile emerges, followed by waves of dark fruit. Hints of orange peel, white pepper, lavender, game and sage add an exotic flair on the finish. The tannins remain firm, but there is more than enough fruit to provide balance. Larkmead uses mostly young vines for the straight Cabernet Sauvignon. Explosive and intense throughout, the 2013 is a highlight of both the year and the range at Larkmead.	(92-94)	2018-2033	Not Available
2013	Firebelle	The 2013 Firebelle is shaping up to be a real beauty. Savory herbs, dark red/purplish fruit, flowers and cinnamon are some of the many notes that meld together in the Firebelle, Larkmead's Merlot-based blend. The flavors are bright and very nicely focused in a wine that impresses for exceptional polish and overall balance. There is so much to look forward to.	(92-94)	2018-2033	Not Available

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VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE	DRINKING WINDOW	RELEASE PRICE
2013	Lillie	The 2013 Lillie, 100% Sauvignon Blanc, is wonderfully floral and mineral. White peach, flowers, mint and crushed rocks emerge from a wine with more than a passing resemblance to the great Graves whites. The persistent, textured finish proves to be absolutely irresistible.	93	2014-2019	\$55.00
2013	Tocai Friulano	Apricot pit, melon, lemon oil and subtle hints of earthiness are laced together in Larkmead's 2013 Tocai Friulano. The style is bright, dry and bracing, with terrific balance and class. My preference is to drink the Tocai over the next year or two, while the flavors remain bright.	90	2014-2017	\$38.00
2012	The Lark	All the best elements of the year come together in the 2012 the Lark. A captivating bouquet laced with the essence of lavender, spices, black cherries, cedar and smoke melds into layers of intense dark fruit, all supported by firm yet well-balanced tannins. Powerful and explosive to the core, the Lark is another 2012 from Larkmead that is built for cellaring. The style is ripe, full-bodied and intense, yet all the elements are in the right place	95+	2022-2032	\$175.00
2012	Solari	Graphite, smoke, licorice, incense, game and black fruit race across the palate in the 2012 Solari. This is an especially explosive, structured wine for the vintage, with superb balance and the density to support years of exceptional drinking. Black cherries, plums, game and tobacco reappear on the huge finish. This is a rare 2012 that demands patience.	94+	2022-2037	\$125.00
2012	LMV Salon	Larkmead's 2012 LMV Salon is all about texture, polish and silkiness. Dark red cherries, plums and cloves are all beautifully expressive. Silky tannins support the creamy finish. The LMV Salon has changed quite a bit conceptually since I first started tasting the component wines in the Spring of 2013. Since then, winemaker Dan Petroski has opted to add a fair amount of Cabernet Franc to the blend, 33% to be exact, the highest ever here. That has resulted in a wine built on finesse and resonance. There is so much to like here.	94	2019-2031	\$110.00
2012	Cabernet Sauvignon	The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon bursts from the glass with tons of depth and overall intensity. Graphite, menthol, new leather, smoke, herbs and black fruit are all laced together nicely. Today the tannins are a bit dusty and rough around the edges, but at the same time, the 2012 is nowhere near ready to drink, so there is plenty of time for those contours to soften a touch. The Cabernet Sauvignon is a pretty tannic wine for the year, so patience is key.	93	2019-2031	\$90.00
2012	Firebelle	Larkmead's 2012 Firebelle is a dark, voluptuous beauty. Black fruit, spices, plums, mocha, licorice and leather meld together in an intense, powerful wine bursting at the seams with intensity and power. With time in the glass, the 2012 finds a bit more focus and finesse. Rose petals, mint, mocha, lavender, and cinnamon are layered into the finish in a striking Firebelle to drink now and over the next 15 years, give or take	91	2017-2031	\$80.00