



CALIFORNIA, NAPA VALLEY:

NAPA'S EXUBERANT, POWERFUL 2015s

JEB DUNNUCK, DECEMBER 2017

Located north of Saint Helena and pulling all from their estate vineyard located around the winery, owner Cam Baker and winemaker Dan Petroski have produced some true superstars in 2015. These are ripe, full-bodied, majestic, yet structured wines that are going to age beautifully. There's been a distinct stylistic shift with the 2016s, which were harvested far in advance of when most were harvesting, and the wines are certainly still beautiful, yet more tannic, backward, and angular. They'll be beautiful wines, but certainly in a different style than previous vintages.

VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE
2016	Lillie	One of the top Sauvignon Blancs out there is the 2016 Sauvignon Blanc Lillie from Larkmead. This beauty offers terrific notes of pineapple, exotic citrus and flowers in a medium-bodied, juicy, lively style that has great complexity and length. Brought up in foudres and smaller barrels, it's well worth seeking out	90
2015	Cabernet Sauvignon	Moving to the 2015s, the largest production cuvee from younger vines is the 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon and it includes 3% Cabernet Franc and spent 18 months in 65% new French oak. Possessing terrific richness in its dark fruit, tobacco and Graves-like minerality, this beauty is full-bodied, concentrated and layered on the palate. It's a beautiful base cuvee that does everything right.	95
2015	Firebelle	The Merlot-dominated cuvee of the estate is the 2015 Firebelle and it checks in as 71% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Petit Verdot that spent 18 months in 65% new French oak. It offers a terrific bouquet of black cherries, leafy herbs, lavender, and dried violets, medium to full body, loads of minerality, and a fresh, focused, beautifully balanced style. It's ideal for drinking over the coming 15 years.	93
2015	LMV Salon	A blend of 60/40 Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, the 2015 LMV Salon is a cuvee that's moving towards being a Cabernet Franc-dominated release as the estate plants more Cabernet Franc. Cassis, spring flowers, chocolate and a rocky, river bottom-like earthiness all flow to a full-bodied, concentrated, tannic 2015 that has exceptional purity and a great finish. Give bottle 3-5 years and enjoy over the following 15+.	94+

VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE
2015	Dr. Olmo	Of the three top Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Dr. Olmo is the most classic expression of Cabernet and offers Pauillac-like notes of black cherry, cassis, lead pencil shavings, espresso roast, and gravelly minerality. It's full-bodied, concentrated, and structured, and will benefit from 4-5 years of bottle age and shine for 20-25 years or more.	96
2015	Solari	From clay soils, the 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Solari is borderline perfection and reminds me of a young Montrose with its deep cassis and currant fruit, graphite and lead pencil nuances, full-bodied richness, and a powerful, yet opulent personality. This is a gorgeous wine that is certainly approachable today given its purity and balance, yet needs a decade to hit prime time and is going to keep for 2-3 decades.	99
2015	The Lark	Lastly, the 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon The Lark is another tour de force in Napa Valley Cabernet! More plump, rounded and sexy than the Solari release, it boasts heavenly notes of blackcurrants, chocolate, espresso roast and dried flowers. With a seamless, full-bodied, plush, even sexy, style, no hard edges, and sweet tannin, drink this beauty anytime over the coming two decades or more.	98
2016	Cabernet Sauvignon	Moving to the barrel samples, the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon is a pretty, elegant wine that lacks the richness of the 2015 yet has perfumed notes of red and black currants, spring flowers, and spice. A blend of 94% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Petit Verdot that was harvested early in September, it's going to need short-term cellaring.	(92-95)
2016	Firebelle	The 2016 Firebelle checks in as a blend of 65% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest Petit Verdot that's still aging in 75% new French oak. Elegant, medium to full-bodied, bright and fresh, with perfumed notes of red plums, cherries, spice and forest floor, with a terrific gravelly minerality, it lacks the oomph of the 2015 but is certainly a perfumed, elegant, balanced red.	(92-94)
2016	LMV Salon	The 2016 LMV Salon is a blend of 55% Cabernet Franc and 45% Cabernet Sauvignon and it was firing on all cylinders. With perfumed notes of plum, currants, violets and spring flowers, it shows the change in style of the estate with a medium-bodied, elegant, crisp, yet balanced style on the palate. Brought up in 60% new French oak, it too is going to need bottle age.	(93-96)
2016	Dr. Olmo	Notes of spice-box, black cherries, earth and dried flowers all emerge from the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Dr. Olmo, which is all Cabernet that's brought up in 55% new French oak. With bright acidity, good concentration, and an elegant, layered style, I expect it to gain a touch more weight in bottle, and it should age beautifully for two decades.	(94-96)
2016	Solari	The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Solari (100% Cabernet Sauvignon) is one of the richer, more full-bodied, concentrated 2016s and it offers lots of blue fruits, spice, and graphite, with huge minerality, in a deep, tannic, backward package that's going to demand bottle age.	(95-97)
2016	The Lark	The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon The Lark is still aging in 80% new oak comes from more sandy, loamy soils. This gorgeous 2016 is more open and exuberant than the Solari offering textbook notes of black cherries, currants, dried herbs and Provençal herbs. With loads of gravelly minerality, full-bodied richness, huge tannin, and impeccable balance, it's going to need 4-5 years of cellaring yet should be a 30-year wine.	(95-97)