



TOP 100 NAPA AND SONOMA WINES OF 2017

- # 56 - LARKMEAD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2014 THE LARK**
- # 70 - LARKMEAD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2014 DR. OLMO**

JAMES SUCKLING, JANUARY 4, 2018

There has never been a better time to buy the best of Napa and Sonoma. Take a look at my list of top 100 wines from the regions that we've tasted in 2017 because there's got to be a number of wines – both reds and whites – that you'll like. From a fresh and balanced 2014 Oakville cabernet to a bold and bright 2015 Sonoma Coast pinot, these are the wines that you must drink. Come and taste the precision and pure fruit character that California does so very well.

Most of the wines in the list are from the 2014 vintage, which was a great follow up to the legendary 2013. As I wrote about Napa Valley's 2014 vintage earlier last year, the 2014s show their true character and nature of their respective soils and microclimates. What's in the bottle is more about their respective vineyards than the weather patterns during the year. It was altogether a more balanced growing season than most years in my recent memory. In my mind, it's better to drink the 2014s or 2012s now and leave the powerful 2013s to mellow with bottle age. I'd say the same when it comes to the 2015s as well. I am a huge fan of reds produced in 2013, as they show a superb structure that harkens back to the great vintages of the 1970s, 1960s, and 1950s. And you know what? Those classic reds from 40 and 50 years back are still drinking extremely well. So, stash some in your cellars....

The fact is that just about all my top wines are Napa Valley cabernets, and they are all expensive – some slightly less than others. I do wish that they are less expensive but nevertheless, most of the wines tend to sell out every year anyway. I did include some reasonably priced Napa reds such as those from Etude, Martin Ray, Larkmead and Flora Springs, among others. I am not going to go on and on about each and every single wine in the list. Ultimately, they are all great wines. I hope you have the opportunity to try one in the near future. Unlike our global Top 100 of 2017, all of these wines were chosen for their sheer quality, and price was not a factor.

—James Suckling, CEO/Editor JamesSuckling.com

VINTAGE	NAME	TASTING NOTES	SCORE	RANKING
2014	The Lark	Aromas of dark berries and currants with pine needles and minerals as well as well as stones. Full body, dense and silky tannins and a savory finish. Blackcurrants and hints of lead pencil. Released in September 2018. Needs at least three to four years to soften.	97	#57 Top 100 Napa & Sonoma Wines 2017
2014	Dr. Olmo	Blueberries and blackberries with hints of lavender and fresh mushroom. Full body, wonderful depth and resounding intensity. Plenty of asphalt and tar. Hot stones. Gorgeous ripe and fine tannins. Great depth. Drink or hold. September 2017 release.	97	#70 Top 100 Napa & Sonoma Wines 2017