



AIRFIELD ESTATES

2020 DAUNTLESS



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

14.2% Alcohol
3.82 pH
5.8 g/L TA
1,777 cases

*Produced in a Vegan Manner
(No animal byproducts used
in production of this wine)*

Airfield Estates is a fourth generation family farm based in the Yakima Valley cultivating a wide range of premium grapes and crafting estate grown wines of exceptional quality. As the name suggests, Airfield Estates has ties to aviation. A portion of the family property operated as a training base for hundreds of Army Air Corps pilots during World War II. The pride, passion, and dedication of these heroes provide a great source of inspiration as we strive to pay tribute to them with our wines.

VINEYARD

Established in 1968, our estate vineyard was one of the first commercial vineyards in Washington State. Our first plantings were Riesling, Gewürztraminer, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Over the years, we have expanded to over 20 varieties spanning approximately 830 acres. Nestled on the foothills of the Rattlesnake Mountains in the heart of the Yakima Valley AVA, our vineyard has one of the most spectacular views of Mount Rainier and Mount Adams. These sunny slopes are blessed with a long growing period, extended summer daylight, and cool evenings that yield well-balanced, world class wines.

VINTAGE

The 2020 vintage will go down as a very memorable year. The growing season was exceptional with a mild winter, warm spring, and moderate summer. Bud break occurred 2 weeks earlier than normal and veraison was well ahead of schedule too. Just as we were preparing for an early start to harvest, wildfires in the Northwest created a thick cloud of smoke over Washington State. Concerns arose about exposure to smoke. Taking a cautious approach, we delayed harvest until the smoke cleared and conducted trials to determine the effect of smoke on our grapes. Fortunately, results showed no sign of smoke taint. Proximity to the source of smoke plays a big factor, and our vineyard was a long distance away. Overall, we have not seen any impact of smoke on the 2020 vintage. Another major event of this vintage was an early frost that occurred the second week of October. Our winemaking team worked tirelessly long hours leading up to the frost. By the time our vineyards had been impacted by the cold spell, our winery was stuffed with fermenting grapes and harvest was 95% complete. All remaining grapes were then hand-harvested and sorted with an optical sorter to remove any excessive M.O.G. or bad grapes. After our wines completed alcoholic fermentation, we were very pleased with the results. We at Airfield have another stunning vintage for you to enjoy. The 2020 wines showcase an abundance of ripe fruit aromatics, low tannin profiles, and exceptionally balanced finishes.

WINEMAKING

A blend of 58% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Franc, and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, we carefully select blocks on our estate vineyard that are the best suitable for each grape varietal. Our goal when creating a blend of this caliber is to see a bounty of red and dark fruit elements, a nice touch of balanced oak, and soft tannins to create a well-balanced wine. Harvested towards the end of October at optimal maturity, the grapes were sent to various size fermenters, the grapes were then cold soak for 48 before being inoculated with several different strains of yeast. Our extraction approach is to be aggressive at the beginning of fermentation, this allows us to extract the color and flavors. Once alcohol levels start to increase throughout fermentation, we then take a much gentler approach to our extraction as to not overly extract tannins with our end goal being a soft and lush finish wine, yet still maintaining balance and structure. After fermentation, each lot was then sent to a variety of new and neutral French oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After that process, each barrel had its lees stirred twice a month for up to five months to help build structure and roundness while enhancing the mouthfeel and acting as a fining agent to naturally soften the wines. The final blend was aged in 100% French oak for 16 months, with 33% being new French oak, 25% 1 to 3-year-old French oak, and 42% neutral oak.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2020 Dauntless, a Right Bank style blend, displays generous dark and red fruit aromas along with velvet like structure on the palate. Aromas of blackberry jam and dark cassis intertwine with subtle layers of licorice and savory roasted herbs. The palate shows its restrained tannin structure that bursts with flavors of sweet plums, smoked caramel, dark espresso, and hints of sweet pipe tobacco. The wine finishes with remarkably smooth tannins and accentuated notes of French oak that linger on the palate. Enjoy now through 2030 with optimal maturity peaking around 2027.

