



# AIRFIELD

ESTATES

## 2019 MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker  
Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

14.3% Alcohol  
3.80 pH  
6.0 g/L TA  
1829 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 2019 vintage started off with a very mild winter, then out of nowhere, we saw record snow accumulations in late February that lasted until early March. Thankfully, this did not affect buds on the dormant grapes, but it did delay bud break by approximately 2 weeks, which had some residual affects on the overall ripening process. We did see a decent amount of heat accumulation, but the 2019 vintage will go down as a cooler vintage for Washington State. Our typically amazing Octobers was very trying for us with not just one but two freezing periods that made our winemaking decisions ever more challenging. The first frost we saw we were happy with the results thinking we have escaped a terrible outcome in the vineyards, and then 9 days later we were hit very hard and we saw considerable frost damage to all our grapes. As we are seasoned winemakers, we took this challenge head on and decided to purchase brand new state-of-the-art equipment including an optical sorter that would eject bad and damaged grapes before any of these grapes went into a fermenter or press. The new equipment worked as amazing for us and the results in the wines are more than pleasing for us as well. Challenging vintages like 2019 really let you know as a winemaker what you are made of, and we at Airfield Estates not only took this challenge head on, but we excelled and the wines we produced from this vintage are going to be more consumer-friendly with higher acidity and lower alcohols but the fruit aspect is exceptional.

### WINEMAKING

Sourced from our estate vineyard, the grapes for this wine were carefully chosen from some of our best performing Merlot blocks with our goal of creating a world class Merlot that is bountiful with fruit aromas, lush tannins and nice integration of French oak. Harvested towards the beginning of October at optimal maturity, the grapes were destemmed and sorted using an optical sorter before being sent to various sized fermenters. The grapes were cold soaked for 48 hours, which helps extract color without the interference of fermentation. After cold soaking, the grapes were then warmed up and inoculated with several strains of yeast. Our extraction protocol was to have an aggressive approach early on to achieve our goals for flavor, aroma and color before alcohol levels started to increase. Once alcohol was present around 9-10%, we took a much gentler approach as to not over extract the wine and to maintain the lush, round mouthfeel. The wine was fermented dry on the skins for 13 days, then drained from the skins, and the skins were gently pressed. The wine was sent to a variety of French oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. Following malolactic fermentation, the wines lees were stirred twice a month for three months, which helps to naturally soften the wine while helping to build structure and enhance the mouthfeel. The wine was aged in 100% French oak for 16 months (40% new French oak, 25% 2-3-year-old French oak, and 35% neutral French oak).

### TASTING NOTES

This 2019 Merlot showcases bountiful dark fruit aromas of cassis, fig jam, and blackberries intertwined with intriguing notes of cocoa and toffee. The palate is full-bodied and robust with secondary flavors of smoked caramel, dark cherry, vanilla, and espresso with hints of toasted oak. Finishing off with remarkably smooth tannins and balanced acidity that accentuates the dark, jam-like flavors, leaving a finish that lingers on the palate. Enjoy now through 2030 with optimal maturity peaking around 2027.

