



AIRFIELD

E S T A T E S

2020 MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

14.4% Alcohol
3.80 pH
6.0 g/L TA
1,529 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

Our estate vineyard was established in 1968 and is situated along the foothills of the Rattlesnake Mountains in the heart of the Yakima Valley AVA. Today, we grow over 20 wine grape varieties spanning over 800 acres. Our vineyard has 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

The fruit for this wine was carefully selected from some of our best performing Merlot blocks on our estate vineyard 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, cold soaking 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 is to have an aggressive approach early on; achieving our goals for flavor, aroma and color before alcohol levels start to increase. Once alcohol is present around 9-10%, we take a much gentler approach as to not over extract the wine and to maintain the lush, round mouthfeel. Fermented dry on the skins for 16 days, then drained from the skins. The skins were then sent to a press to gently press the remaining juice in the grapes. After settling the solids in the tank, the wine was then sent to a variety of French oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After malolactic fermentation was complete, over the next three months the wines lees were stirred twice a month and the barrels topped to ensure healthy aging. Stirring of the wines lees naturally softens the wine while helping to build structure and roundness while enhancing the mouthfeel. Overall, the wine was aged in 100% French oak for 16 months with 42% being new French oak, 28% 2-3-year-old French oak, and 30% neutral French oak.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2020 Merlot displays dark fruit aromas of Bing cherry, dark cassis, and smoked figs intertwined with complex layers of dark espresso and toffee. The palate is full-bodied and robust with secondary flavors of smoked caramel, blackberry, vanilla beans, dark chocolate, and a touch of sweet, toasted oak. It finishes off with smooth, silky tannins and balanced acidity that accentuate the dark berry and jam-like flavors. Enjoy now through 2030 with optimal maturity peaking around 2027.

