



# AIRFIELD ESTATES

## 2021 HELLCAT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker  
Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

14.5% Alcohol  
3.94 pH  
5.1 g/L TA  
407 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 2021 vintage will be recorded as one the warmest in Washington State history. With a mild winter and a warm spring, we saw bud break during the second week of April, about 1 to 2 weeks earlier than average. Then we experienced a heat wave in late June that lasted roughly six weeks with over 35 days of 100°+ temperatures and some daily highs nearing 118° Fahrenheit. This period of extreme heat began when the grapes were in a cluster and berry size development stage, causing grapes to stress out weeks before we vintners would prefer. Smaller berry size led to an overall 30% reduction in crop size for us. On the bright side, these smaller berries produced phenomenal flavors. We also saw rapid ripening at a pace last seen in 2015, creating a very early harvest start. By the end of August, we had brought in nearly 150 tons of sparkling wine grapes and Sauvignon Blanc grapes, hands down an August record for us at Airfield. By the end of September, we had crushed every white varietal, which was beneficial for us in winemaking as we could then give 100% of our attention to red varietals. October started with nice warm temperatures, and the pace of grape harvesting was going very well, with ideal ripeness and exceptional quality. By the third week of October, we did see several freezing events causing our canopies to die. With only a limited amount of fruit remaining, it was easy for us to harvest the last remaining fruit before the end of October. In the end, the 2021 vintage made outstanding wine. Our white wines showcase bright fruit aromas with brisk acidity. Our red wines display dark fruit elements with structure and finesse. The wines created in 2021 will be enjoyable in their youth but also age-worthy, making a lasting impression.

### WINEMAKING

Each component of this blend was sourced from reserve tier blocks on our estate vineyard. The Tempranillo was harvested at the beginning of October and fermented in a concrete tank. The Syrah was harvested towards the middle of October and fermented in a small 2-ton fermenter. Both varieties had a similar extraction program, with a 3-day cold soak, then inoculated with a unique yeast strain. With these varietals, we aimed to get as much extraction as possible before 9 to 10% alcohol. Once we achieved our extraction, we took a gentler approach to not over-extract the wine. Fermented until dry on the skins, each lot was drained, gently pressed, and sent to various French oak barrels for malolactic fermentation. Once this process was complete, the wine's lees were stirred in each barrel twice a month for three months to help create a rounder, softer mouthfeel and act as a natural fining agent. A blend of this nature naturally has a high pH and low acidity, so extra care was taken to ensure the health of the wine during aging. Each barrel was topped twice a month to ensure minimal headspace, and constant chemistry check-ups were also performed. The wine was aged for 18 months exclusively in French oak barrels (35% new French oak, 30% 2-year-old French oak, and 35% neutral French oak). After barrel aging, the wine was returned to a concrete tank and aged for another month before being prepped for bottling.

### TASTING NOTES

A balanced blend of 64% Tempranillo and 36% Syrah, this full-bodied, Spanish-style blend evokes dark blue fruit aromatics with a silk-like texture on the palate. Aromas of fresh huckleberry, boysenberry, and blueberry jam intertwine with hints of spicy black olive tapenade. The entry to the palate creates a velvet-like, round mouthfeel with ever-evolving flavors of sweet plum, black truffles, soy sauce, peppery smoked meats, and a soft layer of toasted oak. On exit, it reveals silky tannins and beautiful oak integration, creating a long-lasting creamy finish. Enjoy now through 2036 with optimal maturity in 2030.

