



AIRFIELD

ESTATES

2018 RESERVE MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

14.1% Alcohol
3.85 pH
5.6 g/L TA
406 Cases

Bottled in August 2020

*Produced in a Vegan Manner
(No animal by-products 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 2018 vintage was characteristic of Washington State with a mild winter and very hot summer. Temperatures in March and April were slightly above average, leading to bud break mid-April. A warm spring provided perfect growing conditions for the vines. Our meticulous viticultural practices allowed us to manage vigorous growth throughout the season so the plants reached optimal crop yield goals for each block. The hot summer allowed grapes to reach full maturity and ripeness levels far exceeding anything we saw in 2017 or 2016. White grape varieties received significant sun exposure creating bountiful aromatics with balanced acidity. The red grape varieties made wines that are luxurious with dark fruit aromas and silky tannins. The 2018 vintage will be one to enjoy for many years to come.

WINEMAKING

Sourced from some of the best Merlot blocks that our Estate Vineyard produces, the production of this wine starts in the vineyard where we strategically plan from winter all the way through harvest to put in the extra work to make these wines really stand out. Our goal is to make sure each plant has an exceedingly small crop load, giving each grape more intensity, flavor, and overall ripeness. Harvested in early October by hand, the grapes were then hand sorted, destemmed but not crushed and sent to small fermenters. The grapes were then cold soaked for 48 hours before being inoculated with three different yeast strains. When it comes to creating a Reserve tier wine, our goals for the wine are to be bold in flavor, with the wine showing weight and elegance. This all starts from extraction during fermentation. Early on, before alcohol is present, we want to make sure we get 75% of our extraction by having an aggressive approach with aerated pump overs, delastage and incorporating more air to extract from the cap. Once alcohol levels are 8-9%, we taper off this extraction to a gentler approach with less pump overs. This allows the fermentation to not over extract or create excessive tannins and astringencies. Fermented dry on the skins for 13 days, once alcoholic fermentation was completed, the wine was then drained from the skins and the skins were sent to the press to press out any remaining juice. The free run and press were not combined. The wine was then sent to a variety of exclusive French oak barrels and were inoculated for malolactic fermentation. Once MLF was complete, the wine had its lees stirred and barrels topped every two weeks for 4 months. Incorporating lees during this time helped naturally soften the wine and build texture creating a rounder mouthfeel. After lees stirring, the wine was only racked 3 times over the course of the aging while making sure each barrel is topped every two weeks. Aged for approximately 20 months in French oak with 52% new French oak, 23% 1-3 yr old French oak, and 25% neutral oak before being sent to tank and prepped for bottling.

TASTING NOTES

The 2018 Reserve Merlot displays gorgeous dark fruit aromas of cherry, cassis, and acai berry with subtle tones of caramel and toffee. The palate is robust with a velvet-like texture and flavors of fig jam, sweet plums, and a touch of licorice. Secondary flavors of vanilla, espresso, and sweet toasted oak add complexity concluding with a long, beautiful creamy finish. Enjoy now through 2029 with optimal maturity around 2026.

AirfieldWines



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