



AIRFIELD ESTATES

# 2008 Merlot

## VARIETAL COMPOSITION

100% Merlot

## VINEYARD

For four generations, our family has been farming in the Yakima Valley (Washington's oldest established AVA). Our estate vineyard is situated along the anticlines of the Rattlesnake Mountains, which frame the Yakima Valley to the North. The original vines date back to 1968. Over the years, the vineyard has expanded and now includes 26 different wine grape varieties, spans over 860 acres, and is positioned within a 4 mile radius from the original World War II Airbase that once resided on our family farm.

The Merlot was sourced from the D-2 Block located within our Miller Vineyard. This block was planted in 1996 in well-drained Warden Silty Loam soil over Broken Basalt. It has a Southern orientation with a 6% slope. The elevation is approximately 950 feet above sea level, and a bilateral cordon trellis is utilized. The grapes were harvested between October 10th through the 25th using a combination of hand-picking and machine-harvesting. The yield was 3.3 tons per acre and the sugar level ranged from 23.5 to 25.2 Brix. The Merlot from this site consistently provides exceptional balance and flavors.

## VINTAGE

The 2008 growing season was unique. Bud burst began early during the first week of April. However, due to inclement weather, bud burst was prolonged for an additional 20 days. Early summer temperatures were warm but tapered off in August leaving concern in regard to Fall harvest. Fortunately, the extended warm temperatures through September and October allowed the crop to achieve optimal ripeness.

## WINEMAKING

Our winemaking begins with a pre-sort of the fruit to make sure only ideal clusters get vinified. After being destemmed, a gentle peristaltic pump is used to transfer the must to the fermentation vessel. The wine is fermented in 6 ton stainless steel tanks and 1 ton stainless steel fermentors. Pump-overs, Rack and Returns, and Punch-downs are used to extract tannin and color from the skin. Ideal peak ferment temperatures are 80-84 degrees. After the wine has finished fermenting it is pressed and settled for 48 hours before going to barrel. Barrels are typically 25%-35% new, and are composed of 60% French, 30% American, and 10% Eastern European. The wine goes through malolactic fermentation in barrel and then is racked. Blending occurs during the 2nd racking, usually in April. Racking continues every 3 months until the wine is finally bottled in May after 19 months in barrel. Prior to bottling, the wine is pad filtered and bottled using screw cap closures.

## WINE ANALYSIS

15.8% Alcohol

## RESIDUAL SUGAR

Dry

## BOTTLING DATE

May 11, 2010

## CASE PRODUCTION

852 cases



Hand-Crafted By Winemaker:

*Marion Z. Miller*

**COLOR** Dark garnet

**NOSE** Aromas of dark berry, plum, and spice.

**PALATE** Full-bodied, round, and smooth with supple tannins and lingering flavors of dark ripe fruits.

**PEAK DRINKING** Now through 2018.