



# AIRFIELD

ESTATES

## 2017 DAUNTLESS



Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

13.8% Alcohol  
3.70 pH  
6.3 g/L TA

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

To begin 2017, Eastern Washington was in the midst of a brutal winter that lingered on into early March. Our concerns of winter damage to the vines were alleviated towards the end of April when our vineyards came back to life with bud break. Bud break was a bit behind a normal Washington vintage, but not by much. Spring of 2017 was warm, and this led to rapid growth in the vineyards. The spring led into a perfect Eastern Washington summer with warm days and cool nights that we are keen on for a great growing season. Veraison happened around the first of August, and with all the last-minute adjustments to crop size we were very pleased. Wildfires were a great deal of concern for us, but as damaging as these fires were, thankfully our estate vineyard was not impacted by the excessive smoke we experienced in the state. Very similar to the 2016 vintage, we had a much cooler than average September that slowed the ripening process down quite a bit. This allowed the grapes to hang on the vines much longer to achieve optimal ripeness for flavor development and sugar content. This meant a later harvest season for us as we brought in the last of our grapes in early November.

### WINEMAKING

Our 2017 Dauntless comes from our Estate Vineyard in the Yakima Valley. We carefully select each varietal that goes into this blend from blocks that are the best suitable for each grape varietal, our goal when creating a blend of this caliber is to see a bounty of fruits, a nice touch of balanced oak and soft tannins to create a well-balanced wine. Harvested towards the end of October at optimal maturity the grapes were sent to various size fermenters, the grapes were then cold soak for 48 before being inoculated with several different strains of yeast. Our extraction was fairly aggressive at the beginning of fermentation, this allows us to extract the color and flavors we look for in our Merlot, Cab Franc's Cabernet Sauvignons. Once alcohol levels start to increase throughout fermentation, we then take a much gentler approach to our extraction as to not overly extract tannins and harshness with our end goal being a soft and lush finish, yet still maintaining balance and structure. After fermentation, each lot was then sent to a variety of New and Neutral French Oak Barrels and inoculated for malo-lactic fermentation. After malo-lactic fermentation is completed, each barrel had its lees stirred twice a month for up to five months, this process helps build structure and roundness while enhancing the mouthfeel and also acting as a fining agent to naturally soften the wines. The final blend consisted of aging in 100% French Oak for 18 months, with 30% being new French oak and 20% 2-5-year-old French oak and 50% Neutral Oak.

### TASTING NOTES

This wine displays gorgeous fruit characteristics of black currant and boysenberry compote intertwined with intriguing layers of cocoa. The palate is robust with secondary flavors of plums and fig with roasted herbs and a hint of black licorice. Smooth tannins and a finish that accentuates the French oak that lingers on the palate.

### VARIETAL COMPOSITION

65% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon

