



AIRFIELD

E S T A T E S

2020 RESERVE MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

14.4% Alcohol

3.82 pH

5.8 g/L TA

273 Cases

Bottled in August 2022

*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 two weeks earlier than normal, and veraison was also well ahead of schedule. 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 as our vineyard was a long distance away from the fires. Another major event in 2020 was an early frost that occurred the second week of October. Our winemaking team worked tirelessly for long hours leading up to the frost. By the time the cold spell impacted our vineyard, 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. Overall, we were delighted with the results of the 2020 vintage. The wines showcase an abundance of ripe fruit aromatics, low tannin profiles, and exceptionally balanced finishes.

WINEMAKING

Our 2020 Reserve Merlot was sourced from some of our estate vineyard's best Merlot blocks. A wine of this caliber truly starts in the vineyard, where we strategically plan from winter through harvest to put in the extra work to make this wine stand out. We aim to ensure each plant has a small crop load, giving each grape more intensity, flavor, and ripeness. Harvested in early October, the grapes were destemmed but not crushed and sorted using our optical sorter before being sent to small fermenters. After a 48-hour cold soak, the grapes were inoculated with three yeast strains. During the fermentation process, we incorporate strategic extraction methods to create a wine that is bold in flavor, showing weight, structure, and elegance. Early on, before alcohol is present, we achieve about 75% of our extraction by having an aggressive approach with aerated pump overs, délestage, and incorporating more air to extract from the cap. Once alcohol levels are 8-9%, we taper off to a gentler approach with fewer pump-overs. This allows the fermentation to not over-extract or create excessive tannins and astringencies. Following the completion of alcoholic fermentation, the wine was then drained from the skins, and the skins were sent to the press to extract any remaining juice. The wine was then sent to barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After this process, the lees were stirred for four months to naturally soften the wine, build texture, and create a rounder mouthfeel. The wine was aged for approximately 22 months in French oak barrels (77% new, 23% 1 to 3-year-old) before being sent to tank and prepped for bottling.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2020 Reserve Merlot is a medium-bodied wine that embodies the classic essence of the varietal. It boasts an abundance of dark fruit aromas, including blackberry, cassis, and black cherry, which are complemented by layers of roasted fig and smoked caramel. The palate shows weight, finesse in structure, soft tannins, and balanced acidity. Flavors of plum jam and sweet cocoa are layered with nuances of freshly roasted espresso. The finish is long-lasting, accentuating the wine's structure, and leaves lingering notes of smoked cedar and dark berries on the palate. Enjoy now through 2039, with optimal maturity in 2033.

AirfieldWines



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