



AIRFIELD  
E S T A T E S

## 2021 MICHAEL L. MILLER



Marcus Miller, Winemaker  
Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

14.5% Alcohol  
3.89 pH  
5.6 g/L TA  
105 Cases

*Produced in a Vegan Manner  
(No animal by-products used  
in production of this wine)*

### ABOUT US

Airfield Estates is a fourth generation family farm based in the Yakima Valley of Washington State. Our estate vineyard was established in 1968 and now spans 830 acres, including over 20 wine grape varieties. 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.

### FOUNDERS SERIES

This wine pays tribute to our father, Michael L. Miller, who founded Airfield Estates Winery and also expanded our estate vineyard into the large-scale operation it is today. The pride, passion, and enthusiasm that he expressed for our vineyard, grapes, and wine is something that we hope to continue to share with others.

### 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 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

Sourced from the best of the best reserve tier blocks on our estate vineyard, the grapes for this blend were harvested in early October, destemmed, sorted using an optical sorter, and sent to concrete tanks for fermentation. 35% of the Syrah grapes were left on the stems and sent to the fermenter as whole clusters; stem inclusion helps add structure and complexity. We also added a small amount of Viognier to co-ferment with the Syrah, giving the Syrah more robust dark fruit flavors. Each lot was fermented in concrete for an average of 17 days, going dry on the skin before pressing. Fermenting in concrete adds additional layers of complexity, giving the wine multi-dimensions of minerality and lifting the wine's fruit aromatics. Our extraction was aggressive to begin fermentation, with aerated pump overs giving the ferment lots of oxygen early on. This approach allows us to have optimal color and flavor extraction early on. Once alcohol becomes prevalent, we taper off to a gentler approach with less frequent pump-overs to maintain the wine's naturally silky tannin structure. After fermentation, each wine was sent to large format French oak barrels for aging. After malolactic fermentation was complete, the lees were stirred twice a month for three months to naturally soften the wine while creating a more seamless and rounder palate. After six months of aging, we meticulously rated each barrel and chose the best of the best barrels from each lot to create this blend masterpiece. The blend was then put together and sent to large format French oak barrels for an additional 16 months of aging. Final aging in exclusive 500L French Oak barrels comprised 90% new French oak and 10% 1 to 2-year-old French Oak. After aging in French oak for 22 months, we then finished the wines aging for an additional month in concrete tanks to create more lifted aromatics and finesse before the wine was bottled.

### TASTING NOTES

Handcrafted for exceptional balance, richness, depth, and complexity, this medium to full-bodied Rhone-style blend is comprised of 83% Syrah, 12% Grenache, 4% Mourvèdre, and 1% Viognier. Notes of dark cherry and plum are layered with savory undertones, essence of orange oil, pepper, toasted oak, and a touch of minerality. The palate is remarkably smooth with a silk-like tannin structure, soft acidity, and an elegant, long-lasting finish. Enjoy now through 2040, with optimal maturity in 2035.



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