



# AIRFIELD

E S T A T E S

## 2021 MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker  
Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

14.4% Alcohol  
3.85 pH  
5.8 g/L TA  
3,500 Cases

*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 2021 vintage will be recorded as one of 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 1-2 weeks earlier than average. Then in late June, we experienced a heat wave for approximately 6 weeks. During this time, we saw over 35 days of 100+ degree temperatures, with some daily highs nearing 118°F. 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 sizes for us. Nevertheless, the flavors that these smaller berries produced were phenomenal! We also saw rapid ripening at a pace we have not seen since 2015, and this created a very early start to harvest. Overall, the 2021 vintage made outstanding wine. Our white wines showcase bright fruit aromas with brisk acidity. Our red wines display dark fruit elements with structure and finesse. The wines created from 2021 will be age worthy and enjoyable in their youth and will be wines that will make a lasting impression.

### WINEMAKING

Sourced from some of the best performing Merlot blocks on our estate vineyard, this wine is made with the goal of creating a world class Merlot bountiful in flavor with lush tannins and well-integrated oak. Harvested towards the beginning of October at optimal maturity, the grapes were destemmed and sorted using an optical sorter. Cold soaked for 48 hours to help extract color without the interference of fermentation, the grapes were then warmed up and inoculated with several strains of yeast. Our extraction protocol incorporates an aggressive approach early on to achieve desired flavor, aroma and color before alcohol levels start to increase. Once alcohol is present around 9-10%, we take a much gentler approach to prevent over extraction and to maintain a lush, round mouthfeel. Fermented dry on the skins for 16 days, the wine was then sent to a variety of French oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After malolactic fermentation was complete, over the next three months the wines lees were stirred twice a month and the barrels topped to ensure healthy aging. Stirring of the wines lees naturally softens the wine while helping to build structure and roundness while enhancing the mouthfeel. Overall, the wine was aged in 100% French oak for 17 months with 36% being new French oak, 34% 2-3-year-old French oak, and 30% neutral French oak.

### TASTING NOTES

This medium to full-bodied Merlot displays an abundance of dark fruit aromas. Layers of black cherry, dark cassis, sweet plum and smoked figs unite with more complex notes of dark espresso and salted toffee. On the palate, the wine shows finesse, balance, and roundness. Smooth, supple tannins frame the way for lingering secondary flavors of blackberry jam, vanilla bean, sweet cocoa, and toasted oak. Enjoy now through 2035 with optimal maturity peaking around 2030.

