AIRFIELD
ESTATES

2023 LIGHTNING



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA
13.2% Alcohol
3.57 pH
5.6 g/L TA
202 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 crafting a wide range of 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 varietals 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 2023 vintage in Washington state is what we like to call normal. A mild winter gave way to a chilly start to Spring. We saw record-high temperatures by mid-April, causing the vines to come to life around the 3rd week of April. Spring temperatures were average, creating nice growth in the vineyard. Meticulous management of our vineyard blocks allowed us to manage the rapid growth and achieve our targeted crop-load sizes. June and July were very hot, one of the hottest on record for Washington State. We saw veraison fairly early in July, about 2-3 weeks earlier than usual. Having such a hot start to summer led to rapid ripening. When grapes ripen too fast, we see lower acid levels. Seeing some of the lowest acid levels in years isn't a big issue as it is easily corrected in the cellar. Overall, the 2023 vintage stands out as truly exceptional. The grapes we harvested during this season were among the ripest we've witnessed in years. The flavors are amazing from this vintage – our white wines showcase bright tropical fruits with balanced, brisk acidity, and the red wines are robust yet elegant and finesse in structure. Dark berry flavors with refined tannins will create world-class wines from this vintage, which can be enjoyed in their youth or have the ability to cellar for many years.

WINEMAKING
Like all of our reserve-tier wines, the Lightning blend starts in our estate vineyard. We carefully selected Chardonnay and Viognier blocks and cropped them to low yields for concentrated flavor. Both types of grapes were harvested at optimal maturity in mid-September. The whole clusters were sent to the press for a gentle pressing, then cold settled for 72 hours, and finally clean racked to French oak barrels for a cool fermentation. We closely monitored the wine during malolactic fermentation to ensure complete conversion without producing buttery flavors. After completion, the lees were stirred twice a month for 3 months to enhance body and soften the texture of the wine. Overall, this blend was aged for 10 months in exclusive French oak barrels (80% new, 20% 2-year-old French oak) before being prepared for bottling.

TASTING NOTES
Our 2023 Lightning is a medium-bodied blend of Viognier and Chardonnay, fermented and aged in 100% French Oak. It displays enticing aromas of roasted pear, applesauce, and lemon curd with hints of smoked cashews. The palate offers a creamy mouthfeel with flavors of apple butter, marzipan, and banana foster. The finish is smooth and impeccably balanced, leaving lingering notes of crème brûlée and toasted marshmallow. Enjoy this wine through 2035, with its optimal maturity around 2029. For the best experience, serve it chilled at 50-55°F.