



AIRFIELD

E S T A T E S

2019 RESERVE MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

14.5% Alcohol
3.85 pH
5.9 g/L TA
295 Cases

Bottled in August 2021

*Produced in a Vegan Manner
(No animal by-products 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

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

The 2019 vintage started off with a very mild winter, then we saw record snow accumulations in late February through early March. This delayed bud break by approximately 2 weeks, which had some residual affects on the overall ripening process. We did see a decent amount of heat accumulation, but the 2019 vintage will go down as a cooler vintage for Washington State. In October, we experienced two freezing periods that made our winemaking decisions ever more challenging. We took this challenge head on and decided to purchase brand new state-of-the-art equipment including an optical sorter. Overall, the wines we produced from this vintage are going to be more consumer-friendly with higher acidity and lower alcohols but the fruit aspect is exceptional.

WINEMAKING

Sourced from some of the best Merlot blocks that our estate vineyard produces, this 2019 Reserve Merlot is truly built starting in the vineyard where we strategically plan from winter through harvest to put in the extra work to make this wine really stand out. Our goal is to ensure each plant has an exceedingly small crop load, giving each grape more intensity, flavor, and overall ripeness. Hand-harvested in early October, the grapes were then sorted using our optical sorter before being sent to small fermenters. After a 48-hour cold soak, the grapes were inoculated with 3 different yeast strains. During the fermentation process, we incorporate strategic extraction methods to create a wine bold in flavor showing weight and elegance. Early on, before alcohol is present, we achieve about 75% of our extraction by having an aggressive approach with aerated pump overs, delastage and incorporating more air to extract from the cap. Once alcohol levels are 8-9%, we taper off to a more gentle approach with less pump overs. This allows the fermentation to not over extract or create excessive tannins and astringencies. After 16 days 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 free run and press were not combined. The wine was then sent to a variety of French oak barrels and was inoculated for malolactic fermentation. Once MLF was complete, the lees were stirred and barrels topped every two weeks for 4 months. Incorporating lees during this time helped to naturally soften the wine, build texture, and create a rounder mouthfeel. After bâtonnage, the wine was racked only 3 times over the course of the aging while ensuring each barrel was topped every two weeks. Overall, the wine was aged for approximately 22 months in French oak (75% new, 25% 1 to 3-year old French oak) before being sent to tank and prepped for bottling.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2019 Reserve Merlot displays generous dark fruit aromas of black cherry, red currant, and acai berry with subtle tones of caramel and fresh espresso bean. The palate has an elegant texture that is robust and rich in flavor. Layers of smoked figs and dark berry jam are interwoven with complex tertiary flavors of vanilla bean, dark chocolate, and sweet, toasted oak. The wine finishes with velvety tannins and a creamy texture that linger on the palate. Enjoy now through 2036 with optimal maturity around 2029.

AirfieldWines



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