



# AIRFIELD

E S T A T E S

## 2018 MICHAEL L. MILLER



Marcus Miller, Winemaker  
Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

14.2% Alcohol  
3.84 pH  
5.9 g/L TA  
250 Cases  
Bottled 7/16/20

*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.

### VINEYARD

Established in 1968, our estate vineyard was one of the first commercial vineyards in Washington State. 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.

### 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 2018 vintage was a classic Washington State Vintage with a mild winter and extremely hot summer. The winter leading to spring was mild and temperatures in March/April were slightly above average leading to bud break in middle April. A warm spring provided perfect growth for the grapevines. Our meticulous farming practices allowed us to manage vigorous growth throughout the growing season, so the plants reached our crop size yield goals for each block. A hot summer with cool nights advanced the ripeness and growth in the vineyards that we have not seen in the last few years providing for an ideal vintage. We did experience some heavy smoke from Northwest wildfires. With the location of our vineyards, the timing of the smoke, and the overall smoke saturation, our vineyard was not affected by the smoke. White grape varieties saw a lot of sun exposure creating bountiful aromatics with balanced acidity. Red grape varieties made wines that are lush with dark fruit aromas and silky tannins. The 2018 vintage will be one to enjoy for many years to come.

### VARIETAL COMPOSITION

53% Syrah, 33% Grenache, 14% Mourvèdre

### WINEMAKING

Sourced from the best of the best of the reserve tier blocks on our estate vineyard, each varietal was harvested by hand at the same time, then hand-sorted, destemmed, and combined in a concrete tank for a co-fermentation. 30% of the Syrah grapes were left on the stems and sent to the fermenter as whole clusters. Stem inclusion in our Rhone blends creates structure and complexity. By co-fermenting all three varieties together, each varietal marries each other from the beginning. This creates more robust fruit aromas and complex flavors. Fermenting in concrete adds layers of complexity giving the wine multi-dimensions of minerality and lifting the wine's fruit aromatics. Giving this wine even more special attention, we fermented using the grapes' native yeasts. A native yeast fermentation brings out each varietal's characteristics with more lifted fruit aromatics. 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. Fermented dry on the skins for 13 days with temperatures averaging 86° F, the wine was then drained from the skins, and the skins were gently pressed before being sent to French oak barrels for Malo-Lactic fermentation and aging. Aged in 75% new French oak with a mixture of barrel sizes ranging from 500L puncheon barrels to 228L barrels, 20% was aged in 2-year-old French oak, and 5% Neutral oak. During the first three months of aging, the wine's lees were stirred twice a month, this process helps naturally soften the wine creating a more seamless rounder finish. After 21 months in French oak, the wine was sent to a concrete tank for an additional month of aging, then sent to stainless-steel tanks to prepare the wine for bottling.

### TASTING NOTES

A Rhone-style blend, the 2018 Founders Series Michael Miller displays dark and luscious aromatics of cassis, fig jam, dried huckleberry, and rich spices. Savory flavors of roasted game, black olive and white pepper leads into rich, silky tannins leaving the palate with robust flavors of dark cherry, gravelly earth, and gorgeous barrel flavors that provides for a long, lush, and elegant finish. Enjoy now through 2031.

