



AIRFIELD

E S T A T E S

2021 AVIATOR



Marcus Miller, Winemaker
Travis Maple, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

14.3% Alcohol
3.69 pH
6.2 g/L TA
291 cases produced

*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 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.

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 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

All of the varietals for this blend were sourced from reserve tier blocks on our estate vineyard. These blocks were cropped to low yields to produce dark, concentrated flavors while balancing out tannins. Each element was harvested at optimal maturity, sorted, sent to small fermenters, cold-soaked for 48 hours, and then inoculated with very specific yeast strains selected to help each wine achieve particular flavor and mouthfeel profiles. Although our extraction protocol for each varietal varied, we generally achieved 80% of our extraction early on before 8% alcohol. After that point, we tapered off to a gentle extraction approach. Once each lot was fully extracted, some lots were left on the skins for an extended maceration to develop more exotic and compelling flavors, while other lots were sent directly to the press. Each wine was barreled down into exclusive French oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. During this process, the lees were stirred twice a month for three months to help build roundness and naturally soften the wine. Overall, the wine was aged for 21 months in French oak barrels (58% new French oak, 32% 2-year-old French oak). A wine of this caliber was created to be enjoyed in its youth, yet has the structure to age for many years to come.

TASTING NOTES

The 2021 Aviator is a full-bodied Bordeaux-style blend comprised of 58% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Merlot, and 13% Cabernet Franc. It displays powerful aromas of black cherry, black currant, cola, graphite, and seared leather. The palate is robust yet balanced, featuring restrained tannins and secondary flavors of sweet chocolate, roasted sage, and salted toffee. As the wine exits the palate, it showcases structure and length, offering layers of sweet oak spices and a dark berry medley. It is best enjoyed between now and 2038, with optimal maturity reached in 2035.

