



# AIRFIELD

ESTATES

## 2021 RESERVE MERLOT



Marcus Miller, Winemaker  
Travis Maple, Winemaker

### TECHNICAL DATA

14.2% Alcohol  
3.85 pH  
5.7 g/L TA  
409 Cases Produced

*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 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 varieties. 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

Our 2021 Reserve Merlot was sourced from some of our estate vineyard's best Merlot blocks. A wine of this caliber truly starts in the vineyard, where we strategically plan from winter through harvest to put in the extra work to make this wine stand out. We aim to ensure each plant has a small crop load, giving each grape more intensity, flavor, and ripeness. Harvested in early October, the grapes were destemmed but not crushed and sorted using our optical sorter before being sent to small fermenters. After a 48-hour cold soak, the grapes were inoculated with three yeast strains. During the fermentation process, we incorporate strategic extraction methods to create a wine that is bold in flavor, showing weight, structure, and elegance. Early on, before alcohol is present, we achieve about 75% of our extraction by having an aggressive approach with aerated pump overs, délestage, and incorporating more air to extract from the cap. Once alcohol levels are 8-9%, we taper off to a gentler approach with fewer pump-overs. This allows the fermentation to not over-extract or create excessive tannins and astringencies. Following the completion 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 wine was then sent to barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After this process, the lees were stirred for four months to naturally soften the wine, build texture, and create a rounder mouthfeel. The wine was aged for approximately 22 months in French oak barrels (75% new, 25% 1 to 3-year-old) before being sent to tank and prepped for bottling.

### TASTING NOTES

Our 2021 Reserve Merlot displays captivating aromas of blackberry, red cassis, and black cherry intertwined with sweet plum, vanilla bean, and smoked caramel. On the palate, this medium to full-bodied wine delivers weight and finesse, with soft tannins, balanced acidity, and rich flavors of raspberry jam and espresso complemented by subtle undertones of smoked cedar. The finish is a testament to the wine's sophisticated structure, leaving long-lasting flavors of sweet chocolate and dark berries. Enjoyable now, this Merlot will reach its peak between 2034 and 2040, offering a truly memorable experience for years to come.

