

Iris

VINEYARDS

IRIS VINEYARDS

MEDIA KIT

OUR STORY

Two native Eugeniensians. One shared philosophy. A very special site.

Iris Vineyards perches in the iris-dotted hills at the southern edge of the Willamette Valley, an 870-acre, high-elevation preserve dedicated to the ancient Greek concept of *areté* – **the tireless striving to achieve one’s fullest potential**. Areté guides the proprietors Richard Boyles and Pamela Frye, and winemaker Aaron Lieberman to create fresh, fruit-forward wines that truly honor their source.



WHAT IS ARETÉ?



ARETÉ

Areté (AIR-it-tay) is a concept with deep roots in ancient Greek mythology, literature and philosophy. In simple terms, it is the moral imperative to achieve your full potential – the obligation to strive every day to do better, and be the best you can be. At Iris Vineyards, *areté* means constant attention to our vineyard practices, our wine quality, and our hospitality.

“There is a tale that Areté (Virtue) dwells on unclimbable rocks and close to the gods tends a holy place; she may not be seen by the eyes of all mortals, but only by him on whom distressing sweat comes from within, the one who reaches the peak of manliness.” - Simonides, Fragment 579 (trans. Campbell, Vol. Greek Lyric III)

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THE PROPRIETORS Richard Boyles and Pamela Frye

“Once farming is in your blood, it never really leaves.” – Richard Boyles

Richard and Pamela grew up in the Eugene area and attended the same high school. Pamela’s grandfather was a farmer, and Richard tended hazelnuts and wheat where a hospital is today.



As a child, Richard spent summer vacations at his paternal grandparents’ house in Roseburg, where his German grandmother cultivated a kitchen garden on the Umpqua River and made her own wine from table grapes. At age 7 or 8, Richard became her winemaking assistant. He learned the basics of fermentation and would enjoy a thimbleful of each (very sweet) vintage with his grandmother the following year. Richard’s father also appreciated food and wine, and while he did not cook often, he went all out when he did—accompanying his creations with fine wines and amiable companions. These early experiences instilled in Richard a lifelong passion for gardening, cooking, the craft and enjoyment of wine, as well as an appreciation for hospitality.

Richard and Pamela went on to the University of Oregon, where a shared interest in food, wine, and conversation brought them together. Both their romance and *areté* philosophy began at the U of O. In a History of Ideas class at the Clark Honors College, Richard studied *The Iliad* and learned about this ancient Greek idea – the moral imperative to live up to your full potential.

“It gave me words to describe a concept I’d believed in my whole life,” he says.

Armed with this clarity of purpose, Richard pursued a career in international business and hospitality, working in Europe for several years. Pamela and Richard made excellent use of their proximity to Europe’s greatest wine regions and culinary traditions, with Pamela planning frequent forays to Burgundy and Alsace nearby their home base, as well as the wine growing regions of Germany,

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Switzerland, Italy, and Austria. At the conclusion of the European assignment, the couple returned to the Eugene area to start a family and begin hunting for their own wine estate – one with soils, slopes, and aspects suitable for growing their favorite Burgundian variety, Pinot Noir. They found it in 1992, high in the hills above the Lorane Valley next to what would soon become King Estate.

Although an economic feasibility study underscored the risk of farming winegrapes in the Willamette Valley, they planted vines in 1996 and built a small house on the property (now the Tasting Room) for themselves and their children. By the early 2000s, Pamela and Richard were moving the television and furniture on weekends in order to pour wine for visitors in their family living room. Pamela was the first sales rep, hauling samples to Eugene area restaurants and retail shops. Some of those first clients are still buyers of Iris Vineyards wine today.

With their children now grown, Richard and Pamela continue to live on the estate next to the Tasting Room. Richard tends a thriving kitchen garden and greenhouse, which provides much of their sustenance. Together, they manage the winery as well as their hospitality management business. Both remain actively involved with the University of Oregon and tourism promotion groups, such as the Oregon Tourism Commission (Richard is a gubernatorial appointee), Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, Travel Lane County, and the South Willamette Wineries Association (Pamela served on the Executive Committee), among others.

They also support *areté* through education and mentoring. Richard is a Start Making A Reader Today (SMART) reader working with second and third graders to build skills and help put them on a path to academic and life success. At the other end of the academic continuum, he is a past chair of the Dean's Advisory Council of the Clark Honors College at the U of O – giving back to the place that helped him cultivate his lifelong philosophy for success.

THE ESTATE

Richard and Pamela spent several years searching for a site with the potential to create great Pinot Noir. In 1992, they found a property in the foothills of the Oregon Coast Mountain Range at the south end of the Willamette Valley. It had been clear-cut, exposing sloping hillsides, promising soils, and site's immense potential for the Burgundian and Alsatian varieties Richard and Pamela loved most.

Richard and Pamela committed to replanting 500 acres of the estate to Douglas fir and Ponderosa Pine for timber harvesting, and to restoring a diverse forest habitat with multiple native tree and understory species represented. Richard manages the oak savannah and oak woodland areas with special care, protecting the vulnerable Oregon white oak trees from being crowded out by faster-growing big leaf maple and fir. When timber is harvested, it is with a light footprint – a selective harvest that is promptly replanted. The 200+ acres of open meadows and pastureland are leased for grazing purposes.

Guests arriving at the estate today pass through an unassuming gate to begin their one-mile climb to the Tasting Room. The long, curving drive meanders through copses of healthy restored woodlands and open meadows, with stunning views over the vineyard. In spring, the winery's namesake wild

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Douglas iris blooms across the hills. In summer, honey bees buzz from hives to flower and back, providing honey which is offered for sale at the estate tasting room. It is a peaceful, pastoral haven.

THE ESTATE VINEYARD: CHALICE

After analyzing the best locations and orientation for each variety, Richard and Pamela **planted the first vines of Chalice Vineyard in 1996 in the south-facing, bowl-shaped valley that inspired its name.** Richard and Pamela's first vintage was bottled under the Iris Hill name in 2001. In 2006, the name changed to Iris Vineyards. Today, the estate vineyard comprises 43 acres of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Gris. In 2020, we will expand with additional blocks of Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir along with plantings of Pinot Meunier and Pinot Blanc.

40 acres in production:

- ~ 10.5 acres Pinot Gris (Clones 146 and 152)
- ~ 3 acres Chardonnay (Clone Dijon 76)
- ~ 26.5 acres Pinot Noir (Clones: Pommard, Wadenswil, Dijon 113, 114, & 115)

3 acres in development:

- ~ 1-acre Chardonnay (Clone 548)
- ~ 2 acres Pinot Noir (Clones 667, 828, & Wadenswil)

Planting Dates:

- ~ Older blocks south of the road (A Block and B Block) planted in 1996, 1997
- ~ D Block north of TR planted in 2000 & 2001
- ~ C Block immediately south of the TR planted in 2008
- ~ C Block young vines planted in 2015 & 2016

All vines are grafted on phylloxera-resistant rootstock, though we have a number of different clone and rootstock combinations. Most are vinified separately, then blended based on characteristics. Our most common rootstocks are 101-14, 3309C, 44-53, SO4.

Thanks to the generous winter rainfall and moisture-retaining soils, we are able to dry-farm the estate. Vines are only irrigated in their first 2-3 years as needed to establish themselves. Rows are oriented north-south, and we utilize a VSP (vertical shoot positioning) trellising system.

Elevation ranges from about 800 feet at the lowest part of the vineyard, to 1000 feet at the top. At these levels, the grapes ripen slowly – harvest tends to be a week or two later than vineyards in the Dundee Hills appellation. **This slow ripening and long hang time develop greater nuance and complexity in the fruit but also test the limits of Oregon's growing season.** The result is richly aromatic, fruit-forward wines balanced with enduring, bright acidity.

Average phenological events:

- ~ Bud Break - third week of April
- ~ Bloom - 3rd/4th week of June
- ~ Veraison - 3rd/4th week of August
- ~ Harvest (sparkling) - second week of September

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~ Harvest (still) - begins last week of September, finishes last week of October

Vineyard Soil Types

Soils are predominantly **Bellpine**, with some **Jory** and **Dupee** (in Pinot Gris). The Bellpine series consists of moderately deep, well-drained soils formed in colluvium (material that accumulates at the bottom of a slope) and residuum (material left behind as a deposit—in our case, deposited as marine sediments which were later pushed above sea level by the subduction of the Juan de Fuca plate), derived from sedimentary rocks.

The Jory series consists of very deep, well drained soils that formed in colluvium and residuum derived from sedimentary and basic igneous bedrock. The Bellpine and Jory series are very similar in composition, except the Jory soils are deeper. Both have a reddish tint from the weathered iron compounds they contain.

The Dupee series consists of deep and very deep, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well-drained soils that formed in clayey colluvium and residuum derived from sedimentary bedrock. These soils are in depressions and drainage ways on hills.

Sustainable Farming Practices

A variety of techniques promote sustainability of the vineyard and surrounding ecosystem:

- ~ Use of cover crops to build soil health and fertility.
- ~ Fungicide inputs carefully considered based on current efficacy data from OSU. Rotation between products to prevent resistance. Sprayer well maintained and calibrated for accuracy in application.
- ~ Alternate row mowing in order to always have blooming plants in the vineyard for beneficial insect and pollinator habitat.
- ~ Fertilizer inputs based on soil and plant tissue testing.
- ~ Ecological compensation areas between fields and on vineyard perimeter. Unmowed and unmaintained areas provide habitat to beneficial insects, pollinators, ground nesting birds.
- ~ Canopy management to reduce disease pressure: *hedging* (trimming excessive shoot growth), *leaf removal* on east side of fruit zone, *shoot positioning* within the trellis. Light and airflow help prevent disease and improve fruit quality.

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THE WINEMAKER
Aaron Lieberman

Aaron joined Iris as the head of winemaking in 2008, and has spearheaded the winery's significant quality advances over the last decade. **Like Richard, Aaron has always approached his life and work with *areté* in mind – striving each day to improve and achieve the best possible result.**



Aaron grew up in California and Corvallis, Oregon, and attended Oregon State University for college. On a whim, he took a soil science class and discovered a cadre of passionate scientists and professors who were just starting to get serious about winegrowing in Oregon. Their enthusiasm and momentum convinced him to pursue a degree in soil science – and ultimately become a winemaker.

After graduating from OSU, he first spent nearly three years in Guatemala with the Peace Corps, teaching farmers how to improve their crop yields through plant and seed selection. He returned to Oregon and wine in 1996, working first at Amity Vineyards before moving on to help plant some of Willamette Valley's most notable vineyards. In 2001, he began focusing more on winemaking at De Ponte Cellars with Isabelle Dutartre. Aaron also started a winery with his father Phil Lieberman, growing and producing their own wine under the Cottonwood label. He then went on to work for Owen Roe from 2003-2007, guiding their winemaking operations as they tripled their production and built two winery facilities. Owen Roe's custom crush clients enabled him to work with a broader variety of grapes from warmer areas of the Northwest, further expanding his expertise and range.

Iris Vineyards' winemaking program empowers Aaron to apply *areté* in every aspect of the work. **He describes himself as a shepherd, guiding rather than forcing nature in the direction he wants it to go.** This work begins, of course, with growing the best possible grapes. Aaron collaborates with vineyard manager Nathan Sparrow to optimize the growth, health, and maturity of each block of the Chalice Vineyard estate. He also works closely with other Willamette Valley growers and Rogue Valley growers who produce the warm-climate varieties for some of Iris Vineyards' wine club selections.

Once in the cellar, he uses a light hand to coax out the innate beauty of the fruit and the place from which it comes. Careful attention to the timing of pressing, lab testing, and barrel topping has yielded superior results in dozens of small but significant ways. Cooler fermentations avoid excessive tannins, and preserve the delicate fruit esters to make the wines not just approachable, but delicious at release. His goal: **bright, fruit-forward wines with crisp acidity and low alcohol that honor their origins and deliver exceptional value.**

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THE WINES

Under the Iris Vineyards name, the winery produces a wide range of red, white, and rosé wines from the Chalice Vineyard, as well as from selected vineyards around the state. The Areté label represents the reserve, or premium level of wines – truly the best of the estate.

Iris Vineyard Wines

Chalice Vineyard Chardonnay. Our two adjoining blocks of the Dijon 76 clone of Chardonnay were established in 1996 near the center of the estate vineyard. Fermented in large 500-liter barrels (instead of standard 228) to achieve texture without excessive oak aromatics, this wine is bright and round.

Willamette Valley Chardonnay. Blended from our estate-grown Dijon clone 76 Chardonnay and two other Willamette Valley Chardonnay vineyards of similar age, this barrel-fermented wine balances brilliant fruit acidity with soft, tender texture. Grapes are destemmed and enjoy 12 hours of soaking on their skins before pressing, settling, and racking to 500-liter barrels for fermentation.

Willamette Valley Pinot Gris. Sourced almost entirely from the estate, this Pinot Gris is crisp and clean with bright fruit aromas. We pick the fruit during Pinot Gris's short window of maturity between tart green berries and overripe orchard fruit, for a zesty wine that shows hints of citrus and perfectly ripened pears.

Viognier (Applegate Valley). Our Viognier is a single-vineyard wine sourced from Steelhead Run Vineyard, on the banks of the Applegate River. Its generous fruit and texture bridge the gap between Pinot Gris and Chardonnay while respecting the varietal character of Viognier. Fermented in mostly neutral oak barrels for complexity and structure.

Chalice Vineyard Rosé of Pinot Noir. We pick the fruit for this light-bodied rosé two to three weeks before the Pinot Noir for our red wines. We destem the same evening as we pick and allow approximately 8-15 hours of skin contact time (vintage dependent) before pressing to tank. Slow, cool fermentation in neutral oak and stainless-steel tanks results in a wine with texture and balance as well as bright acidity, subtle minerality and a clean, crisp finish.

Chalice Vineyard D Block Pinot Noir. Our estate-grown D Block Pinot Noir is full bodied, rich and fruit-forward, with a stronger French oak influence than our other Pinot Noirs. The grapes are destemmed to 1¼-ton fermenters and allowed to cold soak for up to three days prior to fermentation. Once fermentation is complete, the must is pressed and the wine transferred to tank for a day of settling before being racked to barrel. The wine remains in barrel for about 11 months before bottling.

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Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. A blend of fruit from Chalice Vineyard and other prime Willamette Valley sites, this wine showcases the quality and diversity of Willamette Valley Pinot Noir.

Aroha Vineyard Tempranillo (Umpqua Valley). The Aroha Vineyard is located on the banks of the Umpqua River near the town of Umpqua, where warm-weather grapes like Tempranillo thrive. The grapes are destemmed and fermented at low temperatures to preserve fruity aromatics and minimize tannin extraction, enabling earlier enjoyment of this iconic Spanish varietal.

Steelhead Run Syrah (Applegate Valley). The growers at Steelhead Run Vineyard share winemaker Aaron Lieberman's passion for Syrah, and it shows in the quality of their grapes. Hand-picked grapes are transferred to our winery by refrigerated truck before destemming and co-fermentation with 3-5% Viognier from the same site. Several clones of Syrah are blended from the site to create a wine that is fruit forward, but with plenty of spice.

Cabernet Franc-Merlot blend (Rogue Valley). Sams Valley Vineyard is located northeast of Gold Hill and north of Medford, where warmer weather and clay soils lend themselves to classic Right Bank Bordeaux varieties. Picked at optimal ripeness, the grapes are destemmed and aged in neutral barrels to preserve their varietal character.

Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre blend (Rogue Valley). Winemakers of France's Southern Rhône Valley pioneered the GSM blend of three warm-weather grapes. Our version emphasizes Grenache, which tends to be fruit forward, soft on the palate and lighter in color than the other two components. Syrah lends additional layers of fruit, spicy notes and deeper color. Mourvèdre brings even richer color, along with earthy, spicy flavors.

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Areté Wines

This **100% estate-grown** collection includes Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir still wines, as well as three **sparkling wines made in the traditional *champenoise* method**.

Areté Pinot Gris. This wine is made to showcase the Pinot Gris grape. Picked from the far eastern edge of the vineyard, where the vines compete for water and sunlight with nearby oak trees, the clusters are rich in flavor and high in acidity. Fermented in near-neutral, 500-liter French oak puncheons, Arété Pinot Gris is crisp with a strong mineral component, yet generous with fruit flavors.

Areté Chardonnay. The grapes for this wine are selected from the best Chardonnay barrels from our estate vineyard. After harvest, we destem the fruit and allow the skins to soak in the juice for about 12 hours to impart flavor and color. After pressing and settling the juice is racked to large 500-liter puncheons for fermentation, allowing the sensual texture of oak without overpowering wood aromas.

Areté Pinot Noir. One of our most prized blocks of the Chalice Vineyard, separately harvested, destemmed, and vinified with a higher percentage of new French oak than our other Pinot Noirs. Individual barrels are carefully selected to compose a harmonious yet age-worthy and complex blend.

Areté Blanc de Blancs. As with all our sparkling wines, we identify the vineyard blocks destined for this wine prior to budbreak, so we can optimize them for sparkling wine production. We gently press the clusters whole to minimize extraction of bitter phenolic compounds. The juice was settled in tank and then racked to barrels for a slow, cool primary fermentation. This 100% estate-grown Chardonnay shows aromas and flavors of peach, brioche and citrus.

Areté Brut Rosé. This sparkling wine showcases Pinot Noir from our estate. We source the fruit from the far western edge of our vineyard, where the grapes receive less afternoon sunlight—which helps slow ripening and minimize the peak daily temperature of the grapes, thereby retaining higher acid. The base wine is fermented in neutral barrels previously used for Pinot Noir to add viscosity and help to stabilize the color.

Areté Brut Blanc de Noirs. As this is also 100% Pinot Noir, you will note an ephemeral salmon color complimented by aromas and flavors of strawberry, tart cherry and rhubarb. Layered with vibrant fruit notes, bright acidity and persistent bubbles, this fresh fruit-forward wine is balanced by the palate weight of barrel fermentation and aging, and subtle yeast notes gained by secondary fermentation in bottle. Created with minimal dosage (about 2.7 grams per liter).

To maintain bright, fresh acidity we do not allow malolactic fermentation to occur in any of the sparkling wines. When the base wine is ready, we do tirage bottling and store the bottled wine for secondary fermentation and aging in tirage bins we make at Iris Winery. We also perform all riddling, disgorging and labeling operations by hand. What started as Pamela's small passion project has now become some of the most anticipated and sought-after wines we produce.

With every vintage, we strive to do better – in the vineyard, the cellar, and tasting room.

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THE TASTING ROOM



Iris Vineyards' Tasting Room perches on the vineyard hillside next to Richard and Pamela's home on the estate, about 20 miles southwest of Eugene. Guests relax and unwind in the cozy main tasting room – once Richard and Pamela's living room – or outside on the patio to enjoy the full warmth of Iris Vineyards hospitality. In summer, the idyllic, wisteria-draped courtyard hosts live music on Fridays, with spectacular views over the surrounding vineyard and woodlands below.

Wines are available by the glass, flight, or bottle, along with specialty cheese and charcuterie boards. Tasting Room guests are also welcome to bring their own picnics to enjoy with Iris wines.

Iris Vineyards Estate Tasting Room
82110 Territorial Highway
Eugene, OR 97405
Tel: 541-242-6588

The Tasting Room is open Year-Round. Check the website for updates.

**Summer Hours: May 1st through October 1st – Daily 12pm – 6pm.
Summer Fridays start June 7th. Tasting Room 12-9 pm. Live music 6:00-8:30 pm.**

Winter Hours (October – May): Thursday through Monday 12pm – 5pm.

Additional information: available by request, including Tech Sheets, Dropbox photos, etc.

Website and Trade/Media pages: <https://www.irisvineyards.com/> and
<https://www.irisvineyards.com/pages/logos-labels>

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