

Lisa's Bio

Lisa Howard is a second-generation farmer and self-taught winemaker who, alongside her husband, Cliff Howard, founded Tolenas Winery in 2015. An agricultural engineer with a commitment to sustainable farming, Lisa has come into her own under the Tolenas Winery label. Her diligent yet intrepid approach to winemaking has produced unique, award-winning wines showcasing the best of Suisun Valley, California. Dedicated to her hometown, Lisa is also an advocate for the Suisun Valley's burgeoning community of small, local businesses in the region.

Lisa is the daughter of Steve and Linda Tenbrink, who moved to the Suisun Valley in the 1980s and began farming walnuts, heirloom tomatoes, and various fruits. Eventually, they formed their own winery, Tenbrink Winery and Vineyards, and became stalwarts in the local California wine scene. Growing up as a farmer's daughter, Lisa spent her childhood playing among the orchards and learning the gifts of the trade. Though she wouldn't use these gifts until many years later, Lisa's upbringing gave her a unique perspective and planted the seeds for her own foray into the wine industry.

After graduating from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with a degree in engineering and a focus on agriculture, Lisa moved to Arizona, where she began a career as a Water Resource Specialist. She also worked as a project engineer and consulted with farmers on irrigation initiatives.

While living in Arizona, Lisa met and married Cliff. After years away from California, Lisa felt the Suisun Valley calling to her to return. When the opportunity arose to purchase a 55-acre property in Suisun Valley, Lisa and Cliff jumped at the opportunity to fulfill their calling as winemakers. The Tolenas label and winery was born out of a family tradition and Lisa's passion for the land and grapes.

Today, Lisa's meticulous eye for detail and hands-on approach has helped her develop her own winemaking philosophy that sets her apart in the industry. This includes her commitment to protecting the land, preserving the integrity of her wines, and abstaining from disturbing the vines with chemicals or unnecessary additives.

Always willing to take a risk, Lisa is dedicated to perfecting the quality of the Tolenas label's exclusive family of wines. This includes the award-winning Eclipse, a white pinot noir that won a gold medal at the 2019 International Women's Wine Competition, and just one example of Lisa's creativity and willingness to create something different in order to push the boundaries of her guests' wine experience.

Lending her expertise and serving her community, Lisa sits on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Solano County Ground Water Sustainability Agency Department, and the Board of Directors for the Suisun Valley Vintners and Growers, where she has led the Marketing

Committee for six years. Lisa is also an appointed member of the Board of Supervisors for the Solano County Agricultural Advisory Group.

In addition to her extensive community involvement, Lisa is an advocate for women pursuing careers in technology and STEM. She serves on the Industry Advisory Council for the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Bio Resources and Agricultural Engineering Department and as a project leader in the Suisun Valley 4H Club, nurturing female leadership in her community and inspiring the next generation of young professionals.

Lisa is inspired by her parents and influenced by the cuisine of her Italian heritage, which has helped her create wines that are meant to be enjoyed with good food and great people. Her focus on family, quality, and the terrior of the Suisun Valley define her as a winemaker to watch.