



Melissa Aellen - Bio

Founder, Simple Theory Wine Co

Melissa Aellen is a third-generation vintner based in Frederick, Maryland, who launched Simple Theory Wine Co in 2024. At age 33 she carries forward a rich family legacy that began in 1972 when her grandparents first established wine grapes in Mt. Airy, MD. In 1983, recognizing the growing interest in regionally produced wines, the Aellen family worked to establish the first federally designated grape growing area in Maryland, the Linganore American Viticultural Area (AVA). Today, at the helm of Simple Theory, Melissa carries this family history forward with a fresh vision that embraces both tradition and contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Aellen graduated from Cornell University in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Viticulture and Enology. During her time at Cornell and after graduation, she gained extensive hands-on wine experience spanning diverse wine regions, including Illinois, New York's Finger Lakes, Oregon, Napa Valley, and New Zealand. Along the way she also earned an Executive MBA.

In 2017 she returned to her family's winery, Linganore Winecellars, where she has taken on the role of Director of Operations, overseeing the production and operational aspects of the winery. Melissa's innovative approach and dedication to sustainability has been pivotal in the winery's steps toward greater environmental stewardship.

Aellen's contributions to the wine industry have been widely recognized, and she continues to be a prominent figure in promoting Maryland wines. Her commitment to excellence and her ability to blend tradition with modern techniques places her at the forefront of the region's wine industry.