



DRWakefield

EST. 1970

Kenya

ORETI ESTATE



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<i>County</i>	Kiambu
<i>Altitude</i>	1560 - 1650 masl
<i>Size</i>	38 hectares
<i>Varieties</i>	SL28, SL14
<i>Processes</i>	Fully Washed
<i>Harvest</i>	October - February

The Harries family's legacy began in 1904 when Allen Charles Harries arrived from South Africa and established Karamaini Estate near Thika. His son Ivan later expanded the family's agricultural footprint by acquiring land along the Chania River, gradually transforming it into a coffee-focused enterprise. In the 1950s, Ivan formalized the business setting the foundation for a multi-generational commitment to Kenyan coffee farming. Since 2013, the land has been looked after by 5th generation family member Boyce Harries.

The development of Oreti Estate began in 1946. Named after a beach in New Zealand, Oreti was initially a mixed farm but quickly became known for its coffee, particularly the rare SL14 variety. The belief was SL14's rounder bean shape contributed to more even roasting and superior cup quality. Despite its vulnerability to disease, the Harries family has preserved this variety, making Oreti one of the few remaining farms in Kenya where SL14 is still cultivated. Today, the estate also grows SL28, although the earlier, Typica-related varietal is seen as having an even better cup than the well regarded SL28.

Community engagement is central to the Harries family's approach. Chania and Oreti Estates employ 40 full-time staff, many of whom live on the estates and represent 2nd or 3rd generation employees. During harvest, the workforce expands to over 300, all drawn from the local area. A workers' committee meets monthly to address welfare and safety concerns, and the estates provide educational support through a nursery school and a homework room with electricity for older children. The Harries family also donated 50 acres to the Thika Municipal Council to establish the Wabeni Technical Institute, offering vocational training in trades such as carpentry and motor mechanics.

The estates also maintain 80 hectares of indigenous forest to support biodiversity and soil health. Under Boyce Harries' stewardship, both the estates continue to evolve while staying true to their heritage. His leadership reflects a deep respect for the land, the people who work it, and the coffee it produces. By combining historical knowledge with modern techniques and a strong community ethos, Chania and Oreti Estates represent a rare model of continuity and innovation in Kenyan coffee farming.

