



O P I M I A N NEWS

Sense of Belonging | Following the *Cers* | Volatile Acidity - friend or foe?



**UP CLOSE
AND PERSONAL
WITH FLORIS
LEMSTRA**

CONTRIBUTORS



**ROBIN &
JOHN
BENNETT**

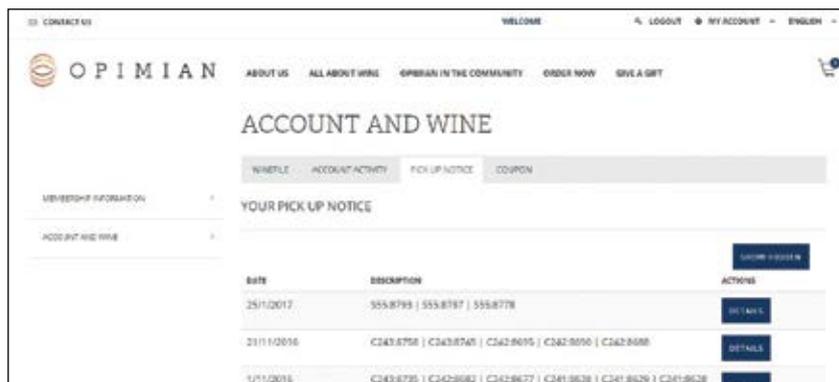
Robin and John Bennett of Grande Prairie, AB have been Opimian members for more than a decade. Avid travelers, self-proclaimed oenophiles and of course savvy in the realm of DIY projects. Robin and John have had the opportunity to enjoy great food, lots of laughs and lots of wine both abroad and in the comfort of their own home.



**CARL
BIRD**

Carl has been a fixture at Opimian for over 15 years. He started out as a member, then took over the Northwest Territories (well, Opimian's chapter there) as Area Representative. In 2015, he moved to Montreal - his hometown - and joined the team at the head office as Area Representative Liaison and Opimian Wine Concierge. He answers members' questions and Answers UnCorked.

PRINTING YOUR PICK UP NOTICE



Spring and summer in Canada can mean a lot of different things to many different people, but for Opimian from coast to coast to coast, it means the start of the pick up season.

Remember that in order to pick up your wines you are going to require a valid identification (or membership card) and a copy of your pick up notice.

Access your pick up notice in 5 simple steps :

1. Sign in at www.opimian.ca
2. Click on the "My Account" drop down menu on the top right of the screen and click on "My profile"
3. Click on the "Account and Wine" box on the left of the screen (just below the box with your name, membership number and e-mail address) and then select the "Pick Up Notice" tab
4. Find the correct Pick Up notice and click on the "Details" box
5. Print the Pick Up Notice

ABOUT THE COVER

We speak to Floris Lemstra whose Château Canet winery is producing some of Minervois' most celebrated whites. Floris talks to us about his techniques, philosophy and how he's using Opimian to connect with Canadian wine lovers.



NEW AREA REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE GTA

We're excited to welcome Lindan Toole as Area Representative for Opimian's Greater Toronto Area. Well-versed in the travel and leisure industry, Lindan has over 25 years of experience as an event manager. During her time in the field, she founded and produced a successful travel and leisure show that grew to be the largest consumer travel exposition in North America. She was also contracted to organize other events both large and small in the travel industry and other areas.

Lindan retired from event management and moved to Israel for two years where she founded Mediterranean Kitchens Cooking Vacations. This venture had her researching, organizing and leading group culinary trips to Sicily, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Turkey and other Mediterranean countries. Upon returning to Canada, she successfully managed luxury condominiums in the downtown core.

We invite you to say hello to Lindan. She looks forward to engaging with all our loyal GTA members! Contact her today at torontowest@ar.opim.ca



Lindan Toole

INTRODUCING A NEW FACE TO THE OPIMIAN TEAM

Opimian would like to welcome our newest addition to the Member Experience Team – Myriam Bennett. Myriam is our new Opimian Concierge and will be working closely with our Senior Concierge, Carl Bird, to expand this valuable service and make it more accessible to all members.

Myriam is a native of Montreal and is a polyglot who speaks fluid French, English and Polish. She is currently in the final stages of her sommelier certificate program through l'École des métiers de la restauration et du tourisme de Montréal.

Myriam brings a wealth of wine knowledge, having traveled to several wine regions in Europe including having participated in the harvest and vinification process in Bourgogne in 2016. She has attended several workshops and wine shows to increase her knowledge and understanding of the world of wine.

Myriam is excited to be joining the Opimian team and looks forward to helping members navigate Opimian's treasure trove of great wines, connecting with suppliers and to further cultivate their curiosity for all things wine and Opimian.



Myriam Bennett



TWO MORE ISLANDERS TO ENTER THE OPIMIAN HALL OF FAME.



On June 9, 2017, the Opimian Hall of Fame welcomes its two newest members – J. David White and Gwyneth Jones – long time members from Prince Edward Island.

David and Gwyneth have a long history of service to Opimian. In 1989, David took over the responsibilities of Area Representative for PEI. Thus began 27 years of combined AR service by David and Gwyneth.

Over the years, David and Gwyneth held over 160 Opimian events. David also acted as speaker at events in Nova Scotia and Ontario. He was the titular AR from 1989 until 1997 when he was asked to take on new responsibilities as Director for Atlantic Canada. He handed the reins to Gwyneth and assumed these responsibilities until 2003. His tenure in Atlantic Canada was followed by a stint on the Hall of Fame Committee for five years.

Not to be outdone, Gwyneth continued to provide unflagging support to the members of PEI as the Area Representative from 1997 through 2015. Gwyneth continued to host wonderful events and addressed any member issues in a timely manner.

Given their lengthy period of service, David and Gwyneth have seen approximately 120 Area Representatives come and go over the years. At all times, they served as incredible mentors and passed on sage advice and tricks of the trade during annual Area Representative meetings that were held in various locations in Canada and abroad.

David and Gwyneth were also great ambassadors for Opimian. They held numerous wine tasting events for private organizations in the community, attended 15 PEI LCC Wine Festival events promoting Opimian and hosted countless guests in their home who have learned about Opimian over a glass or two of wine. They have referred an astounding 82 members over the years.

Between the two of them, David and Gwyneth have provided 37 years of combined service to Opimian – truly, a Hall of Fame worthy accomplishment.

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WORTHY OF A NOMINATION ?

E-mail us at feedback@opim.ca if you have somebody in mind.

A member who has been in good standing for at least five years (or a member in good standing at the time of extreme disability or death) can be nominated in the following categories :

- > **Pioneer** – Longevity of membership; originator; new area, new idea; wine education or Society improvement
- > **Service** – Long and exemplary service by Area Representatives; directors; “unsung” assistants; office members.
- > **Membership/Recruitment** – Has personally introduced multiple members; has promoted membership and encouraged growth.
- > **Members Choice/Activity Support** – Events: Regular attendance, frequently brought guests, helps with coordination. Tours: has taken part in many tours, help guides, promoted tours to others. Cellar Offerings: has consistently ordered many different wines from many Cellar Offerings over time.



SPRING CLEANING

WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE OLD CORKS LYING AROUND...

If you're like us, it's probably not uncommon to find the occasional cork lying around. Next time, instead of tossing it away, consider making some art like Opimian member Robin Bennett. Wondering how? Robin was kind enough to share her clever DIY project with us.

The wall represents corks from over a dozen countries, countless wineries as well as our own travels and special occasions.

Starting off, we measured our wall area and then laid out a small sample of corks to determine the amount required. Cork sizes vary greatly; however, we approximated that a 12" x 12" space required 105 corks to fill. To reach our goal of 2,600 corks, we called on family, friends, wineries and even sought help online.

Next, we created a border using oak baseboards and molding, which we stained and varnished to match our flooring. It was important for the molding to be deep enough to hold the corks in place. To avoid gluing directly onto the wall, we nailed a quarter-inch board on which to mount the corks.

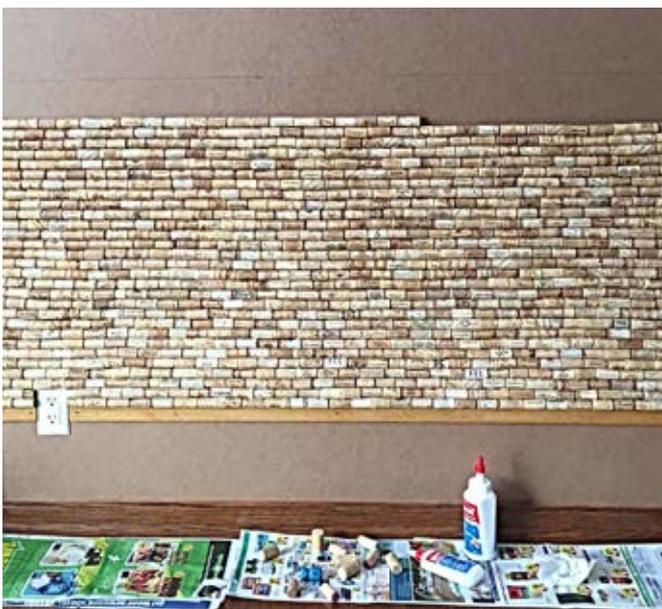
We divided the corks into two categories: size (long, short, fat, skinny) and uniqueness (year, type of wine, logo and even the wine stain).



We applied the corks from the bottom up (never start at the top) using a white wood glue that dries transparent. Choose a glue with a drying time long enough to allow for adjustments. If possible, try to stagger joints with each row. Don't be tempted to use your best corks right away as they are more interesting at eye level.

Take time to place each cork so it fits well with the others. You may need to cut some corks to complete a row but try not to end each row with a cut piece; instead, stagger where you place the cut pieces.

This project took many hours to complete but we were rewarded with a work of art reflecting places, memories and our passion for wine. The final product can perfectly complement your wine cellar and even serve as a feature wall!



FOLLOWING THE *CERS* TO CHÂTEAU CANET



In the far west of Languedoc-Roussillon's Minervois AOC, you'll stumble upon Château Canet, a 19th-century wine estate run by husband-and-wife team Floris Lemstra and Victoria Lemstra-Bake. Opimian's Château Canet offerings often deliver profiles you wouldn't necessarily expect from Minervois—a designation generally known for its legendary reds. Curious to learn more about the estate's techniques and philosophy (particularly, its atypical embrace of whites), we reached out to Floris who was kind enough to grant us an interview.

Happy to be chatting with you, Floris! Before delving too deep into what makes your wines stand out, can you talk to us a little about the general selection process and how you became acquainted with Opimian?

My wife Victoria is from Toronto and her family had a house in Prince Edward County, where we used to spend many summers. I heard about Opimian through them and connected with the club at a wine expo in 2009.

For winemakers, Canada can be a frustrating and complicated market to navigate. There tends to be a leaning toward larger wine producers. To be successful here isn't easy and national distribution is even harder. It was great to finally see an organization cutting against the grain and bringing unique labels to Canadians.

What's more, Opimian's Master of Wine Jane Masters is a joy to work with. I had known her prior to working with Opimian when she was in Burgundy. Jane has a deep understanding of winemaking, which is important to us. She's a big part of the selection process. We send her our offerings and often bounce ideas off her. She even visits the domaine from time to time. Our offerings are always born from this fun exchange of ideas.



One thing that often surprises members about Château Canet is its whites, which are not all that typical in Minervois. What inspired you to embrace white wines?

In Minervois, only 3% of wine production is white. By contrast, we're producing 40% whites, which is mostly thanks to our unique micro-climate. Because we're situated at the westernmost part of Minervois, the dominating wind comes from the Atlantic. It's referred to as the Cers and is very cool and dry. Often, I find whites from Southern France overly ripe and lacking in acidity

and freshness. The Cers prevents sugars from maturing too quickly, which gives us a fresh, elegant wine.

The reds, too, are affected by these winds. Like the whites, they're less over-ripened than their regional counterparts. They produce a fresher, black-fruit structure.

I'd imagine this microclimate also plays a big part in how you're oaking your whites.

Our approach to oak can be likened to a chef's approach to seasoning a dish. A lot of it boils down to personal taste but at the same time, you want to let the natural flavour profiles sing rather than mask them. Nothing's easier than hiding a white behind a big wall of vanilla and toastiness.

We only oak when the wine can sustain the oak. Take a white like our Minervois Blanc, which, thanks in part to the Cers, has a long, mineral structure. Its profile offers exotic fruit, pineapple, apricot and citrus. If we were to oak it, it would lose its pureness and elegance. On the other hand, our Chardonnay is a little fatter with higher alcohol. Here, we blend 30% oak with 70% stainless steel. You'll taste the vanilla and toasted oak but still enjoy all the peach, pear and citrus fruit. It's all about finding that balance.

Speaking of balance, your estate dates to the 19th-century yet you frequently discuss using state-of-the-art equipment and new winemaking techniques. Tell us about this dichotomy of the old and the new.

My view on which techniques to use is very much based on my own experience of the last 20 years. I don't come from a 16th-century winemaking family. My knowledge is born purely from interpreting everything happening around me. There's real value in trying to absorb experience gathered by the people working this land for the past 40 or 50 years.

With that said, I live by the principle that even if we win



a bunch of medals, I always want to find new ways to improve. I have no aversion to pairing technology with our old-school techniques. Combining our terroir knowhow with scientific objectivity is never a bad thing. Of course, it's a balancing act. We may uncover that perfect chemical recipe but know intuitively that the profile's not what we're looking for. We've also hired a consultant winemaker. It's extremely easy to get used to your own wine methodology. It's always healthy to have an outsider's voice included in the mix.

I see that visitors to your estate can stay for more than a glass—you offer great accommodations. Walk us through a trip to your winery.

Château Canet is a joint venture between me and my wife. Her background is in tourism and hospitality. We chose this location because apart from its vineyards, the Château already had 10 cottages, which allowed Victoria and I to combine our two passions.

We're situated very close to the 11th-century medieval Cité de Carcassonne, one of France's most visited tourist sites. We'll often receive visitors taking pilgrimages there. Over the last seven to eight years, we've also organized several visits through Opimian. Many members learn about our estate through your wine club's offerings. Upon a little research, they discover that we offer a great place to rest your head along with a pool, tennis court and fantastic scenery (not to mention, we encourage all visitors to join us for a glass and learn all about our techniques). Opimian's Concierge service has done a wonderful job connecting members directly with us!

If you're curious about Château Canet's wines, Opimian is featuring several in Cellar Offering 251. And if you're dreaming about a trip to Minervois (who isn't dreaming about Southern France?), contact your concierge to get the conversation started!





VOLATILE ACIDITY - FRIEND OR FOE ?

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I know when a wine is “corked” and I understand the cause of this issue. Wines can also spoil for other reasons and I was hoping to better understand them. Recently I experienced some spoilage that caused the wine to smell and taste vinegary (not as potent as pure vinegar, but clearly not a wine to drink). I store all my wines in a basement cellar, which maintains a nice temperature year-round as well as good humidity. Can you weigh in on what might have caused this?

Mike Batting – Waterdown Ontario

There are several conditions that may exist in wines that one would call faulty. The condition you describe is excess Volatile Acidity (VA). VA is not actually a fault in and of itself. In fact, it is an important component of wine. Some levels of acidity are necessary to ensure balance in a wine and provide some of the pleasant fruit flavours. VA is often higher in wines with long fermentation periods such as Amarone, Ice Wine and Barolo. However, when the levels get too high, the aromas and flavours can be off-putting. This is considered a fault.

The source of VA can vary. The main source is bacteria that cause the formation of acetic acid. If too much bacteria are in the wine, it can cause excess levels of VA. Another source is rogue yeasts that cause excess acidity as well as alcohol to be developed during the fermentation process.

If excess volatility is caught at the winery, it can be corrected using reverse osmosis. It can also be combated by filtering the wine with excess VA and blending with a wine with lower VA.

In the case of individual bottles, it may be that the bacteria were present in the bottles and the excess VA developed after bottling. Perhaps, in your case, the sanitation of those specific bottles was not up to par. Bacteria was left in the bottle and over time reacted with the alcohol and oxygen that came into the wine.

So while excess VA is rare, it can happen at times, even with the best quality wines. But all is not lost — you can always keep the wine and use it as a base to make homemade red wine vinegar!

Vita Vinum Est

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FAULT	WHAT IS IT ?	HOW CAN YOU TELL ?
Oxidization	Contamination from too much exposure to oxygen	Wine has lost its brightness both in colour and flavour
Trichloroanisole (TCA) ; aka corked	A chemical contaminant that found its way into your bottle somewhere in production, usually from real cork	Aromas of wet newspaper, moldy basement, smelly dog
Reduction	Excessive sulfur compounds	Aromas of burnt match, rotten eggs, burnt rubber
Secondary fermentation	When a few grams of residual sugar are accidentally left in a wine and it re-ferments, resulting in bubbling	Well... bubbles. But check to make sure this is not intentional such as for Vinho Verde and some Grüner Veltliner
Heat Damage (maderized)	Over exposure to excess heat	Cooked fruit and jammy aromas somewhat like a wine reduction sauce

If you have a question, please email it to conciierge@opim.ca. Questions may be used in future issues of Opimian News. Material chosen for publication may be edited for clarity and fit.