



O P I M I A N NEWS

Minerality in wine | Cultivating your wine curiosity | How to build a wine cellar



**AN
OPIMIAN
TOUR
OF CHILE**

CONTRIBUTORS



FRANK IANNI, CEO

Frank joined Opimian as CEO on September 1st, 2015 after a nationwide search. His vision and leadership have been a

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hallmark over a 30+ year career while successfully leading multi-national, midsize and smaller organizations in Canada, the U.S., Europe and Asia to new heights. Frank is the strategic driving force and architect, in harmony and conjunction with his dedicated management team and support staff at Opimian, behind the recent rejuvenation and member-centric strategies of our great wine club. He is considered an expert regarding national and international business development and sustainable strategic growth, has a lovely wife of more than 30 years, 2 beautiful daughters and a grandson.



JANE MASTERS MW

Jane joined Opimian back in 2010. She tastes, selects and writes about all the wines featured in Opimian's Cellar Offerings. Based between France and

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London, UK, Jane personally knows the winemakers and visits every region offered. She passed the Master of Wine exams in 1997 and is now Chairman of the Institute of Masters of Wine.



CARL BIRD

Carl's 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

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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 shares them in Answers UnCorked.

SNEAK PEAK

Opimian has a new website: opimian.ca



Opimian's new website is a reflection of our promise of a renewed connection with our members and our efforts to continue to grow Opimian into the future. Over the next few months, we will continue to enhance your membership experience with new and exciting features allowing you to Cultivate Your Curiosity.



Villard Fine Wines was established in 1989 by Thierry Villard. At the time, it was Chile's first family-owned boutique wine company. Over the last two decades, they have been recognized as one of the best producers of the Casablanca Valley

Keeping it in the family, their property and winery at the Villard estate is overseen by Thierry's son, winemaker Jean-Charles, who hosted the Opimian tour at their brand new facility in Casablanca.



NEW AREA REPRESENTATIVE FOR OAKVILLE



Sandra Pauwels,
Area Representative for
Oakville/Burlington

Opimian is pleased to introduce Sandra Pauwels as the new Area Representative for the Oakville/Burlington/Niagara region. As a first generation Canadian, Sandra grew up in a family that always took time to enjoy each other's company over lavish meals paired with ample amounts of wine. It is something she still takes great pleasure in and is a large part of why food and wine continue to be such a large influence in her

life. After college, Sandra joined her family business, a travel agency specializing in group tours, and immediately became involved with their food and wine focused programs. As a result, she has been able to share her love of wine with many others and at the same time become more educated on the topic.

Knowing there is still so much more to learn has led her to Opimian. Although she has not been a member long, she has a strong background in organizing food and wine focused events. She looks forward to organizing events, learning more about Opimian and exploring our wines with members of the Oakville, Burlington, Niagara and the surrounding area.

NEW AREA REPRESENTATIVE FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



Todd McLean,
Area Representative for PEI

Meet our new Area Representative for Prince Edward Island, Todd McLean. Todd naturally developed an interest in wine early on. He grew up in a family that enjoys wine and there was often a bottle of wine with dinner in his household. His father, Mitch Mclean, is one of the first Opimian members on PEI. After moving back to the island in 2003, Todd joined Opimian. He participates in many Opimian events and has

encouraged others to join the PEI chapter. He looks forward to serving as the Area Representative for PEI in coming years.

Inheriting the role of Area Representative from David White and Gwyneth Jones after more than 27 years of service will be a fun endeavor for Todd. He cannot wait to share his enthusiasm of his new role with members across the province and has already planned more than eight events in 2017.

A FAREWELL TO LONG TERM AREA REPRESENTATIVES



David White & Gwyneth Jones,
former ARs Representatives for PEI

The time has come for us to retire as Area Representatives of Opimian for P.E.I. Over the past 27 years, we have hosted over 160 wine events where we had approximately 5,000 members and guests attending at which we opened more than 8,000 bottles of wine. It is safe to say that good times were had by all.

We would like to thank Opimian Hall of Fame member, Jay Macdonald for originally suggesting us as his replacement and to John Sambrook for having the confidence in us to carry out the role of Area Representative. To all of the staff

at Opimian past and present, thank you for your guidance and support over all of our time as AR. Each and every one of you will have a warm place in our hearts as we understood the task which you were required undertake. To all of our AR colleagues across Canada, it has been a pleasure knowing all of you.

To our chapter members, we say THANK YOU for all of your support over the past 27+ years. We enjoyed every minute of our time and it certainly has been our pleasure to have been your AR.

Finally to our successor Todd McLean, we wish you nothing but the best as you begin your time as AR for PEI Enjoy your experience as it is an experience like none other...Enjoy

David & Gwyneth



CULTIVATING YOUR CURIOSITY FOR WINE



Life has its interesting twists sometimes, doesn't it? My father left Italy with \$400 in his pocket after the Second World War to immigrate to Canada with wide-eyed hope for a better life for his family, leaving behind a wine Cantina business.

During my teen and young adult years, I recall my dad gathering the Ianni clan every fall (aunts, uncles and all children) to make our own wine from scratch, including that manual press set up in our garage.

A few decades later, here I am leading the innovative changes we are bringing to our great wine club.

Life has a strange way of finding its own sense of harmony.

Opimian is poised to carve out its role as one of the most accessible and unique wine clubs in the world.

The recent improvements to the Opimian experience allow members and potential members to discover and connect with wine and the people who make it in a way that no other wine club may offer.

We are dedicated to you, the member, and bringing you the stories behind the wine with simplified methods to encourage your discovery of our world.

Recent innovations all combine to redefine the Opimian experience. These innovations include our Concierge Service, National/Tasting series (where producers visit our chapters to connect with members), new website, corporate service program (for companies to have executives/employees learn more about the world of wine), and partnership with Ensemble travel.

Of course, Opimian has modernized its communication strategies to begin the process of rejuvenating its membership base. This includes more social media presence and using technology to connect members to the wine experiences.

All this is done so that we may effectively communicate the unique advantages of our wines, rigorously identified, tasted and chosen by Jane Masters, Master of Wine (and now Chairperson of Institute of Master of Wine), and our expert wine sourcing team.

There are a number of innovations to come in the years ahead at Opimian that will refresh our wine club in the eyes of potential members, while enhancing the existing member experience.

On behalf of the whole Opimian team, we thank you for your loyalty and membership.

We look forward to seeing you at our chapter events and encouraging potential members to contact us.

This is a journey to cultivate our collective wine curiosity in every sense, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to lead us through this positive change.

Just as this immigrant's son had discovered from his father's actions, Opimian bringing in all these new and innovative strategies and partnerships is realizing its sense of community and harmony.



MINERALITY IN WINE

The term minerality is being increasingly used in describing wines. Not long ago it was virtually non-existent. Wine books written 20 years ago have no mention of the term. Today read any wine blog or magazine and there are frequent references to mineral streaks, mineral edge, mineral taste and minerality.

Its rise in popularity is impressive. As I was preparing this article, I was with a winemaker in Chile who had no idea I was thinking about it; maybe it's the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon, but he mentioned minerality about 20 times in the space of an hour's tasting. But so what if the term has become popular – language is constantly evolving – the Oxford English Dictionary is updated every quarter and the latest update included 500 new words in the English language.

The widespread use of minerality has become a talking point in the wine trade. I recently attended a seminar on the subject with leading researchers from far and wide including Dr. Wendy Parr, Wine Sensory Scientist at Lincoln University, New Zealand; Dr. Jordi Ballester, researcher at Université de Bourgogne in Dijon, France; and Professor Alex Maltman, Professor of Earth Sciences at Aberystwyth, Wales in UK.

What do we actually mean by minerality? And why is it such a talking point? It's certainly a term I use although I would hope not to excess. For me, it's a counterbalance to the fruit, a more savoury note that complements fruit flavours giving the wine an edge - making it more interesting. Wines can have a certain earthiness and/or smell of wet stone. On the palate, minerality can be associated with acidity, citrus flavours and length.



One of the complaints is that the way in which the term is used often infers that the mineral character in the wine comes from the soil on which the vines were cultivated. The terroir where grapes are grown has an impact on the quality and flavour of the grapes and resulting wine. But this is very different to minerals being taken up by the

roots, transmitted through the vine to the berries and ultimately into the finished wine with the flavour being a direct result of the soil make up. From a scientific point of view this simply doesn't stack up.

So are we confusing or misleading wine drinkers? We use many descriptors for wines – blackcurrant, cat's pee and coffee to name but a few. This doesn't mean that the local Tom has made his own contribution to the wine-making process. Flavour descriptors are metaphorical, an attempt to put a flavour impression into words to give wine drinkers an indication of what to expect from a wine and help them select wines to enjoy. Different tasters use different descriptors.

I guess there is a difference in that certain aromas can be attributed to specific aromatic compounds that are found in fruits, and that these same compounds are found in wine. Whereas there is no single identified molecule that confers mineral notes and with few exceptions, minerals lack any aroma or flavour. Lick the surface of rocks such as limestone, granite or slate or of minerals like quartz, calcite or feldspar and you will find no flavour. Yet for many years, terms such as flinty and chalky have been used to describe wines.

Having racked my brain I cannot think of an alternative, so I for one will continue to use mineral as a descriptor.

AN INTIMATE WEEK WITH OUR FRIENDS FROM CHILE

During the week of November 18-26, 2016 a group consisting of Opimian Area Representatives and your Opimian Wine Concierge had the opportunity to connect with our suppliers as we visited Chile.

It was a great opportunity for us to learn more about our Chilean friends and to enhance our connection to these wonderful people. To help you discover a little more about these fabulous winemaking families, here is a short recap of how week unfolded.

Nadalié Cooperage and T. Villard Fine Wines

Owned by Thierry Villard, Villard's operation is a stunning example of how to do things right. We were exposed to one of the least understood aspects of wine making and came away with a real appreciation of this very important step in the wine making process: the crafting of the right barrel for the right wine. We were truly inspired by the presentation, which included how to select the right trees to the final steps of the barrel making process.

We then proceeded to the Villard winery and were fortunate to be the first visitors of their new facilities in Casablanca. The state-of-the-art facility, built to withstand a major earthquake, is nestled among vines featuring Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Syrah grapes that are mostly hand-picked to make their reserve wines and their Grand vin.

Bodegas y Vinedos O'Fournier and Bodegas y Vinedos Mauricio Lorca

On day two, we were greeted by Jose Manuel Ortega, owner and operator of the O'Fournier wineries in Spain, Argentina and Chile. This visit was highlighted by a walk through one of their vineyards in the Valle de Maule ...its 123-year-old



José Manuel Ortega, proprietor of O'Fournier wines

Cabernet Franc so twisted over time are spaced so close together that modern day harvesting machines and tractors cannot fit between them. Who would have thought that horse-drawn tractors would still be used to this day?

Of course no visit is complete without an opportunity to sample some of O'Fournier's amazing products. The first of two tastings featured three vintages of O'Fournier Alpha Crux from 2011, 2012 and 2013 (which is available to members on C246).

Another tasting was provided by Bodegas y Vinedos Mauricio Lorca who joined us in Chile from Argentina. Mauricio presented us with a number of wines offered from previous Cellar Offerings including their Tematico Joven, Lirico, Opalo and Tematico Reserva line.

Two highlights of these tastings were the O'Fournier Alpha Centauri red blend, featuring Cabernet Franc grapes from those 123-year-old vines and Lorca's Opalo Malbec, a wine that clearly shows the elegance of a well-made Malbec from Argentina.



Thierry Villard, proprietor of Villard Fine Wines

Francisco Castro, Senior Export Director of Viña Echeverria since 2003 will be joining Opimians in Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Vancouver and Victoria from January 24-28, 2017. Join us for this intimate gathering and sample the very same wines that will be available on Cellar Offering 246.

Viña La Rosa Cornellana Estate Winery

One of our last stops was a visit to Viña La Rosa, one of Chile's oldest family wineries, located at Pauma in the Cachapoal Valley some 150 kilometres south of Santiago.

Opimians were led on a Master Class describing the challenges and rewards of working with Chile's signature grape, Carmènere. No Master Class would be complete without a tasting as we compared Carmènere wines made with grapes from three different vineyards with different soil compositions.

Just when you thought that it could not get any better, our second tasting featured a five-varietal tasting of the barrel reserve Carmènere from 2011 through 2015 (the 2015 vintage is offered on C246).

Needless to say, our visit to Chile was more than memorable. We had the opportunity to visit some old friends and gain an added appreciation of the love and passion behind the creation of wines and the importance that Opimian has in their lives.

More importantly, your Opimian Concierge left Chile with the added knowledge of how and why some of Opimians' favourite wines are made. We also confirmed that the wines of Chile and Argentina are among the best values you can get and that C246 will be a budget-friendly Cellar Offering not to be missed.

To learn more about the wines being offered in C246 or to arrange a visit one of our fabulous Chilean or Argentinian partners you can contact the Opimian Wine Concierge at concierge@opim.ca.



Diego Echeverria, Roberto Echeverria Sr and Roberto Echeverria Jr. of Viña Echeverria

Viña Echeverria

Upon arrival, we were met by patriarch Roberto Echeverria and his sons Roberto Junior and Diego who led us on a tour of the family run winery. The tour started with a "how to" on the art of making of sparkling wine and led us to the garden just outside of the family hacienda for a tasting of wines that are featured on Cellar Offering 246.

18 years ago, Opimian entered into a relationship with the Echeverria family to provide our members with fine wines at an excellent price. What has developed over those 18 years is much more than a business relationship. Echeverria is truly part of the Opimian family. This relationship was demonstrated in spades as we spent several hours in the company of the entire family enjoying wine, renewing friendships and exchanging great stories.



BUILDING A WINE CELLAR

Before you start, you need to determine how many wines you wish to maintain in a cellar. Whatever number that is, there are some basics that you should consider.

A mix of sparkling, red, white and fortified wines should be your goal.

For sparkling, I would suggest at least one Champagne – vintage would be preferable as they can be stored longer than non-vintage. Another sparkling wine from another region made in the Charmant (Tank) method. Perhaps a Spumante from Italy.

For still wine, I would suggest a ratio of 2-to-1 in favour of reds. Even if you don't normally drink white wine, you should have some for guests or for correct pairing with food. Among the white wines should be one or two dessert wines.

Fortified wines come in many styles. Port, sherry, cognac and brandy are all good examples. I would suggest one vintage port, one tawney port, and one of either sherry, cognac or brandy would be a good selection for fortified wines.

You should also try to gain a balance between Old World wines – France, Spain, Italy e.g. – and New World wines – Australia, South America, North America, South Africa e.g.

About half of the wines in your cellar should be wines that are ready to drink. These wines will be replaced each year with the next vintage. The balance should be wines that can be laid down for two or more years. Long-term planning would suggest that when you start opening wines that have aged, you are also buying future vintages to replace them.

Given these criteria, here are some specific suggestions I would provide. Numbers are based on a starting cellar of 108 bottles. It can be expanded from there.

- 18 bottles of everyday white: Vin de Pays Chardonnay, Muscadet, Canadian Pinot Blanc, German Kabinett of any varietal, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, Italian Soave and Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc blend from Bordeaux

- 36 bottles of everyday red: Bordeaux AC, Chilean Carmènere, Beaujolais Villages, Valpolicella Classico, Chianti Classico, Canadian Cabernet Franc, Australian Shiraz, other European reds
- 12 bottles of fine white: Burgundy or Chablis Grand Crus (4 ready to drink, 8 for ageing), Graves AC, Alsatian Gewürztraminer or Riesling from a named village (lieu dits), German Riesling Spätlese, fine Okanagan Chardonnay
- 24 bottles of fine red: Bordeaux Cru Classé or Burgundy Grand Cru (4 ready to drink, 8 for ageing), fine Italian red such as Barolo, Brunello or Amarone, Côtes du Rhône or Châteauneuf du Pâpe, Premium California Cabernet
- 6 bottles of dessert wine: Canadian Icewine, Sauternes, German or Austrian Trökenbeerenauslese, Tockay Essencia, New World Late Harvest wine
- 6 bottles of sparkling wine
- 6 bottles of vintage port to age
- 4 bottles of fino sherry

This will help you with starting a basic cellar. You can start smaller by cutting the quantities in half or increase the size by doubling or tripling the quantities and adding variety.

You should know that Opimian has a unique tool to help you start your own cellar. On each Cellar Offering, we identify wines that we suggest would be a good purchase in order to start or add to your cellar. Identified with an amphora, purchasing each of these wines will ensure a balance between red and white, drink now or cellar and varietals.

Of course, for the more personal touch you can call me and I will be happy to help you start a cellar based on your own personal preferences.

Vita Vinum Est,
Carl Bird | Opimian Wine Concierge |
Montreal, QC



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