



O P I M I A N NEWS

Opimian's Hall of Fame | What is fare with fowl? | Knowing the Masters

**PROGRAMS
DESIGNED TO
CULTIVATE YOUR
CURIOSITY**



DISCOVERY



SELECT PLUS



**FOUNDERS'
CHOICE**





CARL BIRD

5 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 in Answers UnCorked.



JANE MASTERS MW

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

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2018



In late summer, Opimian's Board of Directors met for a Strategic Planning Session. The board identified three (3) Critical and/or High Priority capabilities, which will animate the 2018 business plan. Those priorities are:

- Member Service Excellence
- Effective Communications with all stakeholders
- Sustainable membership growth through effective member retention and recruitment

For a summary of the strategic outcomes, we invite you to visit the governance section of the Opimian website.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO OPIMIAN'S HALL OF FAME

Opimians come together from across the country under the common interest of excellent wine and engaging conversation. We know there are many Opimian members who put forth the effort and energy that makes us stronger with each passing year. We honour these stand-out members by highlighting their contributions at our annual Hall of Fame induction ceremony. This is our way of celebrating and recognizing Opimians who make a difference.



The original list of Hall of Fame inductees included 10 members who had made invaluable contributions of time, energy, knowledge, leadership, experience and in some cases, money to build and maintain the club. Without these people, and many other unsung members, the Opimian way of ordering, distributing and enjoying wine would not exist as we know it.

We are now accepting nominations for 2018 - contact feedback@opim.ca for more information. If you know a member who has made or continues to make a special

contribution to Opimian, we want to know. 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) is eligible for nomination.

CATEGORIES

All Hall of Fame Inductees are selected based on four main types of contribution:

Pioneer

Longevity of membership; originator of something new; new area, new idea, wine education or a Society improvement.

Service

Long and exemplary service by area representatives, directors, "unsung" assistants, office members.

Membership/Recruitment

Has personally introduced multiple new members; has promoted membership and encouraged growth.

Members Choice/Activity Support

Often and consistently participates in events, tours and frequently partakes of the wine selection.

ABOUT THE COVER

Opimian's wine programs are designed to help you develop your palate at each stage of your journey. It starts with Discovery; once you've cultivated your curiosity and explored the wine world, you can graduate to Select Plus - the "next level" mixed cases, with both ready to drink wines and wines for aging. After you've challenged your palate and started your cellar, it's time to start collecting with Founders' Choice - premium wines available exclusively through this program. Learn more on page 6!



AREA REPRESENTATIVES NEEDED FOR MONCTON, NIAGARA AND ORILLIA

Opimian loves to cultivate a community of curious wine lovers. In order to do that, we need our men and women on the ground, helping members with everything from navigating their first order to picking up their wines, and organizing tasting events.

If you love sharing your passion for wine, organizing events and helping others, then consider becoming an Area Representative. We are currently looking for community leaders in Moncton, Niagara and Orillia. **To apply, email your resume and cover letter to feedback@opim.ca.**



EARN A FREE CASE OF CRÉMANT D'ALSACE THIS FALL



Opimian and Cave Vinicole de Hunawihr joined forces to bring you a sparkling reward – a three bottle case of Peter Weber Crémant d'Alsace Brut.

Opimian's Fall Rewards Campaign is our way of thanking you for your continued support and for being the number one reason more Canadians come to us to cultivate their curiosity for wine. Every year, we work with our favourite suppliers to prepare exciting, exclusive rewards as part of our Fall Rewards Campaign. Why? Because you deserve it.

Our 2017 reward comes from Cave Vinicole de Hunawihr. This Alsatian co-op lies on the outskirts of Hunawihr village, working to support local winegrowers and wine-makers – a goal we agree with, given our mission is to bring the world's wines to Canadian oenophiles.

Hunawihr has been a part of the Opimian family since their first appearance in Cellar Offering 109. It just made sense that we would work with a supplier that has a lasting relationship with us – and consistently ranks among the members' favourites. Especially since your free case of Peter Weber Crémant d'Alsace will arrive in time for our 45th Anniversary!

THANK YOU! Now get out there, spread the word and start earning your reward.

Visit www.opimian.ca for more information about our 2017 Fall Rewards Campaign Crémant reward.

PETER WEBER CRÉMANT D'ALSACE BRUT

This delicate bubbly presents in a watery-yellow shade with deep silver tint. Its small bubbles dance in the glass with good persistent grace. The nose is straightforward, elegant and harmonious, with notes of fresh bread, butter and nuts. Following these beautiful aromas is a sharp, clean palate with dry acidity. Soft, delicate bubbles lift the mid-palate and give it a long-lasting, buttery finish. A very complex and elegant Crémant. Peter Weber Crémant d'Alsace Brut was aged for 18 months after being fermented in the méthode traditionnelle.



WHAT IS FARE WITH FOWL?

With Christmas nearing, I am again being approached with a very common question: what should I pair with my Christmas dinner?

This is a pretty simple question with a very complex answer.

If I had to narrow it down to four wines, they would be: Riesling Grand Cru Osterberg (ham), Luminos Brut Sparkling (turkey and dessert), Domaine de L'Atrandine (turkey and tourtière) and Shottesbrooke Shiraz (sweet potato purée).

The components of a Christmas dinner vary in the way they are prepared and cooked as well as their primary flavour profile. So here are my thoughts on what you might want to serve with each course of your Christmas dinner.

Having been brought up in Quebec, my table always has tourtière at Christmas. I make mine with lamb, veal, pork and a blend of sweet spice. Onions and potatoes add complexity and the profile is rounded out by the sweet flakiness of the crust. Here you want to avoid wines with too much tannin. Fruity reds with a nice level of acidity would pair nicely here. From my cellar, I choose Domaine des Cigalons, 2001, AOC Châteauneuf-du-Pape (lot 7014). The tannins have softened, leaving a terrific fruit/acid balance.

Baked spiral ham is a combination of sweet, salty and fatty. High fruit and acidity are essential for this pairing. Plus, you need a decent level of sweetness to match that of the ham. A nice aromatic Alsatian Riesling is my suggestion. The fruitiness and sweetness will match well with the saltiness of the ham, and the nice acidity level will cut through the fat. I will be opening my last bottle of Riesling Grand Cru Osterberg, AOC Alsace, 2013, which was part of the Grand Cru Mixed Case (lot 8370).

One of my favourite sides at Christmas dinner is roasted sweet potato purée. I roast the sweet potatoes in the oven

with a drizzle of pure maple syrup. Then I mash them up with some sweet spices, such as cloves, nutmeg and a bit of cinnamon. Add a little bit of butter and then bake in a 350°F oven until a slight crust forms on the top for a terrific side dish. Pop open a bottle of Shottesbrooke Founders' Choice Shiraz, McLaren Vale, 2014 (lot 8326) as a perfect foil for the earthy spiciness of this dish.

The classic Roast Turkey and Stuffing has a lot of versatility. Richer than other poultry, the white meat is still not very highly flavoured, although the dark meat stands up better. Long roasting of a nicely basted and seasoned turkey means that there will be a bit of oily fattiness and a certain amount of saltiness in the meat and stuffing.

High acidity is imperative with the ultimate Christmas main course. Turkey will also help make tannins more palatable. I offer a wonderful sparkling wine that just arrived as an option to pair with the big bird. Luminos Brut Rosé, Sparkling Wine, Curicó Valley, NV from Viña Echeverria (lot 8942) will be on my table for sure. Alongside that will be Domaine de L'Atrandine, AOP Vinsobres, Medaille d'Or, 2014 – a Founders' Choice selection from Bernard Perrin (lot 8443). Perfect acidity and tannin levels for a wonderful dish.

Finally, dessert. We usually offer a choice of pumpkin or apple pie. Umami or sweet, either way, you can't go wrong with a well-aged 20-year old Tawny Port. For the first time, Churchill Graham has offered Opimians this wonderful treat (lot 9082). An excellent balance of sweetness and soft tannins make this a wine that can be paired with either, or both, desserts. I will be cracking my first bottle on December 25, 2017 to celebrate being together with family as we look forward to a new year filled with joy and prosperity.

May you all have a wonderful festive season!

DESIGNED TO HELP YOU CULTIVATE YOUR CURIOSITY, ONE STEP AT A TIME

There was once a time when every wine expert was a beginner. When they wondered at the tickle of a méthode traditionnelle Champagne (and were surprised to learn that Champagne is not the only bubbly worth popping for celebration); when they were astonished by the creamy butter of a well-oaked and aged Chardonnay; when they were new to the spices of Australian Shiraz (and shocked to learn that Syrah and Shiraz are twins). Every wine lover from the causal drinker, to the avid collector and right up to the highest echelon of wine knowledge – the Master of Wine – started with that first bottle. That first glass. That first sip.

What separates the experts from the beginners is experience, time and knowledge. Opimian started out as a club for Canadian wine lovers to gain better access to the world’s wine selection. We’ve evolved since then (that tends to happen after nearly 45 years), and now we offer our members the complete package to take them from beginner to expert.

Our Wine Programs are one of the benefits, exclusive to our members, to help you cultivate your curiosity. There are three programs available – one for each stage of the journey – each designed to help you explore, taste, sample and expand your wine horizons.



DISCOVERY

Cultivate your curiosity & explore the wine world

Everyone’s wine journey starts with that first bottle, uncorked and poured with excitement. Knowing where to start is daunting – wine can be intimidating. That’s why we created the Discovery wine program – to help you taste everything that the wine world has to offer and find your footing. This unique mixed-case program will give you the foundation you need to challenge your palate.



SELECT PLUS

Start your cellar & challenge your palate

Like wine, your palate evolves with time. With experience comes the patience to wait before opening a bottle – and the desire to start a collection of your own. Our Select Plus wine program is designed for when you first feel the cellaring bug. This remarkable mixed-case program is a combination of wines meant to rest a few months to a few years with ready-to-drink wines.



FOUNDERS' CHOICE

Fill your cellar & collect premium wine

Being an Opimian means knowing that each wine in your collection has a story, or is made by a winemaker that is among the best in the world. Open your palate to the next level of premium wines, without breaking the bank. The Founders’ Choice program is the highest stage in your wine journey. Every bottle is made for long-term cellaring, to set aside for those special moments.

Members can choose their pace. You can take it one program at a time (we suggest staying on a program for two years to get the full impact); or you can join two or all three simultaneously. You find the pace that works best for you.

Interested in enrolling? Visit www.opimian.ca/wine-programs for more details. There you will find more information about what is in each case, how the wines are chosen and a form to enroll (you’ll need to be logged in). If you have any questions, you can contact your Opimian Concierge.



KNOWING THE MASTERS

Opimian members sometimes ask me the difference between a Master of Wine and a Master Sommelier. Both are highly regarded and notoriously difficult qualifications – there are 236 Master Sommeliers and 369 Masters of Wine worldwide. Both test one's knowledge of wine and tasting ability, but whilst there is some overlap, the two are very different. There are three people in the world who hold both titles – Gerard Bassett OBE, Doug Frost and Ronn Wiegand. A rare breed indeed.

Most Master Sommeliers (not to be confused with a Sommelier or wine steward, which is a job title rather than a certification) work in fine-dining restaurants. The Court of Master Sommeliers was established in 1977 to improve standards of beverage service in hotels and restaurants. Candidates are tested on their practical service skills, knowledge of wines and regions, and tasting ability.

The aim of the Institute of Masters of Wine is to promote excellence, interaction and learning across the global wine community. Its mission is much wider than that of the Court of Master Sommeliers, so it's no surprise that Masters of Wine come from a much broader range of professional activities within the wine trade. The 369 Masters of Wine worldwide include wine merchants, buyers, winemakers, shippers, auctioneers, academics, writers, and yes, a few sommeliers.

A high level of knowledge is required for both, but there is a difference in emphasis and the way in which they are tested. The Court of Master Sommeliers offers four certifications of increasing difficulty, the ultimate being the Master Sommelier Diploma. Candidates are tested on restaurant service and posed a series of questions to evaluate knowledge of wines and growing regions. The final stage of the MS exam is a blind tasting of six wines done orally to identify grape variety, appellation and vintage. In addition, Master Sommeliers must also demonstrate knowledge of spirits, beers and cigars.

The first Master of Wine exams took place in the city of London, UK in 1953. The written exams are more academic in nature, testing all aspects of the art and science of wine. It's a rigorous examination, demanding stamina, and requiring strong communication and writing skills.



One week in June each year, in three cities around the world, candidates sit five three-hour theory papers and three two-and-a-quarter hour written practical papers. Tasting ability is tested in the practical papers – each one a 12 wine blind tasting requiring the assessment and identification of the grape, origin, winemaking, quality and style. The theory papers cover viticulture, vinification, bottling procedures, handling of wine, the business of wine and contemporary issues. Once these exams have been passed, the final part of the journey to become a Master of Wine is to write a research paper – an original piece of work on a suitable wine-related topic of interest.

In November each year, in the magnificent and historic Vintners

Hall in the city of London, we welcome our new Masters of Wine. In 2017, there were 18 of them. In my role as Chairman, I presented their certificates and celebrated with them.

Since I became a Master of Wine in 1997, the world of wine, like all things, has developed and will continue to do so. Wine quality has improved in many regions around the world. Research and science give us a better understanding while technologies evolve. Wines are now made in more places, some even more remote than you would think, than ever before. There is always something new to learn.

As Opimian's Master of Wine, I see my role, and indeed Opimian itself, as aligned with the mission of the Institute - to promote standards of excellence, interaction and learning across the global wine community. Opimian is a community; it includes the members, the Area Representatives, the producers we work with, the Head Office team in Montreal and myself, as well as the wider world of wine. My aim as I taste and select wines for the Cellar Offerings is to bring you wines that you will enjoy and find interesting. My goal in writing the Cellar Offering is to interact with you by sharing my experience of the wines, producers and wine regions.