



# O P I M I A N NEWS

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**UP CLOSE  
AND PERSONAL  
WITH AXIAL  
VINOS**



# HIDDEN TRADITIONS

## OPIMIAN STEPS OFF SPAIN'S BEATEN TRAIL WITH AXIAL VINOS

When we think Old World, we think tradition. And while Axial Vinos certainly celebrates Spain's rich winemaking history, it also makes a big effort to introduce the world to profiles that shake things up. It should come as no surprise then that we were intrigued by the Spanish wine company upon our first sip. Like Axial, Opimian is attracted to wines that cut against the grain.

Cellar Offering 248 features six of Axial's most celebrated labels to Canada. Each wine has us rethinking Spanish traditions and offers a glimpse at winemakers often overshadowed by some of the country's bigger names. Providing us with some insight into the wines, Axial's Export Area Manager Alba Salesa recently spoke with us about these offerings as well as Axial Vinos' selection process.

Thanks for taking the time to chat with us, Alba. So how did you get acquainted with Opimian?

Jane Masters, your Master of Wine, came across to our stand at Prowein 2017. She tasted our wines and encouraged us to get involved with Opimian. We were lucky!

That makes two of us. Care to provide some musings on this month's Cellar Offerings?

Sure. Let's start with Albada. The name has a double meaning. Albada refers to the age-old songs sung by local vine growers; it also means "dawn." This wine emphasizes the cycle of the seasons and the new life that begins every year. It's a love letter to the generations of viticulturists loyal to the Macabeo and Calatayud regions. The wines are made with 100% autochthonous grapes such as Garnacha and Macabeo. These vines are all very old, some more than 100 years.

In a way, Albada perfectly illustrate what Axial thrives at and what Opimian constantly tries to bring to its clients: a reframing of traditions—shining a light on something timeless yet perhaps unexplored.

Absolutely. We put a lot of energy into recovering small, traditional wineries that otherwise might have trouble commercializing their products. In the '90s, it was exceedingly difficult to break free from the rigid Spanish winemaking traditions. We were the first ones who really dared to present to the world a with a more colourful picture of Spain.

Axial and Opimian share similar backstories in this respect. Opimian got started in the '70s because, at the time, wines accessible in Canada were mostly of the



checked-tablecloth variety. They didn't paint an accurate portrait of what the world had to offer.

Like Opimian, we love uncovering hidden gems. For example, we looked at wine regions such as Navarra and Calatayud and found these abandoned, high-altitude Garnacha vines exceeding one hundred years old. They were just sitting there. We couldn't help but jump on this opportunity to make something special. Quality, authenticity and culture are the three pillars of Axial's selection process.

Tell us about a few of the other hidden gems featured in Opimian's Cellar Offerings...

The *Javier San Pedro* is made from 100% Tempranillo grapes, which come from family-owned vineyards in Sierra Cantabria's impressive foothills. The San Pedro family has a centuries-old history of vine growing and winemaking. Bodegas San Pedro was dreamed up by Javier San Pedro Rández, who began working for his father's business at 14 and always wanted to produce wines that define his character. These are elegant, concentrated wines loaded with ripe fruit and complexity.

There's also the *Cátulo Tinto*, inspired by the romantic poems of Catullus from Verona and his passion for a Roman patrician named Clodia Metelli. His

daydream romance lends its name to this superb, delicate Garnacha-Tempranillo-Merlot from the organic vineyards of Navarra.

I can see we're both inspired by wines that tell a good story. What else do you look for during the selection process?

It all starts in the vineyards. We plan everything from vine growing to packaging. Supervision is key and we're there through every step of the process.

Also, we do our best to preserve Spanish wine culture. We like to emphasize traditional winemaking and try to introduce manual production as much as possible. At the end of the day, we have a big social responsibility. Overall, Axial has helped create more than 300 jobs and that's something we're extremely proud of.

Speaking of job creators, congratulations on the announcement of your new winery in Caniñena! What is it about this region that's so special?

The 2,800 square meter winery will be located in the village of Almonacid de la Sierra. The goal is to produce two million bottles of red, rosé and white wines every year with Tempranillo, Garnacha, Syrah and Macabeo.

While Caniñena is a region typically known for volume, we saw a great opportunity here for premium wines. Firstly, it's one of the oldest wine regions in Spain with some of the oldest Garnacha vineyards. What's more, the locals have wine in their blood—an unrivaled history of winemaking that we're committed to showing the world!



We're committed to helping you show it, Alba! Thanks so much for your time.

A worldwide exporter, Axial Vinos prides itself on sourcing and developing wines through a unique lens. Discover six of Axial Vinos' visionary wines exclusively through Cellar Offering 248 available until April 28