

# Fine wines, hot tunes focus of Fredericton concert series

Local artists selling out shows at Corked Wine Bar, thanks to intimate setting, carefully curated concert series

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THE DAILY GLEANER

Looking for a classy night out with some fine wines, good friends, and exciting musical entertainment?

A new concert series has been drawing crowds to Corked Wine Bar in recent weeks, earning rave reviews from local music fans thanks to a focus on intimate, personal showcases from talented performers in the business's warm, inviting atmosphere.

These concerts were born because of a partnership between Corked Wine Bar owner Charlotte Burhoe and Emma Chevarie, a local concert promoter and blogger for Fredericton Tourism.

Chevarie, who publishes weekly concert listings on her blog, Music Runs Through It, said she's been booking small, one-off musical performances at venues across the capital region for the past 12 years.

"My first show was at Doodles Café, in the basement of the Charlotte Street Arts Centre, for Rose Cousins," she said.

"I've just always been interested in music. I was on the board for Music New Brunswick for a few years. I have lots of friends who are musicians, who didn't



A new concert series focuses on intimate, personal singer-songwriter performances. PHOTO: THE DAILY GLEANER ARCHIVE

have places to play. And I kept hearing about travelling musicians who were looking for a gig to play and they didn't know where to start. That's really how it all started for me."

Over the years, she's booked shows at the former Roxstone Café, Grimross Brewing Company's tasting lounge, Gallery 78, and lots of house concerts.

But Chevarie said she's been hoping to link up with a particular venue, where she could try to establish an ongoing series.

"Charlotte was open to it. She had just bought Corked and she was looking for

a way to bring people into the space, just so they could see what it's like, and it's really done well," she said.

Since then, there has been a string of sold-out shows featuring local artists like Peter Hicks, Juanita Bourque, Josh Bravener and more.

Chevarie has also been paying attention to her audience.

So far, she said, roughly 60 per cent of her patrons have been women between the ages of 35-55, a demographic that is sometimes hard to attract in the local concert circuit.

"We're getting a group of people who

want to actually listen to the music. It's not about going to a bar, it's about going to a show. And they want the shows to start earlier in the evening," she said.

"Most places in town have music that starts at 10 p.m. There are people who say, 'I'm just not going to do that.' So I find this has really filled that space."

Much like a house concert, the appeal for fans is seeing acts in a close, personal setting, with opportunities to approach the artist afterwards to talk about the show or their music.

"People want an experience where they can hear the story behind the song and they can often chat with the artist if they want to," she said.

"For some people that's really important."

In the local music eco-system, there have been a number of venues that have catered to mostly acoustic, stripped down live performances through the years, such as the now-closed Crumbs Café and Cedar Tree Café.

"Cedar Tree was the last place I can think of that was really trying (to promote these kinds of shows)," she said.

"There's a real hush that comes over the crowd as the artist takes the stage. Before, the room is abuzz, everybody's chatting and having a good time, but when the show starts, the intent is set for the night and people focus their attention on the artist. The artists love it."

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### WINE → C1

Zach Atkinson, co-organizer of the Shivering Songs Music Festival and the promoter who books shows at The Capital Complex, said he's happy to see this concert series resonating with local music fans.

He said this success is a credit to the dedication of the organizers and to the quality of the space.

"I think a lot of this has to do with the people organizing it, their attention to

detail, their great taste in artists, the location and the timing," he said.

"It's quaint and easy to get to and it has a fun, rootsy sort of vibe. We do some of that in the Wilser's Room. Our shows can vary from rock and roll to a solo-acoustic show and, to be honest, we've had mixed results. Because we present so many things here, maybe some people aren't sure we can create an intimate, cozy environment. But I'm really glad that there's an alternative out there."

There are several shows scheduled to happen at Corked in the coming weeks.

Halifax blues-rocker Christine Campbell will perform on Mar. 10. Home-town favourite Ross Neilsen will take the stage on April 6, followed by a make-up date by Jared Lutes on April 14, who had a previous concert date cancelled by a winter storm.

For more information, people can visit [musicrunsthroughit.wordpress.com](http://musicrunsthroughit.wordpress.com) or drop by Corked Wine Bar on Regent Street.