



Press release
For immediate release

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Every end is a new beginning – the Native Grapes Academy project in 2020

The Native Grapes Academy (NGA) project has unveiled its 2020 activities programme. NGA plans more events than last year, including 15 seminars and accompanying Walk-Around Tastings of Italian and Spanish wines. The tour will touch down in 15 Canadian, Japanese, and Russian cities, connecting wine professionals and wine lovers with quality European wines.

“*You were not made to live your lives as beasts*”, Ulysses said this trying to convince his companions, exhausted by ten years of travel, to move on once again and sail towards a new destination. The journey turns into a quest for growth—a thirst for knowledge—and Ulysses' drive never wavers through a thousand trials and tribulations. Similarly, even though the first year of the Native Grapes Academy (NGA) project has ended, the adventure towards discovering the roots of European civilization will continue and become more intense in 2020, with 15 seminars and various Walk-Around Tastings in the three key countries; Canada, Japan and Russia.

NGA was founded in 2019 by the two most important winery associations in Italy and Spain, namely [Unione Italiana Vini \(UIV\)](#) and [Organización Interprofesional del Vino de España \(OIVVE\)](#). The mission of the project is to train a new generation of experts in the wines of excellence of the two countries, disseminating information on European quality labels. In 2019, 120 individuals participated in the Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) Maestro courses, obtaining the qualification of “European Quality Wine Hero”. The name of the course understandably refers to the title of the Homeric poem: just like Ulysses, the participants in the NGO Maestro course went on a metaphorical journey, explored Italian and Spanish terroirs, gained a deep knowledge of their native grape varieties.

Comparisons with The Odyssey don't end here: Ulysses has shown us that knowledge is not a destination, but a process in progress, an infinite journey. The NGO Maestro course was therefore not conceived as a stand-alone activity, but as a continuous learning opportunity, both because it is part of a project set to last several years and because it has succeeded in creating a united community that provides continuous educational stimuli for its members.

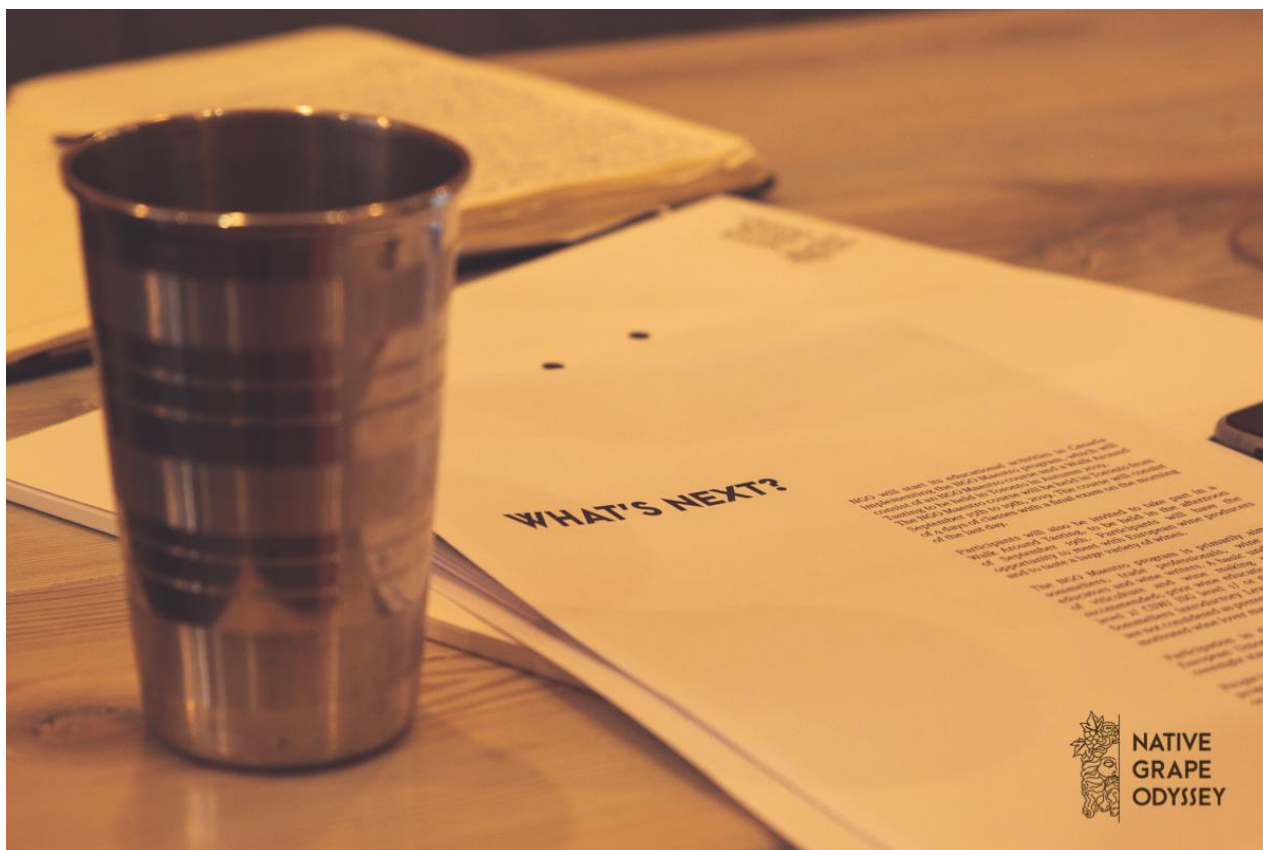
2020 will build on the experience of 2019 and introduce an expanded version: while in the first year the focus was on operators in the sector, the second year will be aimed at a wider audience. The 15 NGO Fellow courses planned for the current year will consist of an intense day of in-depth learning about Italian and Spanish grape varieties led by renowned experts in the field. These masterclasses are therefore suitable both for experts who want to deepen their knowledge on a particular topic as well as for general enthusiasts.

The choice to hold 15 seminars in 15 different cities, five per country, is motivated by one of the NGA project main objectives, to improve the visibility of these products which, although of exceptional quality, are not yet known to the general public. NGA works to promote the diffusion of these products not only in those areas where the wine industry is more developed, but also and above all, in those cities where it is more difficult to access the great variety of oenological products that Italy and Spain have to offer.

In addition to the aforementioned seminars, NGA will also organize a grand Walk-Around Tasting in each city. This is an opportunity for people to taste hundreds of PDO and PGI wines and meet the best European quality wine producers and professionals. Rebecca Lawrence, NGA Education Development Manager explains the importance of the tasting experience for industry professionals: “*If you've tasted it, you get a better understanding of the wine, and you will know why a certain wine will be better with a specific dish. This demonstrates to customers that your restaurant is a place*



where the staff know what they are talking about. They've tasted the wine; they've experienced them and therefore, they will be trusted."



The NGA project will continue and expand in 2020, organizing 15 seminars on quality Italian and Spanish wines in Canada, Japan and Russia. Walk-Around Tastings will accompany each seminar.

The positive forecast given to the Italian and Spanish wine industry in 2020 points to equally if not greater reverberations for the NGA project events planned throughout 2020. According to data revealed by *the Vinitaly-Nomisma Wine Monitor* at wine2wine 2019, exports are expected to increase in 2020. In particular, "...among the buyer countries with the highest confidence index, [those that] stand out - together with the USA – are the two protagonists of the partnership agreements, Canada (90/100) and Japan (87/100), whose growth is already in evidence this year." ([La Stampa](#)) These agreements have also favoured the export of Spanish wines to the two out of three NGA project target countries, as reported by the [Observatorio Español del Mercado del Vino \(OEMV\)](#): "Por mercados, destaca el buen crecimiento de las ventas de vinos con IGP envasados a Portugal, así como la buena marcha de Japón y Canadá" (In terms of markets, solid growth in sales of PGI wines bottled in Portugal stands out, as well as the good performance of Japan and Canada).

For detailed information and timely updates about the NGA project and events, please refer to nativegrapeodyssey.com and associated social media channels.

About: [Native Grape Odyssey \(NGO\)](#) is a brand of the Native Grapes Academy (NGA) project. NGA is a project financed by the European Union and managed by Unione Italiana Vini and Interprofesional del Vino de España (OIVE) for the promotion of PDO and PGI European wines abroad, in particular in three countries: Japan, Canada and Russia. In order to achieve this, the NGA educational program will organize wine seminars, workshops and b2b meetings both in these countries and in Verona, Italy, inviting wine experts and influencers from these countries. These events realized across the span of three years (2019-21) aim to create awareness about European native grapes abroad, as well as the wines produced from them, in particular Italian and Spanish wines, which share a long tradition and a high standard of quality.

A real hero never gives up and always seeks to expand their knowledge. Are you a true hero of Italian and Spanish quality wines? Find out how much you know at form.jotformeu.com/unioneitalianavini/course-evaluation-form .