**Press Release Contacts:**

**For Immediate Release** Vinitaly International

International Media Dept.

+39 045 8101447

media@vinitalytour.com

[www.vinitalytour.com](http://www.vinitalytour.com)

Twitter: @VinitalyTour

Join Vinitaly International Network on LinkedIn

**Vinitaly International Academy switches gear with local partners New York Vintners and Wine Country Ontario**

In January, Vinitaly International inaugurates the New Year with two highly academic events in New York and Toronto. Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) is now entering into its second academic year, after an intense year of travelling and conducting its Executive Wine Seminars (Introductory, Advanced and Focus levels) worldwide with its founders Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinitaly International, and wine expert Dr. Ian D’Agata.

On the evening of 27th of January 2015, VIA will lead the scene at New York Vintners with the private Executive Wine Seminar, Focus level, “A study of Sangiovese”. This seminar is tailor-fitted for the more mature American market, where general knowledge about Italian wine is higher than average. Italian Wine still holds one third of the market shares, with more than 180 thousand bottled litres sold between January and September 2014 out of a total of 500 thousand bottled litres (SOURCE: Il Corriere Vinicolo, <http://www.vinitalyinternational.com/sites/default/files/worldbynumbers/WBN_jan_sep_14.pdf>).

The New York event promises to be a unique opportunity to attend a scholarly presentation on some of Italy's all time greatest wines with Ian D’Agata, author of “Native Wine Grapes of Italy”, explaining and illustrating the subtle differences in wines that are the direct result of minor alterations in terroir. The session "A study of Sangiovese" has the aim of analyzing Sangiovese from different terroirs and vintages, an amazing set of 15 wines ranging form 1974-2001.

Amongst many rare gems personally sourced from the estates, the wine list will include the 1974 Monteso di Chianti Rufina by Frescobaldi, the first ever vintage of this famous wine available these days only via the estate. The Chianti Classico Riserva Rancia by Felsina will be featured in three absolutely historic vintages whilst the Badia a Coltibuono Chianti Classico will showcase vintages such as 1979 and 1983, that have often been thought of as very good but not exceptional. A huge mistake, as this tasting will point out.

After the event in NY, Canada will be the site of a second series of VIA Focus tastings. On the 28th of January Vinitaly International Academy will move on to Canada, and in particular to Toronto, for its very first edition of Vinitaly Canada. “Canada is the world's single biggest wine buyer and it certainly helps that I travel there four times a year and have lived there for over fifteen years” says Canadian-born Ian D’Agata. “We at Vinitaly International and VIA take our responsibilities seriously towards the hard working people, often small family units, that are the backbone of Italy's wine industry and we owe it to them to do the best job we can. That means going where there are emerging or established wine markets that may benefit from knowing even more about Italy's many great wines. Toronto and Canada are just such an important market.”

On the 29th, Vinitaly International Academy will be partnering with Wine Country Ontario and organizing a series of three different Seminars analyzing wines of Italy and Ontario made from exactly the same grape varieties. “I have essentially seen the Ontario wine industry flourish from day one, as I was growing up there during the mid-1970s” recalls Ian D’Agata. “Over the past forty years, the improvement in Ontario wines has been exceptional, and I firmly believe that today Ontario wine producers are at the forefront of world quality Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir production. The Focus seminars VIA has co-organized with Wine Country Ontario are an excellent opportunity to compare similarities and study differences between wines made in Ontario and Italy from exactly the same grape varieties.”

VIA’s first to attempt such an in-depth analysis of these wines in three sessions, guided by Ian D’Agata and three well-known Canadian Master Sommeliers John Szabo, Bruce Wallner and Will Predhomme will be devoted to: Riesling and Mixed White Grapes; Pinot Gris/Grigio and Chardonnay; and Pinot Noir/Mixed Red Grapes. In each session there will be 12-14 wines shown, half from Italy and half from Ontario, giving everyone in the audience a chance to study similarities and diversities of the wines made in each country.

The evening before, in Toronto, VIA and Wine Country Ontario will also be organizing an exclusive dinner, by invitation only, with Toronto's top wine collectors, public personalities and wine lovers coming to taste some of Ontario's and Italy's best wines.

“2015 for Vinitaly will prove to be a challenging but exciting year with many additional opportunities to showcase Italian Wines and Winemakers, including an Italian Wine Pavilion entirely dedicated to Italian Wines at the Expo2015Milano for six months. We will also continue to showcase in Hong Kong, Mainland China, Europe and Russia. In each stop, VIA will continue to organize its Executive Wine Seminars with the specific focus of driving them also back to Italy. One concrete example is to create global representation of highly-qualified Italian Wine Ambassadors through our first edition of the VIA Certification Course to be held in March this year in Verona”, states Stevie Kim. “The official scouting program for Italian Wine talents is now in full-force”.

**About:**

**Veronafiere** is the leading organizer of trade shows in Italy including Vinitaly ([www.vinitaly.com](http://www.vinitaly.com/)), the largest wine and spirits fair in the world. During its 48th edition Vinitaly counted some 155.000 visitors and 4.000 exhibitors on a 100.000 square meter area. The next edition of the fair will take place on 22 – 25 March 2015. The premier event to Vinitaly, OperaWine ([www.vinitalyinternational.com](http://www.vinitalyinternational.com/)) “Finest Italian Wines: 100 Great Producers,” will unite international wine professionals on March 21st 2015 in the heart of Verona, offering them the unique opportunity to discover and taste the 100 best Italian wines, as selected by Wine Spectator. Since 1998 Vinitaly International travels to several countries such as Russia, China, USA and Hong Kong. In February 2014 Vinitaly International launched an educational project, the Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) with the aim of divulging and broadcasting the excellence and diversity of Italian wine around the globe. VIA is now ready to present the first edition of its VIA Certification Course to be held in Verona from the 16th to the 20th of March 2015 with the aim of creating new Ambassadors of Italian Wine in the World.

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