



Verona, April 5th 2019

The Native Grape Odyssey Program: A Full Immersion Wine Experience

The EU sponsored program that focuses on the native grape varieties found in Italy and Greece is about to kick off in Verona, Italy during the Vinitaly 2019 season. The 79 hand-picked participating wine experts from Canada, Russia and Japan are already en route to experience a series of wine-related events to be held in their honor.

Activities taking place on April 7th and April 8th will include tours of the wine exhibition Vinitaly and seminars with renowned wine professionals, such as Prof. Attilio Scienza, Lynne Sheriff MW and VIA certified Italian Wine Expert Henry Davar. The program was conceived in an effort to promote the many varieties of **high-quality European wine** on the international market and it will be opening during the Vinitaly season to give guests the opportunity to experience the seminars and events, as well as considerable wine tasting. Native Grape Odyssey program participants will have the option to taste a number of wines from all **Italian regions**.

Guests of the program are scheduled to take part in two seminars, one on April 7th and the other on April 8th. The seminars will illustrate the importance of native grape vines as well as the wines made from them. The sessions have a distinct cultural aspect to them: the native grapes of Italy and Greece further a sense of European pride since not only do they produce quintessentially European wines, but their history also ties into the celebrated roots of these regions. Both seminars will be held by **Prof. Attilio Scienza**, an authority in the world of oenological studies and **Chief Scientist** of the prestigious **Vinitaly**





International Academy (VIA). Prof. Scienza will also be assisted by wine experts **Henry Davar** and **Lynn Sheriff MW**, who will lead the tasting component of the seminars.

The first seminar cum tasting on April 7th is entitled **The Progeny of Sangiovese**. The widely cultivated Sangiovese grape bears great significance in the Italian native grape vine narrative, and Prof. Scienza will illustrate this grape's genetics, its historical ancestry and descendants, and the terroirs where this variety is grown. Scienza comments on the importance of the Sangiovese variety: *«Sangiovese represents a sort of **symbol**, it speaks to the relationship between Western culture and Greek culture, because dozens of Italian vines came into existence through the crossing of Sangiovese grapes with other Greek grape varieties such as Mantonico»*.

This seminar about Sangiovese is fully coherent with the program's concept: not only does it represents a link between Italy and Greece, whose grape varieties are the focus of this project, but it also provides a way to re-discover European ancient enological traditions.

The second seminar to be held on the following day is entitled "The Old Vines of Italy". While the focus will be kept on the origins of the European wines, this seminar also doubles as a tasting session. Guests will taste rare and unique wines and listen to Prof. Scienza discussing the various old vine varieties, their survival through endemic diseases over time, and the overcoming challenges faced in the present day. Scienza explains the importance of preserving old vines: *«Why is wine made from old vine grapes of such peculiar quality? Well, that is because this wine is the result of grapes produced by a plant that has great equilibrium. A vine that doesn't produce many berries means that the plant has very small vigor, however, they certainly have great maturation and concentration»*

This series of events is the first of many educational and promotional activities that will follow: in three years (2019-2021), the Native Grape Odyssey plans to organize numerous seminars, b2b meetings and workshops. The mission goal is to **foster awareness** of European wines, **spreading knowledge** about their craft and quality around the world. The project ultimately wants to educate spokespeople on the distinctive features of European grape varieties, with an emphasis on **designations of origin**, so that they can in turn continue spreading this information in their home countries, increasing European **wine export** and the potential for increased wine **tourism**.

About:

[Native Grape Odyssey](#) is a project financed by the European Union and managed by Unione Italiana Vini and Zante Agricultural Cooperatives Union 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 Native Grape Odyssey 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 in the span of three years (2019-21) aim at creating



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awareness about European native wines abroad, in particular Italian and Greek wines, which share a long tradition and a high standard of quality.