

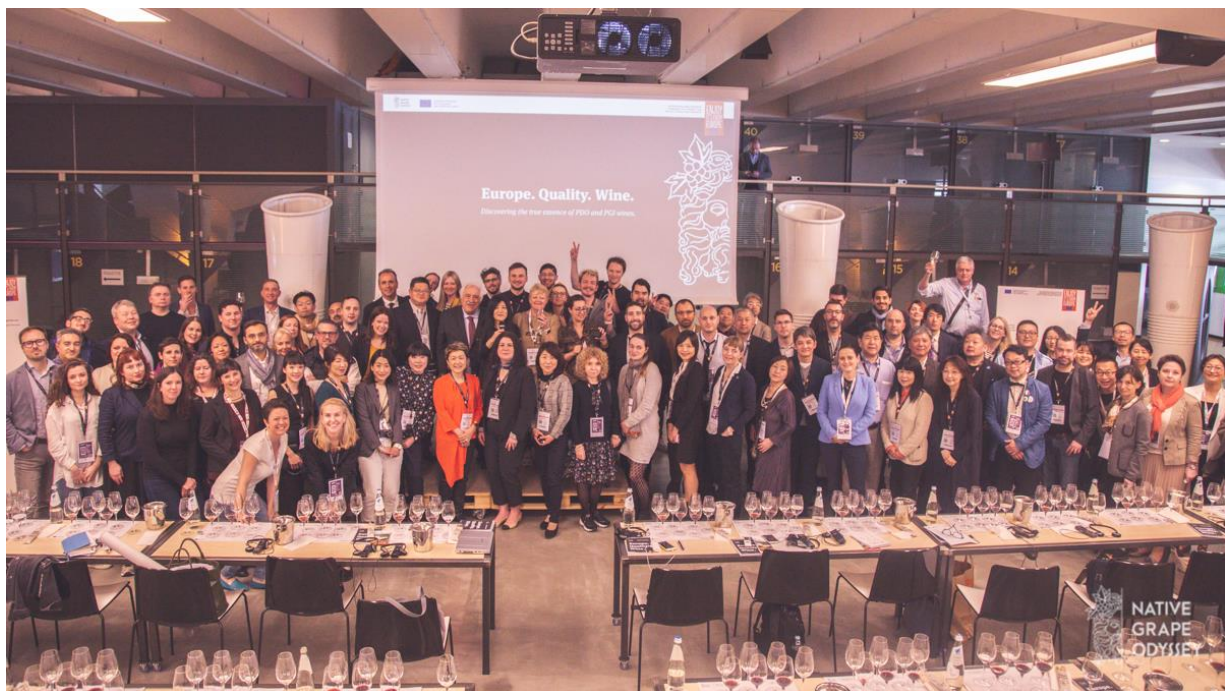


Verona, April 19th 2019

European High-Quality Wine to Conquer the World: the Native Grape Odyssey Program Launched at Vinitaly 2019

From April 6th to April 8th, 79 wine experts from Canada, Japan and Russia joined their first series of Native Grape Odyssey program activities, which included seminars and wine tastings with renowned wine professionals. They were also given a guided tour of Vinitaly, one of the largest wine exhibitions in the world. The participants are now returning to their home countries with a new awareness of native European grapes and a commitment to share the quality of European wines with the world.

Vinitaly 2019 offered the perfect backdrop for the launch of the Native Grape Odyssey program. This educational project is financed by the European Union for the promotion of high quality PDO and PGI European wines and is focused on the Canadian, Japanese and Russian markets. The mission goal will be to succeed in fostering increased awareness about these European native grape denominations within these countries by coordinating wine seminars, tastings, workshops and b2b meetings.



Native Grape Odyssey participants after the seminar with Prof. Scienza and Lynne Sherriff MW held on April 8th at wine2digital, a space at Veronafiere hosting various wine-related events throughout the year, most notably Vinitaly International Academy.



On April 6th, the participants were welcomed at the **Palazzo della Gran Guardia**, a historic building in the center of Verona, where **Stevie Kim**, Managing Director of Vinitaly International and Coordinator of the Native Grape Odyssey program, explained the program's mission and initiatives. The planned events started on the following day with a guided tour of the Vinitaly pavilions, where producers from every region of Italy lined-up their wines for participants to taste. The participants had the opportunity to meet producers and taste a large number of different wines selected from approximately **4600 Italian and International** wineries that joined Vinitaly this year. With **120.000** visitors from around 145 nations in attendance, Vinitaly was the perfect occasion for Native Grape Odyssey participants to network with many trade professionals.

The educational activities also included **two seminars** on Italian wine, held on consecutive days, and each one consisting of a lecture and tasting. The first seminar on April 7th was conducted by **Prof. Attilio Scienza**, an authority in the world of enological studies, and **Henry Davar**, wine educator and Vinitaly International Academy Italian Wine Expert and Faculty member. The seminar topic was entitled **The Progeny of Sangiovese**, with Sangiovese being an Italian vine from which an impressive quantity of other grape varieties stemmed. On the following day Prof. Scienza discussed the **Old Vines of Italy** and the tasting session was led by **Lynne Sherriff MW**. In the two days of forums, Native Grape Odyssey guests had the opportunity to taste **eleven wines**, some of them often very difficult to obtain outside of Italy, most notably the wine made from the **Versoaln** grape, one of the oldest in the world. These events were a sample of the many educational activities Native Grape Odyssey has planned over the next three years.

These events were also an opportunity for the program to collect feedback and forecasts about European wines from the participants, in order to explore future **potential** for these wines within the Canadian, Japanese and Russian markets. Participant **Jeffery Osborne**, Sales Manager at Grape Brands Ltd. and sommelier in Canada, described the fluid situation of the Canadian wine market by saying: *«Italian wine sales are growing in Canada, as well as Italian restaurants... most importantly wine culture is growing in Canada, so much so that many people are becoming sommeliers. For many people it is “cool” to learn about wine, so there is huge value in educating these people on PDO and PGI wines. For this reason, I think that high quality European wines have the potential to appeal to more people in Canada».*

Oftentimes, foreign buyers are unaware of European designations of quality. According to one of the Japanese participants, **Takashi Ichirō**, who works as an employee in a Japanese wine import and sales company, consumers need to be provided with details on what defines quality: *«In Japan, wine is consumed almost exclusively in big cities like Ōsaka and Tokyo, but I think that if more information about*



Italian wine were provided, it could become more consumed within Japanese family units as well. Moreover, Japanese people are getting increasingly interested in Italian wine and food culture, so much so, that after a period of study in Italy they come back to Japan to open their own business. I think that with the contribution of these people, wine will become more appreciated in Japan from now on».

It is therefore evident that European high-quality wine has **great potential** in these targeted nations and its appeal is growing, but, to fully reach its potential in foreign markets and reach maximum saturation rates, it needs more **ad-hoc explanation**. This is exactly where the Native Grape Odyssey educational program has ramped up its efforts by training Japanese, Canadian and Russian wine experts on European wine and their labels. The Native Grape Odyssey program has begun to create **evangelists** for these wines, who will spread out and assist in making **high quality PDO** and **PGI** wines easily comprehensible to common consumers so that they can fully take advantage of what Europe has to offer them.

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