



Press release  
For immediate release

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## **Native Grape Odyssey riding the wave of the EU-Japan Trade Agreement: a new frontier for European wine**

**From the 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July, Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) will be in Tokyo for a press tour to launch its project in Japan. The series of meetings will involve some of the most important personalities in the wine world, along with several institutions that represent Europe in Japan. These meetings will allow the NGO organisers to present their project and to announce the upcoming events to be held in Tokyo in autumn 2019.**

After successful events in Russia and Canada, the Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) turns its gaze towards the Far East. Following the press conferences that were held on 18<sup>th</sup> June in Moscow and 10<sup>th</sup> July in Toronto, NGO is organising a press tour in Tokyo from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> July. The traveling event will take place in some of the Japanese capital's most iconic oenological sites and institutions, in order to announce NGO's upcoming events in the country.

Europe is not new for Japan, in fact locals already have a strong affinity for European food and wine. Shigeru Hayashi also emphasises the importance of European products to the Japanese. Hayashi is a journalist and wine consultant who participated in the launch of NGO in April of this year. During a conference held at Vinitaly entitled: "Exports of Italian wine to Japan following the EPA agreement: what are the prospects?", Hayashi stressed that "*there are more than 10, 000 Italian restaurants on Japanese soil*". If we add French restaurants to these, which enjoy an almost equivalent presence, we begin to appreciate the immense importance of European food and wine to the Japanese.

Although the presence of European food and beverages is already consolidated in Japan, the European denomination system remains a mystery to ordinary consumers. This was the unanimous message that emerged from among Japanese participants who attended the launch of NGO, from various sectors of the wine industry, such as wine journalism, education and import. They emphasised that although consumers experience a deep fascination for European food and beverage products, they often find it difficult to choose quality products imported from Europe. The principle reasons for this are the overwhelmingly wide variety and a general lack of information.

A project like NGO, whose activities are specifically aimed at disseminating information about the European denomination system through education, thus assumes considerable importance in a country such as Japan with its strong potential as a market for European products.



*The 79 wine experts from Canada, Japan and Russia that participated to the NGO flagship edition during Vinitaly 2019.*

With the aim of clearly communicating the NGO message to a wide audience, the NGO team has opted for a ‘press tour’ which will include several events. These will take place from July 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> in Tokyo, which will be the host city for the 2019 NGO events. During these three days, NGO will be meeting with some of the most important stakeholders in the Japanese wine industry, wine importing companies, retail chains of quality products and wine schools. On top of this, NGO will also be presenting its educational program to wine journalists, wine consultants and wine educators. Last but not least, the NGO tour will also engage several institutions which represent Europe in Japan.

NGO will be experimenting with a new format to announce future events. However, the approach remains in line with the guiding principles of the project. Above all, the NGO project aims to engage people as individuals, with the important objective of mentoring and supporting spokespeople of European wine across the world. The ultimate goal of NGO is to ensure that these spokespeople have the tools to become real heroes. We envision them becoming points of reference for Japanese consumers, to enable them to make informed choices around which European products they purchase.

Participation in the NGO press tour in Japan is by invitation only. Those interested in finding out more about the NGO project can consult the website for Japan ([japan.nativegrapeodyssey.com](http://japan.nativegrapeodyssey.com)) and may request further information at the following email address: [info@nativegrapeodyssey.com](mailto:info@nativegrapeodyssey.com)



**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.