



Press release
For immediate release

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Native Grape Odyssey and Vinitaly International Academy: allies in the walk-around tasting for the promotion of European wine in Canada

The Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) education program will join forces with the Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) to create a walk-around tasting that will host more than 250 labels, selected from top quality European producers. The event, which will take place on Thursday September 19th at the Peter Pan Bistrò in Toronto, will be an opportunity for 150 professionals in the wine world to taste a large quantity of wines, as well as to network with both local colleagues and wine producers who have specifically arrived from Europe for this event.

The advanced training program on European wine entitled the Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) Maestro Course will end on Thursday, September 19, but not before giving a practical demonstration on the richness and quality of European wine production. A walk-around tasting will be held on the same day at 3 o'clock. At least 250 labels will be featured with a guest list of 150: the numbers speak for themselves, the event presents a unique opportunity for tasting and networking.

To implement an event of this magnitude, the NGO project has established important partnerships such as with the [Vinitaly International Academy \(VIA\)](#). The NGO and VIA have an educational objective in common: VIA offers a complete training course on Italian wine, as well as the option to become certified as an Italian Wine Expert thereby baptising them into a community of international wine professionals. VIA's experience lies in the field of wine education as well as their skill in the area of event organization; the NGO project is proud to be taking part in the walk-around tasting alongside them, so as to be able to offer participants a real showcase of European wines; Italian labels in particular.

NGO has also collaborated with local authorities, in particular [The Sommelier Factory](#), a wine school founded and run by Master Sommelier Bruce Wallner. As a forum for sommeliers and wine professionals, The Sommelier Factory has worked with the NGO team to recruit the best wine professionals in Canada to take part in the NGO Maestro program. The NGO Maestro program, as well as the walk-around tasting, are addressed to people working in the local wine industry, such as sommeliers, journalists, consultants, beverage directors, etc...those most interested in learning more about the quality wines that Europe has to offer.

Both the organizers of the NGO project and their partner The Sommelier Factory are very optimistic about the positive reception the Canadian public has given to this event. In an interview given to the NGO following the press conference that was held on July 10th, when the announcement was made about the NGO Maestro course, Bruce Wallner expressed the following opinion on the link between Canadian consumers and European wine: *"I think there really is a tight connection [between Canadians and European quality wine]. Canada is funny; being in North America, we have so much influence from the United States, but in a way, there is part of our culture, and definitely part of our taste, that is so European. So, for me serving guests, their preference is always European wine. [...] It's an idea of wine being something for the table that goes with food, and when you start to think of it that way, you really get pulled towards growth; it is impossible not to"*.



Daniele Cernilli, co-founder of the Gambero Rosso publishing house and inventor of the "three glasses" classification system, will also attend the walk-around tasting. Cernilli has been brought on to teach the NGO Maestro course, which will take place in the days before the walk-around tasting.

For those interested, it is still possible to participate in the NGO's walk-around tasting happening in Toronto. Just fill in the form located on the Eventbrite platform, follow the link: [eventbrite.ca/e/a-walk-around-tasting-of-italian-and-spanish-high-quality-wines-native-grape-odyssey-maestro-tickets-71372570279](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/a-walk-around-tasting-of-italian-and-spanish-high-quality-wines-native-grape-odyssey-maestro-tickets-71372570279). Please remember that space is limited.



The Sommelier Factory, directed by Bruce Wallner, hosted NGO's press event in Toronto in July and acts as a local partner for the recruitment of participants to NGO educational activities.

About: Native Grape Odyssey 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 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 Spanish wines, which share a long tradition and a high standard of quality.