



Press release
For immediate release

Native Grape Odyssey
Media Team
info@nativegrapeodyssey.com
www.nativegrapeodyssey.com
Facebook Canada: @NativeGrapeOdyssey_CA
Facebook Japan: @NativeGrapeOdyssey_JP
Facebook Russia: @NativeGrapeOdyssey_RU

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How to describe the indescribable: the first NGO course in Canada harmonized poetry and technique

The curtain fell on the five-day Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) Maestro course and its Walk-Around Tasting organized by the European NGO program in Toronto, from September 15th to the 19th, 2019. The NGO methodology, which combines simple technical analysis on wines, incorporating elements within the humanities, has left all involved impacted; the course left a seemingly “poetic” impression, and this contributed to the success of this educational program.

The Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) Maestro Program in Canada that ended on Thursday, September 19, was the first chapter in a long series of educational activities to be held outside of Europe. The program included a five-day course, complete with its own customized material, especially prepared for the course and culminating in a final exam; this was followed by a Walk-Around Tasting of high-quality European wines. From its inception, the entire event was intended to transpire as an all-inclusive experience and organizers feel this goal was realized thanks to an approach that combined practice with interdisciplinary incorporation.

The program carried out in Canada, which will be similarly implemented in Russia and Japan in the coming months, brought forty experts together from various sectors of the wine industry in Canada. These professionals operate in different fields and they all have different stories: there are those, like Nicole Campbell, who decided to promote high quality wine by founding an all-female company with her friend Krysta Oben, and then there are those who like Steve Sousa, after having graduated in psychology, let a passion for wine carry him away: Sousa eventually moved into his current position of Beverage Director within the Toronto branch of the Momofuku chain.

An equally inspiring story can be found in Daniele Cernilli’s road to the wine sector. Cernilli is the instructor of the NGO Maestro course, he is also the co-founder of the publishing house Gambero Rosso. Initially, in the beginning of his career he had dedicated himself to the study of theoretical philosophy, but when describing his choices in retrospect, he declared that he did not conceive the two disciplines of philosophy and wine as separate: *“Describing wine is describing the indescribable. Wine is halfway between poetry and technique, because without poetry one cannot relay the emotions that wine imbues, and without technique you can't give it a structure”*.

Technique is obviously a fundamental methodology for approaching wine education. Wine is science, from the fermentation of the grapes to the analysis of the product in the bottle, passing through the climatic and chemical phenomena that influence its production. It is not a coincidence that the sheet of paper describing the characteristics of a wine is called a "technical sheet". In drawing up the syllabus of the course, the NGO organizers therefore took great care to follow a precise method of analysis. Rebecca Lawrence, education development manager, describes the NGO course as follows: *"The NGO Maestro is a course that has based its methodology in understanding the quality of European wines, in particular Italian and Spanish wines, by exploring the native grape varieties specifically as they relate to their territories as well as making the connections between the shared heritage (both cultural and genetic) of Mediterranean grapes. The course first*



describes the territory and then explains why native grapes have thrived there and places them into the broader context”.



Daniele Cernilli instructing at the NGO course in Toronto, Canada.

In addition to science, culture is also an essential element for the study of native European vines, particularly Italian ones, because *"nowhere in the world is there a stronger connection between the individual and the vine as in Italy"*. These are the words of Attilio Scienza, an authority in the field of genetic studies on the vine and author of the teaching material that NGO had commissioned specifically for the NGO Maestro courses. The volume used in Canada was the first in a series of six, in which Prof. Attilio Scienza disentangles the native vines and grapes of Europe using an interdisciplinary approach: there are plenty of elements within the text that expand on history, linguistics, anthropology and of course, myth.

The encompassing of all these elements allowed Prof. Attilio Scienza to effectively deliver the relevant material in two ways. Firstly, in that he was able to effectively cushion a delivery method for the dense native European vine material, since these vines are inseparable from elements such as the territory and the people who produced them. Secondly, the storytelling technique he employed mixed so many disciplines into a well-woven and cohesive package that is attractive to the reader. Here is the real poetry of the book: Prof. Attilio Scienza takes the reader by the hand and helps the individual uncover a fantastic world, in a sort of journey through time, passing through the mythological domain of Ulysses all the way up to the medieval Italian cities and beyond, because after all, to take the words right out of the Professor's mouth, *"science is also an adventure"*.

This latest NGO adventure is just the beginning: the NGO Maestro course and Walk-Around Tasting will also be organized in Russia and Japan. Find out more information at: canada.nativegrapeodyssey.com/sign-up-form/



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.