



Press release
For immediate release

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One project, three countries, limitless wine knowledge – Native Grapes Academy 2019 by numbers

In 2019 the Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) Maestro course delivered specialized courses on Italian and Spanish wines, training 120 professionals who were awarded the “European Quality Wine Hero” title in Canada, Russia, and Japan. The course was part of the Native Grapes Academy (NGA) project co-financed by the European Union and one of the many educational activities implemented in 2019 by NGA. In 2020 and 2021, additional educational and trade initiatives will follow in the project’s target countries.

Three nations, 490 wines tasted, and 120 “heroes”: these are the 2019 achievements of the Native Grapes Academy (NGA). NGA is a project co-financed by the European Union and coordinated by [Unione Italiana Vini \(UIV\)](#) and [Organización Interprofesional del Vino de España \(OIVE\)](#) aimed at training wine specialists on PDO, PGI and TSG wines of Italy and Spain in three target countries, Canada, Russia, and Japan.

To train the “European Quality Wine Heroes”, NGA created the Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) Maestro, course which, in 2019, was held in three cities in three different countries: Toronto (15-19 September), Moscow (28 October-1 November), and Tokyo (2-6 December). In five days and 30 hours of lessons in total, participants discovered Italian and Spanish wines studying these countries’ enological production. They immersed themselves into Italian and Spanish grape varieties, wine regions’ climate, history, and culture. Rebecca Lawrence, education development manager of the NGO course, described the methodological approach of the lessons: “*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.*”

To study the viticulture and wine-making tradition of these countries, NGA supplied students with a course text characterized by a multidisciplinary approach. *Native Grape Odyssey Volume I* was written by Prof. Attilio Scienza, Full Professor at the University of Milan and renowned expert in vine genetics, together with science writer and researcher Serena Imazio. Complimentary copies of the book were distributed to the 120 participants of the NGO’s educational activities. The volume is the first of six publications which will be compiled throughout the three-year period of the project (2019-2021).

In the NGO educational experience, wine tasting takes central stage. In addition to the tastings during the lessons, each course also featured a final Walk-Around Tasting, where importers could showcase their portfolios of Italian and Spanish wines to a bigger audience of students, professionals and wine lovers who gathered for the occasion.



The NGA project strives to furnish students and wine lovers with free and open access training tools. Through the project's [official website](#) and social media channels updates about the world of Italian and Spanish wines are shared on a daily basis. In addition, in November 2019, NGA launched its [NGO Tasting Webapp](#). The Webapp allows users to record tasting notes, working as a sort of online tasting diary; moreover, with the app, users can share their tasting notes with other members of the community. Furthermore, by subscribing to the NGO Tasting Web-app, users who will compile the best tasting notes, will be selected for participation in the Vinitaly 2020 Incoming program and for the Spanish 2020 Incoming program. Selected users will have their travel and accommodation expenses covered and will join an exclusive program of b2b meetings, thus becoming active members of the NGO community.

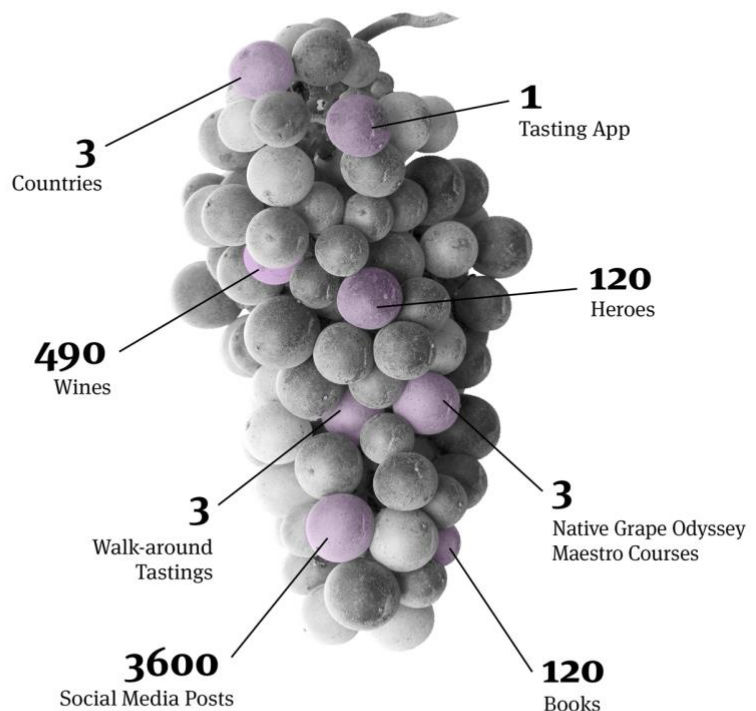
In the next two years of the project, NGA initiatives will grow exponentially: new destinations for educational and trade activities will be added and new “European Quality Wine Heroes” will join the community after taking part in the NGO program of discovery of Italian and Spanish wines. In 2020 and 2021 one-day seminars and Walk-Around Tastings will be organized in five different cities in each of the three target countries (15 events per year).

Updates on the next NGA events are available on the official website nativegrapeodyssey.com and on the project’s social media channels.

About: Native Grape Odyssey (NGO) is a brand of the Native Grapes Academy (NGA) project. NGA 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 NGA 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 across the span of three years (2019-21) aim to create awareness about European native grapes abroad, as well as the wines produced from them, in particular Italian and Spanish wines, which share a long tradition and a high standard of quality.



1 Native Grape Odyssey For...



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