vinetur

A revolution in viniculture: old vines take center stage with global digital initiative

Old Vine Registry (OVR) unveils ambitious plan to catalog the world's aging vines in an unprecedented crowdsourced effort

Monday, July 3, 2023



In an era increasingly defined by technological innovation and data, the Old Vine Registry (OVR) is ambitiously aiming to reposition viniculture at the forefront of digital revolution. With a commitment to the preservation of ancient vineyards and the

sustainable future of our planet, the OVR has launched a global initiative to catalog the world's old vines with an advanced, fully searchable, and updatable online database.

Old vines enter the digital age

Last week marked the debut of a ground-breaking effort to compile the most comprehensive dataset on the world's old vines, bringing the traditionally rustic charm of vineyards into the age of the Internet of Things. The OVR is calling upon the collective support of the global wine community to help this ambitious project truly flourish.

Established in 2010, the OVR's humble beginnings can be traced back to a simple spreadsheet on JancisRobinson.com. This transformation into a dynamic digital tool, however, positions it as a valuable resource for future research. It also reinforces its mission to serve as a non-profit, community-based platform primarily driven by the shared enthusiasm of all stakeholders.

Harnessing the power of crowdsourcing

The strength of this project rests not only in the enthusiasm of its originators but in the power of its contributors. Many of the entries in the database, which details old-vine plots situated across the globe, have been, and will continue to be, crowdsourced. This unique methodology signifies the birth of a team effort, fueled by the universal understanding of the importance of preserving old vines.

Prominent figures such as Sarah Abbott MW of the Old Vine Conference, Jancis Robinson MW, Tamlyn Currin, senior editor of JancisRobinson.com, Alder Yarrow, the database project manager, and other notable industry veterans have expressed their support for the project, further solidifying the seriousness of the endeavor.

The preservation of old vines is not just a romanticized ideal. Over the past two decades, there has been a growing appreciation of their importance for the sustainability and future of the planet. Empirical evidence suggests that deep-rooted old vines fare better with drought, heatwaves, and even certain diseases.

The unique interest in old vines is not merely academic. They are the last remaining specimens of rare grape varieties, potentially more suited for winemaking in a changing climate and more conducive to biodiversity. However, these precious resources are at risk of disappearing due to potential replanting by farmers seeking higher returns through fashionable grape varieties or increased volume.



The journey to a global database

Alder Yarrow, a distinguished wine blogger and digital marketing expert, has taken the reins as the product manager for the Old Vine Registry. His tasks range from finding the right developers to fine-tuning the database's structure and hierarchies and testing the user interface. The platform, though in its nascent stages, is set for continuous improvement, aiming to bridge existing gaps and expand its reach.

At present, the OVR houses over 2200 entries from thirty countries. With Portugal, Spain, and the US leading the tally, there's an undeniable need for more listings from countries like Italy and France. This data collection is set to grow, presenting the opportunity for increased global participation and engagement.

Old vines have stories to tell, stories that link us to the past and help us navigate the future. Through this digital initiative, everyone is encouraged to play a part in telling these stories by suggesting corrections, submitting new vineyard entries, and contributing to the financial sustainability of the project.

By creating an all-encompassing database, the OVR aims to stimulate global awareness of old vines and encourage the wine trade to embrace them. Sarah Abbott MW, co-founder of the Old Vine Conference, emphasized the significant role that the potential for increased sales could play in motivating importers, traders, and retailers.

In essence, the Old Vine Registry serves as a testament to our growing understanding of the intricate relationships between tradition, technology, sustainability, and global collaboration. This digital transformation signifies a crucial step in preserving the world's viniculture heritage and setting the stage for its future evolution.

Visit the Old Vine Registry: https://www.oldvineregistry.org/