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Yantai hosts global summit highlighting responsible wine tourism and sustainable growth

International delegates recognize Yantai’s leadership in integrating wine culture, tourism, and education for economic and community benefit

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The city of Yantai, located in the Peng Lai district of Shandong province, China, hosted the second Global OMET Summit on Responsible Wine Tourism from July 2 to 5. The event brought together delegates from 20 countries to discuss the future of wine tourism and to showcase Yantai’s unique blend of coastal scenery and wine culture, under the theme “Wonderland Coast + Wine.”

Yantai was chosen as the summit's location due to its historical significance as the birthplace of Chinese wine. The city attracts around three million domestic tourists each year, thanks to its integration of wine production and tourism. The summit aimed to further internationalize Yantai's wine tourism industry with support from OMET (World Organization of Wine Tourism).

During the opening ceremony, José Antonio Vidal, founder and CEO of OMET, highlighted Yantai's efforts to integrate its value chain for wine tourism. He thanked local authorities, educational institutions, and industry organizations for their commitment to positioning Yantai as a responsible, sustainable, and satisfying destination for both visitors and residents. Vidal also acknowledged OMET's China team for their role in organizing the summit.

Yantai's history with wine dates back to 1892 with the founding of Zhangyu Winery. The city has played a leading role in China's wine industry ever since, including bringing Chinese wine to international attention in 1987. In recent years, Yantai has focused on combining its wine industry with tourism development. At the end of 2024, Yantai led the formation of an alliance for developing wine culture and tourism, coordinating resources and promoting innovative practices.

Guided by OMET, Yantai established its own Wine Tourism Association and participated in international events such as the International Wine Tourism Forum in Barcelona earlier this year. During the summit, Yantai Vocational College of Culture and Tourism signed an agreement with GWTO (Global Wine Tourism Organization) to establish a physical headquarters for GWTO Academy in Yantai. This partnership aims to introduce global standards and resources into local education and train international talent.

The summit featured speeches from high-profile figures including Rafael Ansón, Honorary President of OMET; Harry Theoharis, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece; Gabriela Testa, Minister of Tourism for Mendoza, Argentina; and Alejandra Cabrera representing Uruguay's Ministry of Tourism. José Antonio Vidal delivered a keynote address on positioning wine regions as responsible tourism destinations through five key OMET initiatives: professional training via OMET Academy, promotion through OMET MICE events, international recognition with OMET Biosphere

Certification, experience marketing through EWC EnoWineClub’s booking platform, and economic monitoring with OMET’s global enotourism monitor.

Delegates from across the globe—including representatives from the United States, Russia, China, and other major wine-producing countries—attended technical sessions focused on planning, training, innovation, quality, inclusion, and sustainability. Participants discussed how responsible practices can deliver returns on investment and how events can create opportunities for wineries. The value of data-driven decision-making and knowledge sharing through OMET Academy was also emphasized.

Yantai received international recognition during the summit. The city was awarded the OMET Biosphere Certification as a Responsible Wine Tourism Destination for its sustainable practices benefiting both visitors and residents. Peng Lai district was recognized as an International Coastal Wine Tourism Destination.

Attendees visited historic sites in Peng Lai and toured some of Yantai’s most prominent wineries. Six educational institutions were announced as new physical locations for OMET Academy: Yantai Vocational College of Culture and Tourism (China), Ningxia Dulaan-Helan Mountain (China), National University of Cuyo (Argentina), Chamber of Commerce of Ciudad Real (Spain), IGES University (Mexico), and University Villa María (Argentina).

Several organizations received awards for their contributions to responsible wine tourism development. Associations from China, Spain, Portugal, Armenia, Romania, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile were recognized for integrating value chains to improve socio-economic outcomes in their regions. Wineries from Italy, Portugal, Argentina, Russia, and China received diplomas or awards for outstanding responsible experiences.

The summit concluded with the announcement that Alentejo in Portugal will host the next Global OMET Summit in 2026.

Yantai’s wine region has developed over 133 years since Zhangyu Winery was founded. Today it is home to more than 200 wineries—including 63 well-known producers—and is divided into three main subregions: Mountain Valley, Liulin River Valley, and Pula

Valley. For nine consecutive years Yantai has led China’s wine industry by volume and reputation.

Despite current challenges facing China’s wine sector overall, Yantai continues to innovate by integrating tourism into its value chain. The Chu Valley area features boutique wineries that have become models for combining travel experiences with winemaking. The “One Belt Three Valleys” route in Peng Lai is now part of China’s first official wine tourism route. Chu Valley also hosts Asia’s only Lafite-Rothschild winery—a major draw for visitors each year.

Yantai’s approach emphasizes responsible development rooted in local realities and dialogue among stakeholders—balancing economic growth with cultural preservation and community well-being. This model is seen as a valuable example for other regions seeking sustainable growth in wine tourism worldwide.