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John Barker's blueprint for the future of the OIV

OIV's centennial under new leadership

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The International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) is embarking on a pivotal moment in its storied history, as 2024 marks not only its centennial but also the commencement of John Barker's tenure as the new Director General. Barker's appointment is a milestone for the OIV, signifying both a reflection on a century of accomplishments and a forward-looking approach to future challenges and opportunities in the viticulture and winemaking industry.

John Barker, born on October 7, 1968, in Auckland, New Zealand, brings to the table an impressive blend of academic and professional expertise. His educational background is notable, with a Bachelor's degree in Law and Arts from the University of Auckland (1992) and a Ph.D. in Law and Geography (2004). His doctoral thesis, "Different Worlds: Law and the Changing Geographies of Wine in France and New Zealand," was a collaborative effort between the University of Auckland and the INRA-ENESAD of the Université de Bourgogne in Dijon. Barker's career spans a range of roles, including his work as the Wine Programme Manager for the New Zealand government and as General Manager of Advocacy and General Counsel for New Zealand Winegrowers, the national association for the wine industry in New Zealand.



In his inaugural address, Barker emphasized the importance of the connection between vine products, the land, climate, and the people from their place of origin. He underscored the economic and cultural significance of this connection, highlighting the necessity of understanding wine not just as a beverage but as a representative element of the diversity and richness of wine regions. Barker pointed out the OIV's commitment

to the integrity and authenticity of all vine-derived products, as well as to responsible and moderate consumption.

The centenary of the OIV, as Barker noted, presents a "chance to celebrate a century of achievements, reinforce member commitment to the Organization, elevate the OIV's profile, and look towards the next 100 years and beyond." This year of celebrations is not merely a retrospective moment but also a springboard into a future that, under Barker's direction, seems poised to focus on contemporary challenges and emerging opportunities in the wine sector.

One of the major focal points of Barker's term will be the implementation of the OIV's new five-year Strategic Plan (2025-2030). This plan aims to set an ambitious agenda for the beginning of the OIV's second century, with a strong scientific emphasis on elements that will shape the future of the sector, such as climate change and sustainability. Barker has also advocated for a revision of the OIV's structures and processes to align them with member expectations and the directives of the new Strategic Plan.

Moreover, 2024 will witness significant events that will mark the life of the Organization, including the centenary celebration of the OIV, the 45th World Congress of Vine and Wine, and the inauguration of the new headquarters in the Hôtel Bouchu d'Esterno in Dijon.

A Tribute to Pau Roca During the ceremony, a tribute was paid to Pau Roca, the former Director General of the OIV, who passed away in late 2023. Luigi Moio, the President of the OIV, highlighted Roca's contribution, devotion, and passion for the viticulture sector, remembering him with admiration and respect. Roca's legacy in the organization is a testament to his dedication to the world of wine, and his absence was profoundly felt during this significant transition.

Barker's presidency arrives at a time when the global wine industry faces significant challenges, including adapting to climate change, the need for sustainable practices, and the constant evolution of market trends and consumer preferences. His background and approach suggest a mandate that will blend respect for tradition with a commitment to innovation and adaptability, key aspects for the future sustainability of

the sector.

With his extensive experience in wine regulation and international trade, Barker is uniquely qualified to guide the OIV through these challenging times. His focus on science, sustainability, and product integrity promises a bright future for the OIV and the wine industry as a whole.

The OIV, under Barker's leadership, stands at the cusp of a new era. His vision for the organization is not just about maintaining its prestigious role in the wine world but also about steering it towards new horizons. The initiatives he plans to implement are set to redefine the way the wine industry operates, with an emphasis on environmental stewardship, technological advancements, and fostering a global community that shares a deep respect for the cultural and historical significance of wine.

The centennial of the OIV is more than a celebration of its past; it is a rallying point for the future. Barker's strategic vision, combined with his profound understanding of the complexities of the wine industry, sets the stage for a period of growth, innovation, and sustainability. As the OIV embarks on its second century, it does so with a renewed sense of purpose and direction, ready to face the challenges of a changing world while upholding the traditions and values that have made wine an enduring and beloved part of human culture.