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Diageo names João Matos as new Marketing Director for Southern Europe

The Portuguese executive will join the regional Executive Committee and report to General Manager Patrick Gantier

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Diageo has announced the appointment of João Matos as its new Marketing Director for Southern Europe. The Portuguese executive will begin his role in July and will report directly to Patrick Gantier, General Manager for the region. He will also join the Executive Committee that oversees Diageo's operations in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and Greece.

João Matos has worked at Diageo for nearly two decades. He started his career in the Iberia region and has held positions in Sales, Marketing, and Innovation. His international experience includes assignments in the United Kingdom, India, and Brazil. Most recently, he served as Global Marketing and Innovation Director for Johnnie Walker.

While leading the marketing strategy for Johnnie Walker, Matos focused on repositioning the brand within the premium and sustainability segments. He redefined the image of Blue Label, turning it into the fastest-growing variant in the portfolio. He also oversaw new product launches such as Johnnie Walker Blonde and Black Ruby, as well as limited-edition collaborations with other brands, including Blue Label Ice Chalet with Perfect Moment and the Johnnie Walker Blue Label Ultra bottle, recognized for its lightweight design.

Diageo plans to leverage Matos's international background to bring a new strategic direction to its Southern Europe markets. According to Gantier, the company expects Matos to apply the insights and practices he developed in previous roles to strengthen Diageo's position in the region.

Matos will succeed Úrsula Mejía, who has been appointed Marketing Director for Great Britain. In her new role, she will oversee the company's spirits portfolio as well as Guinness, a leading beer brand in the UK closely associated with national sporting events like the Premier League and the Six Nations rugby tournament.

During her four-year tenure in Southern Europe, Mejía led several initiatives that contributed to increased sales and enhanced brand perception. Under her leadership, Johnnie Walker became the best-selling whisky in Spain. She also played a key role in the expansion of Diageo's tequila offerings in the region and introduced Venturo, a Mediterranean-style premium aperitif launched in Italy.

Mejía also promoted social responsibility programs, including J&B Orgullo de Pueblo and She, along with campaigns aimed at gender equality in advertising. One of her notable projects was UnaDeDos, a campaign seeking to achieve gender parity in creative roles by 2030.

In statements following the announcement, Mejía reflected on her time in Southern Europe as a significant period in her professional life and expressed gratitude to her team. João Matos said he was pleased to return to the region where he began his career with Diageo and committed to using his experience to support the company's goals in the coming years.