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Yantai Becomes First Chinese City to Join Great Wine Capitals Network at 25th Anniversary Conference

Bordeaux event highlights global expansion, innovation in wine tourism, and celebrates excellence across eleven renowned wine regions

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The 25th Annual Conference of the Great Wine Capitals Global Network is underway in Bordeaux, France, marking a significant milestone for the international wine community. The event, which began on November 2 and will continue through November 6, brings together delegates from eleven member cities representing some of the world's most renowned wine regions. This year's conference returns to Bordeaux, the founding city of the network, under the theme "GENESIS," emphasizing both a reflection on origins and a focus on future innovation.

A key development at this year's gathering is the official inclusion of Yantai, China as the first Observer Member of the network. This move highlights the organization's commitment to expanding its reach and recognizing emerging wine regions on a global scale. The addition of Yantai is seen as an important step toward greater diversity and inclusion within the international wine industry.

Throughout the week, participants are engaging in a range of activities designed to foster collaboration and share best practices. Technical visits are taking place at several iconic estates across Bordeaux's celebrated subregions, including Médoc, Saint-Émilion, Sauternes, Entre-Deux-Mers, and Cognac. These visits offer insights into heritage preservation, innovative winemaking techniques, and immersive tourism experiences. Notable stops include Rémy Martin, Château de Cérons, and Chateau La Croizille.

The conference also features working groups and a B2B marketplace where hosted buyers meet with Bordeaux-based producers and wine tourism professionals from across the network. These sessions aim to strengthen commercial ties and encourage knowledge exchange among industry leaders.

One of the highlights is an international wine tasting event held at Le Bassin des Lumières, a unique venue known for its immersive art installations. Delegates have the opportunity to sample wines from all member regions in a visually striking setting that underscores Bordeaux's reputation for blending tradition with modernity.

On November 6, La Cité du Vin will host Knowledge Day, which includes an international conference titled "Navigating the Future of Wine Tourism: Industry Challenges, Innovations and Global Opportunities." Experts from around the world will

discuss trends affecting wine tourism, such as sustainability initiatives, digital transformation, and changing consumer preferences.

The conference will culminate with the Best Of Wine Tourism Global Awards ceremony. These awards recognize excellence in categories such as architecture, art and culture, sustainable practices, and innovative visitor experiences. Winners are selected from among member cities for their contributions to enhancing wine tourism and promoting their regions on a global stage.

A gala dinner at Bordeaux's historic Palais de la Bourse will close out the event. The dinner provides an opportunity for delegates to celebrate achievements over the past year and build relationships that support ongoing collaboration.

Catherine Leparmentier, Managing Director of the Great Wine Capitals Global Network, emphasized the importance of this anniversary edition. She noted that returning to Bordeaux allows members to honor their shared history while looking ahead to new opportunities. The inclusion of Yantai as an Observer Member was described as a bold step that reflects both growth and openness within the network.

Founded in 1999, the Great Wine Capitals Global Network connects cities with internationally recognized wine regions to promote economic development, cultural exchange, and tourism. Current members include Adelaide (South Australia), Bilbao-Rioja (Spain), Cape Town-Cape Winelands (South Africa), Hawke's Bay (New Zealand), Lausanne (Switzerland), Mainz-Rheinhessen (Germany), Mendoza (Argentina), Porto (Portugal), San Francisco-Napa Valley (USA), Valparaiso-Casablanca Valley (Chile), Verona (Italy), and now Yantai as an Observer Member.

The annual conference serves as a platform for sharing knowledge and fostering innovation across continents. As Bordeaux hosts this milestone event, participants are focused on shaping strategies that will sustain their regions' prosperity amid evolving challenges in global wine production and tourism.