



DIJON CITY COUNCIL
PALACE OF THE ESTATES OF BURGUNDY



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PRESS RELEASE
**DIJON'S *CITÉ INTERNATIONALE* CENTRE FOR GASTRONOMY AND WINE
WILL OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ON 6TH MAY 2022**

During his 2022 New Year's Greetings that were broadcast online via www.dijon.fr, **François Rebsamen, Mayor of Dijon and President of Dijon Métropole, officially announced 6th May as the date on which Dijon's *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine will open to the public.** A new landmark destination celebrating France's legendary lifestyle, the *Cité Internationale* will aim to **share and promote the values of the "Gastronomic meal of the French" and the "Climats, terroirs of Burgundy", which enjoy UNESCO World Heritage status.**

As François Rebsamen observes: "How many cities can claim to have two UNESCO accolades to their name? Dijon is a city that is proud of its heritage and has worked hard to earn those titles, cementing its positioning as one of the world's go-to destinations for anyone who enjoys the pleasures of hospitality and of eating and drinking well. Through the *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine, we are celebrating France's legendary lifestyle, which underpins our values of sharing and enjoying life together."

An outstanding venue to celebrate France's legendary lifestyle

Dijon's *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine is a 1,750 m² exhibition space that provides the keys to understanding the "Gastronomic meal of the French", which was added to the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2010. Far from being a label that sets the country's unique "fine dining" expertise in stone, the UNESCO accolade recognises the outstanding value of a thousand-year-old tradition that helps strengthen social ties. Amongst other things, it is a tradition that celebrates the art of making every meal a celebration; that celebrates the art of choosing the right produce and pairing dishes with the perfect wine; and that consecrates the sociable side of festive meals and the rituals they involve, marking life's key milestones.

Backed by the *Mission Française pour le Patrimoine et les Cultures Alimentaires* (French Mission for Food Culture and Heritage), chaired by Jean-Robert Pitte, France made the pledge to promote its Gastronomic Meals by creating a network of multidisciplinary facilities dedicated to gastronomy, giving tourists the opportunity to delve deeper into this rich heritage whilst simultaneously giving the people of France the chance to take ownership of what is a core aspect of their culture.

It was with this in mind that Dijon was chosen in 2013 to specifically promote the culture of winemaking and wine, having seized the opportunity to submit an application that drew on its core identity. Following a

call for expression of interest launched by the city of Dijon, the EIFFAGE group was awarded the tender to actually build the *Cité*.

As of 2017, a Strategic Steering Committee was formed to drive the project forward, co-chaired by Jocelyne Pérard, head of the UNESCO “Culture and Traditions of Wine” Chair, and Éric Pras, three-Michelin-starred chef at *La Maison Lameloise*.

The *Cité Internationale* has since gradually sprung to life, nestled in the very heart of Dijon and just a stone’s throw from the railway station to which it is linked by a pedestrian wine trail. Occupying a vast 6.5-hectare plot that had always had ties with the city’s healthcare and hospital services since back in 1204 – including being home to Dijon’s *Hôpital Général* until 2015 –, the *Cité Internationale* is set to bring a thoroughly unique experience to the city. It will welcome temporary and permanent exhibitions, the Ferrandi Paris school of culinary arts, the *Ecole des Vins de Bourgogne* run by the *Bureau Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bourgogne* (BIVB), food and drink shops, the *Librairie Gourmande* specialised bookshop, show cooking stations in the Gastronomic Village, the *Cave de la Cité* wine cellar and restaurants run by the Epicure Group, a nine-screen Pathé cinema complex, and the Village by CA that brings together start-ups and is spearheaded by Vitagora and the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region Foodtech.

Inextricably linked to French gastronomy, **wine takes centre stage at the *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine**, with exhibitions, workshops and shops all shining a light on the culture, science, history and heritage underpinning the beverage. **The *Cave de la Cité* wine cellar** – an immense space extending across three floors and covering more than 600 m² – **will give visitors the unique opportunity to enjoy wine-tasting sessions tailored to their tastes, with 250 different wines being served by the glass each day from a vast selection of over 3,000 references sourced from all over the world.** Particular prominence will, of course, be given to Burgundy wines.

A striking new setting that celebrates modern architecture whilst safeguarding the city’s heritage

Dijon’s *Cité Internationale* is the fruit of a 10-year development project spearheaded by the city of Dijon, with the site’s cultural developments backed by funding from the French government and the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region.

It has to be said that the new facility boasts a prime position. Firstly, it sits at the starting point of the *Route des Grands Crus* marking the beginning of the *Vallée de la Gastronomie*, which stretches all the way down to Marseilles via the iconic *Routes Nationales* 6 and 7 trunk roads. Secondly, it is just a stone’s throw from Dijon’s old town, which is one of France’s largest Remarkable Heritage Sites and part of the “Climats, terroirs of Burgundy” that were added to the UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites in 2015.

Occupying the site of the former *Hôtel-Dieu* alongside the river Ouche, the project has breathed new life into buildings that were originally built between the 15th and 18th centuries, and features not only a protected woodland but also a new eco-neighbourhood with 600 residential dwellings. It is this very metamorphosis that will be the focus of the first temporary exhibition hosted by the Interpretation Centre for Architecture and Heritage, which has also been strategically positioned at the *Cité Internationale*. In line with the commitments Dijon made on being awarded France’s prestigious “City of Art and History” label back in 2009, this brand-new space that encourages people to share and build on their local knowledge has been named “The 1204” in reference to the year in which the city’s first-ever hospital was built – the *Hôpital du Saint-Esprit* – on the very site that now houses the *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine.

The build, which is the EIFFAGE group’s biggest regional project to date, demanding an investment of around 250 million euros, will serve as the enduring symbol of the city’s major architectural rehabilitation

spearheaded by architectural firm Anthony Béchu & Associates, whose design **celebrates the site's heritage whilst embracing the addition of bold contemporary structures.**

Dijon: a city with wine running through its veins

Historically the capital of the Dukes of Burgundy, Dijon is now more motivated than ever to place wine centre stage once more. Over the past few years, the Dijon Métropole has, indeed, already made a concerted effort to breathe new life into its vineyards, which had fallen foul to both phylloxera and urbanisation.

The days when a quarter of the city's population were employed by the wine trade may be long gone, but that certainly isn't preventing Dijon from drawing on its rich past in order to build its future, with over 300 hectares of land currently in the process of being acquired. According to UNESCO, "the historic centre of Dijon embodies the political regulatory impetus that gave birth to the Climats, terroirs of Burgundy system". Back in the Middle Ages, Dijon was at the epicentre of the Burgundy wine trade. Today, Dijon's *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine will celebrate the Climats in an Interpretation Centre based in the *Hôpital Général's* former chapel. It is, indeed, in Dijon, alongside the *Cité Internationale*, that Burgundy's very own Champs-Élysées begins – the *Route des Grands Crus*, which heads south across the Dijon Métropole passing through Chenôve and then Marsannay.

Having successfully convinced the International Organisation of Vine and Wine to relocate its head office from Paris to Dijon in October 2021, the city is now gearing up to further strengthen its position as a global showcase for the country's wine heritage.

Bon appétit and cheers!

As of 6th May, the *Cité Internationale* will officially open its doors, inviting the public to broaden their knowledge, indulge their taste buds, take cookery and wine-tasting courses, attend masterclasses or conferences, visit the shops and restaurants, enjoy a stay in a 4-star hotel or even watch a film.

A pick-and-mix selection of experiences will cater not only to tourists but to the people of Dijon, too, commensurate with an unprecedented project that focuses on the relationships between food and wine, themselves so deeply emblematic of the "Gastronomic meal of the French".

"Dijon has embarked on a truly far-reaching project, which is unquestionably the most complex and innovative project I have ever been asked to lead," concludes François Rebsamen. "Above and beyond the *Cité Internationale's* evident benefits for tourism, we are keen to ensure it is seamlessly integrated into the day-to-day lives of our city and its residents. By rehabilitating a site in the heart of the city that may otherwise have remained derelict, Dijon has begun writing a new page in its history with a project that embraces every aspect of city life, from urban development, heritage and culture to tourism, gastronomy and wine."

For further details, please take a look at the official *Cité Internationale* Centre for Gastronomy and Wine website: <https://www.citedelagastronomie-dijon.fr/>

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