

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Diageo CEO Sir Ivan Menezes dies at 63

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A founding member of Diageo in 1997, Mr. Menezes served the beverage conglomerate for 25 years, spending the last decade as CEO. Image credit: Diageo

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Sir Ivan Menezes, the long-time CEO of British spirits distributor Diageo, has died at 63.

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The executive has passed away following a sudden illness; per a company statement released early Wednesday morning, he was surrounded by family and loved ones. A founding member of Diageo, Mr. Menezes served the beverage conglomerate for 25 years, spending the last decade as CEO.

"Ivan was undoubtedly one of the finest leaders of his generation," said Javier Fern, chairman at **Diageo**, in a statement.

"Ivan was there at the creation of Diageo and over 25 years, shaped Diageo to become one of the best performing, most trusted and respected consumer companies," he said. "I saw first-hand his steadfast commitment to our people and to creating a culture that enabled everyone to thrive."

Diageo remembers

Born in 1959 in Pran, India, Mr. Menezes would go on to become a figurehead in the beverage industry.

Arriving at the advent of Diageo's formation, the leader would gain widespread recognition for his guidance in facilitating the deal that created the larger firm in 1997. Mr. Menezes oversaw the merger of English food and beverage wholesaler Grand Metropolitan and Irish beer company Guinness, where the executive served as strategy director at the time.

Over the course of ten years as CEO, Mr. Menezes oversaw an unprecedented period of growth and sales performance at Diageo, all while championing gender equality and ethnic diversity across the company's board.

Among a litany of contributions, the late CEO is credited for steering the company through the rough pandemic years, pushing net sales value up by 36 percent from 2019.

"Ivan's energy and his commitment to diversity created a truly inclusive business and enabled Diageo to have a positive impact on the communities we serve," said Mr. Fern.



The late CEO is credited for, among other advancements, steering the company through a set of rough pandemic years. Image credit: Diageo

"His passion for our brands was second-to-none and in his heart, he remained the Johnnie Walker marketer from his early days. The desire to build the world's best brands never left him."

In January 2023, Mr. Menezes was awarded a Knighthood honor for his service to business and equality by His Majesty The King as part of the 2023 New Year Honors List.

On June 5, the company announced Debra Crew's appointment to the interim CEO position following complications with an emergency surgery Mr. Menezes underwent for a stomach ulcer.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Shibani, two children, Nikhil and Rohini, and many friends.

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