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Australian Wine Sales Surge in Canada

Trade disruptions and years of marketing helped lift exports 24% in value as buyers embraced premium regional bottles

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Demand for premium Australian wine is rising sharply in Canada, where importers and producers say a mix of trade disruptions, sustained marketing and growing consumer interest in regional wines has helped lift sales across the country’s largest provinces.

In the 12 months through March 2026, Australian wine exports to Canada rose 24% in value to $188 million and 15% in volume to 69 million liters, according to industry data. The number of Australian exporters active in the market also increased to 220 businesses, a sign that more producers are finding room on Canadian shelves and wine lists.

The growth comes after restrictions on U.S. wine imports in 2025 reduced the availability of American products across Canadian liquor boards. Producers said that opened space for Australian wines, but they also stressed that the gains were not sudden. They said years of work with buyers, retailers and sommeliers had built a stronger understanding of Australia’s wine regions, grape varieties and price points.

Sales data from EzFocus showed Australian wine gaining in both volume and value across Canada’s four largest provinces. Ontario posted the strongest results, with sales volume up about 30% year over year and market share rising from 6% to 9%. Growth was broad-based across price segments, including midpriced wines in the $8 to $14.99 range, which has long been a core category for Australia, as well as premium bottled wines above $15.

Cabernet Sauvignon led the gains, especially in Ontario, where volumes rose by more than 70%. Shiraz and Chardonnay also performed well. Producers said demand was also increasing for lighter styles, sparkling wines and wines with a clear regional identity.

Matt Fowles of Fowles Wine said buyers were responding to premium Australian wines that emphasize origin and quality.

“Our focus is firmly on fine wine, and it’s clear customers value having these wines back on shelves,” he said. “When the regional story and provenance are understood, the category lifts quickly.”

Trade engagement has played a central role in that shift. Over the past two years, buyers from major provincial liquor boards in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia have traveled to Australian wine regions through inbound programs organized by Wine Australia and industry partners. Those visits have been paired with tastings,

masterclasses and staff training in Canada.

Industry officials said those efforts have helped produce 177 new liquor board listings and expanded education for retail and restaurant staff. They also said the programs have strengthened support among sommeliers, who often influence what appears on restaurant wine lists.

Peter Marshall, a Vancouver-based importer with Sur Lie, said firsthand exposure to Australian regions has changed how buyers view the category.

“Buyers who have travelled to Australia approach the category with far greater confidence,” he said. “That firsthand experience reshapes their perceptions and opens the door to more distinctive and adventurous Australian wines.”

Libby Nutt, general manager for marketing and export sales at Casella Family Brands, said repeated contact with provincial liquor boards had deepened commercial relationships.

“Our relationships with the liquor boards have always been strong, but they’ve deepened significantly as more buyers travel to Australia,” she said. “These visits have driven real alignment, and we’ve secured new listings every time we reconnect.”

Recent events in Canada suggest that momentum is continuing. At a trade gathering in Vancouver during Wine Australia’s North America Roadshow, nearly 100 buyers, media members and sommeliers attended seminars and tastings focused on emerging varieties and changing wine styles from Australia. Organizers said white wines and sparkling wines drew particular interest because they fit current demand for fresher styles and food-friendly options.

Wine Australia said feedback from attendees was strong. More than 90% of those surveyed who were in buying roles said they were likely to increase the number of Australian wines in their programs after the event.

Paul Turale, Wine Australia’s general manager for market development, said direct engagement remains one of the most effective ways to build trust in export markets.

“This kind of firsthand experience builds confidence and advocacy among buyers and sommeliers,” he said. “It helps them share the stories of Australian wine with greater credibility.”

Producers say Canada still presents challenges, including high costs and competition from other countries as some U.S. products gradually return to shelves in parts of the market. But they say consumer skepticism toward American wine remains a factor, while awareness of Australian brands continues to improve.

Mark Ramm, regional export manager at Angove Family Winemakers, said Canada offers strong potential if producers keep investing in market presence.

“Canada is a market with deep goodwill toward Australian producers,” he said. “The opportunity is significant, and now is the right time to back it with sustained investment and on-the-ground presence.”