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Italy enters grape harvest with wine stocks 6.9% above last year

Cellars held 42.6 million hectoliters on July 31, a heavy carryover that could strain storage and pricing.

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Italy is entering the new grape harvest with wine cellars still holding more stock than they did a year ago, a sign of continued pressure on the country’s wine supply chain as producers begin bringing in the 2026 crop.

As of July 31, Italian wineries and wine facilities held 42.6 million hectoliters of wine, up 6.9% from the same date in 2025, according to the latest “Cantina Italia” bulletin published by Icqrf, the Italian government inspectorate that monitors agri-food quality and fraud. The data is based on the country’s electronic cellar registers, which track

volumes held in wineries across Italy.

The stock level is large even by Italian standards. It equals about 4.26 billion liters, or roughly 1.13 billion gallons, of wine still in storage before the harvest moves into full swing in most regions over the next several weeks.

The same bulletin showed 3.1 million hectoliters of grape musts, up 31.5% from a year earlier, and 42,027 hectoliters of new wine still in fermentation, down 28.5%. Compared with June 30 of this year, however, inventories were lower across all three categories. Wine stocks were down 8.6% month to month, musts fell 17.4%, and fermenting new wine dropped 24.4%.

That monthly decline is not unusual as wineries continue to ship wine and clear space ahead of harvest. But the year-over-year increase matters more for the market because it shows that inventories remain elevated despite another growing season already underway.

The concentration of those stocks also stands out. Northern Italy accounts for 55.9% of the wine held in storage, with Veneto carrying the largest share. Veneto is central to Italy’s sparkling wine trade and to several of the country’s biggest denominations, so inventory levels there are closely watched by producers, traders and bottlers.

More than half of the wine in storage, 55.4%, is classified as DOP, the European quality designation for protected origin wines. Within that group, red wines account for 53.8%. Another 25.8% of stocks are IGP wines, the broader protected geographical indication category. Varietal wines represent only 1.7% of the total, while 17.1% falls into other wine categories.

The report also showed how heavily Italian inventories are concentrated in a small number of appellations. Out of 523 geographical indications tracked in the bulletin, just 20 account for 57.6% of the total stock. That means shifts in a relatively limited set of denominations can have an outsized effect on the national picture.

Prosecco DOC alone accounts for 9.4% of all wine stocks in Italian cellars, with 3.2 million hectoliters in storage. It is by far the largest single denomination by volume and remains a key indicator of supply conditions in Italy’s wine industry.

Behind Prosecco are Toscana IGP and Puglia IGP, each with 1.5 million hectoliters, equal to 4.4% of total inventories. Chianti DOCG follows with 1.2 million hectoliters, or 3.6% of the total. Montepulciano d’Abruzzo stands at 1.13 million hectoliters, or 3.3%. Terre Siciliane IGP and Sicilia DOC each hold 1.11 million hectoliters, both at 3.2%. Salento IGP has 1 million hectoliters, or 3.1%, while Veneto IGP has 984,446 hectoliters, or 2.9%. Delle Venezie DOC rounds out the group with 963,076 hectoliters, equal to 2.8%.

For producers, these numbers matter because they shape pricing power, storage capacity and the pace at which wineries can absorb incoming grapes. High carryover stocks can weigh on the market if sales do not move fast enough through domestic channels and exports. They can also force difficult choices about tank space, especially in large producing regions where the first grapes are already being picked.

The timing adds to the concern. Harvest has already started in several Italian wine areas, even if most estates expect the real start in the coming weeks. In that transition period, wineries are trying to balance the last of the previous campaign with preparations for the new one. When stocks remain above the prior year, that balancing act becomes harder.

The Italian wine sector has dealt in recent years with uneven demand across categories, changing consumer habits in some export markets and intense competition between appellations and price segments. Large stocks do not automatically point to a crisis, since part of the inventory reflects wines that need time in cellar or are scheduled for bottling later in the year. But the July data suggests that supply remains heavy enough to keep pressure on producers as the 2026 vintage arrives.

The Icqrf bulletin does not itself forecast prices or sales, but it offers a detailed snapshot of where the wine is and how it is classified at a sensitive moment in the season. With the country moving toward peak harvest activity, the figures show a system that has reduced inventories since June but is still carrying more wine than it was a year ago, especially in the biggest denominations and in the North, where much

of Italy’s commercial wine volume is concentrated.