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Stout led Britain’s pub beer market in August with a 6.4% rise.

Conventional lager fell 4.4%, the weakest showing among major styles in data pointing to a shift in draught demand.

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Stout gained ground in British pubs in August, even as conventional lager lost pace, according to trade data that point to a clear shift in drinking patterns within the draught beer market.

The rate of sale for stout rose 6.4% from a year earlier in August 2026, while conventional lager fell 4.4% over the same period, according to figures published by The Morning Advertiser and based on Market Watch data from Oxford Partnership. The gap between the two categories reached 10.8 percentage points, making stout one of the strongest performers in the latest monthly reading.

The same data showed international lager also moved higher, up 4.4% year over year, while ale declined 3.9%. Taken together, the figures suggest drinkers in the U.K. pub trade are shifting spending toward some styles and away from others rather than lifting beer sales across the board.

The measure used in the report is rate of sale, a pub industry indicator that tracks how quickly products are selling through the hospitality channel. It is not the same as total market volume, and the published figures do not include category totals in pints, hectoliters or sales value. That distinction matters because the numbers show relative momentum by style, not the full size of each segment.

Even so, the August data mark a notable change in direction for a part of the market that has often been led by lager. Conventional lager, a staple of British pubs for years, recorded the weakest reading among the main beer styles cited in the report. Stout, by contrast, posted the strongest increase, continuing a trend that has drawn attention in the trade as more pub customers choose darker beer across a wider range of drinking occasions.

International lager also outperformed the broader beer mix. Its 4.4% rise put it well ahead of both conventional lager and ale, reinforcing the view that consumers are not moving away from lager altogether but are becoming more selective within the category. Ale remained under pressure, with a 3.9% annual decline in rate of sale in August.

The figures were reported on Sept. 21 by The Morning Advertiser, a hospitality trade publication, which described the latest reading as evidence of a reshaping of demand in draught beer. The data cover the U.K. pub market and compare August 2026 with the same month a year earlier.

The broader drinks picture was weaker. The publication also noted a 3% decline for total draught drinks, but that aggregate includes cider as well as beer. For that reason, it should not be treated as a measure of beer volume alone. The beer-style figures instead show where demand is strengthening and where it is easing within the pub channel.

For pub operators, brewers and distributors, the numbers may carry practical implications for tap selection and stock planning heading into the autumn trading period. A rise in stout and international lager, alongside declines in ale and conventional lager, points to a market in which product mix may matter more than category-wide growth. The August reading does not say how many pints were sold in each style, but it does show which beers were moving faster at the bar.