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New Zealand wine exports rose 6% to 306.2 million liters

Export value held near NZ$2.1bn, signaling pricing pressure in a difficult global market for producers

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New Zealand’s wine exports increased in volume over the past year even as export revenue stayed nearly unchanged, a sign that producers are selling more wine into a difficult global market without seeing a matching rise in value.

In the 12 months through June 2026, New Zealand exported 306.2 million liters of wine, up from 288.8 million liters a year earlier, according to the latest annual report from New Zealand Winegrowers. That was a 6% increase by volume. Export value, however, remained broadly flat at about NZ$2.1bn, only slightly above the NZ$2.098bn recorded in the previous 12-month period.

The industry group said overall sales rose 8%, driven by export growth, making the June 2026 result the second-highest June year total on record for New Zealand wine. The figures came during what the organization described as a challenging global and domestic environment for wine producers.

New Zealand Winegrowers said the country’s wines continued to perform better than the broader wine category in key overseas markets. Exports remain central to the industry’s business model, accounting for about 90% of all New Zealand wine sales. That dependence on foreign markets means shifts in demand, pricing and trade policy abroad can quickly affect growers, wineries and distributors at home.

The report pointed to strong results in several major destinations, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and China. China posted one of the sharpest increases, with New Zealand wine exports to that market rising 72% over the 12-month period. Shipments to South Korea also climbed, up 20%.

Fabian Yukich, chair of New Zealand Winegrowers, said the past year had been difficult across the global wine industry but said New Zealand producers had shown resilience and had continued to adjust their businesses to current conditions. His comments reflected a broader effort in the sector to align supply more closely with demand after a period of strain in international wine markets.

That adjustment is also visible in production. The 2026 vintage delivered a smaller harvest of about 440,000 tonnes, down 15% from the previous year. The industry group said the lower output brought production into closer balance with current market demand and supported a longer-term focus on sustainable growth.

For wine and other beverage companies, the new export figures may carry two messages at once. The rise in shipment volumes suggests New Zealand wine is still finding buyers in a weak global market and expanding beyond its traditional base in a number of countries. But the limited movement in export value, despite higher volumes, may also point to pressure on pricing, product mix or both, an issue that matters for margins across the wider drinks trade.

The market breakdown also suggests that diversification is becoming more important for New Zealand producers. While established markets such as the U.S. and the U.K. remain important, faster growth in China and South Korea shows that Asian demand is becoming a more significant part of the export picture. That matters not only for wine producers but also for importers, wholesalers and retailers that track changes in consumer demand across beverage categories.

New Zealand Winegrowers also highlighted the recently signed New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement as a longer-term opening for the sector. The agreement provides for gradual reductions in tariffs on New Zealand wine, which could improve access to a market that has traditionally been difficult for foreign wine exporters because of high import duties. Any commercial gains are likely to depend on how quickly tariff cuts take effect and how producers position themselves in India’s still-developing wine market.

The latest data show an industry that is still growing abroad in volume terms, even as revenue growth has slowed sharply. In practical terms, that leaves New Zealand wineries in a position familiar to many drinks producers around the world: moving more product, relying heavily on exports, and trying to protect value in a market where demand remains uneven and competition is intense.