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Italy’s Wine Exports Fell 6.2% in the First Half of 2026

Export volumes fell 4%; average prices dropped 2.8%, leaving sparkling wines as the sector’s main source of resilience

Friday, September 25, 2026



Italy’s wine exports fell in the first half of 2026, with lower shipments, lower revenue and lower average prices hitting the sector at the same time, according to a Wineitaly24 market review published this week.

The review said Italy exported about €3.6 billion of wine in the first six months of the year, down 6.2% from the same period in 2025. Export volumes fell 4% to 989.6 million liters. The average export price also dropped 2.8%, a combination that points to weaker pricing power and tighter margins for producers.

The setback was led mainly by still wines, while sparkling wines showed greater resilience. That split matters beyond wine alone because a simultaneous decline in volume, value and price can shape margin expectations, competitive pressure and commercial strategy across the broader beverage business, especially as producers compare the performance of wine with cocktails, ready-to-drink products and other categories competing for the same consumer spending.

Wineitaly24’s review described a market that is placing less value on production capacity alone and more value on brand positioning, distribution strength, consumer experience and the ability to find new demand. It also pointed to growing interest in alternative export markets such as Brazil as Italian producers look to reduce dependence on slower destinations.

Italy’s results compared poorly with France in the first half. France exported about €5.4 billion of wine, down 2.2% in value and 1.5% in volume, according to the review. Argentina posted a different pattern, with export volumes up 16.3% and export value up 4.2%, but at the cost of a 10.4% drop in average price. Chile and Spain, the report said, were affected by lower production and higher prices, with negative effects on exports.

Those comparisons suggest that rising volumes alone do not guarantee stronger returns. For Italian producers, defending prices may now be as important as pushing more product into foreign markets.

Sparkling wine remained the strongest part of Italy’s export mix. In the first half, Italian sparkling wine exports reached about €1 billion, up 0.4% from a year earlier, while volumes were nearly flat at 252.2 million liters, down 0.7%. Prosecco DOP remained the main driver, accounting for €825.4 million, or about 82% of all Italian sparkling wine exports.

Even Prosecco, however, was not fully immune to the slowdown. Its export value fell 1.3% and volumes slipped 0.3%, though that was still a much better result than the broader wine sector. In the United States, Prosecco DOP exports were worth €236.9 million despite a 7.2% decline. Germany showed a firmer trend for Italian sparkling wines, with exports of €64.4 million, up 2.7%.

The stronger performance of sparkling wines may reflect a broader shift in consumption. Wineitaly24 said international demand is moving toward fresher, more versatile products with lower average alcohol content that can fit more occasions, including mixology. That trend could influence decisions not only on appellations but also on packaging, formats and the way wine groups position themselves against other beverage categories.

The United States remains the biggest question for Italian exporters. After several weak months, Wineitaly24 reported that July brought the first positive signs, with Italian wine exports to the U.S. rising nearly 10% in value. Volumes increased 1.3%, and the average price was up by more than 8%.

That improvement narrowed part of the decline built up earlier in the year. The gap, which had reached about -14% in June, improved to roughly -11% over the first seven months, and the review said August may have reduced the shortfall further, to around -9.5%. Even so, it said it was too early to describe the change as a turning point.

Several risks remain in the U.S. market, including tariffs, inflation, the strength of the dollar, household purchasing power and deeper changes in consumer habits. The review said the marketing year from August 2025 through July 2026 was still one of the weakest in recent years for Italian wine in the United States. It also noted that American consumers are spreading their spending across sparkling wine, cocktails, ready-to-drink products and other beverages, rewarding products that are simple to use and fit newer lifestyles.

Within Italy, export performance varied sharply by region. Veneto remained the country’s leading exporter with about €1.3 billion in first-half wine exports, but that was down 8.4%. Piedmont rose 2.4% to €566 million and overtook Tuscany. Emilia-Romagna gained 5.6%, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia rose 2.5%.

Smaller regions such as Molise, Basilicata, Liguria and Valle d’Aosta posted strong percentage increases, though from much lower starting points. Other regions, including Trentino-Alto Adige, Abruzzo, Sicily, Lazio, Umbria and Sardinia, were reported to be under pressure.

The regional split underscores how uneven the market has become. Performance now appears to depend heavily on product type, market exposure, branding and commercial structure rather than on national trends alone.

At home, the review said wine tourism is becoming more important for wineries, not only as an additional source of sales but as part of the value of the business itself. That shift adds another layer to how producers may respond to weaker exports, especially as many try to protect margins in a market where consumers are becoming more selective and where category competition is increasing.