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Italian wine exports fell 6.2% by value in the first half of 2026

Lower prices failed to lift demand, leaving producers squeezed by higher packaging, logistics, transport, glass costs.

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Italy’s wine industry is facing a difficult stretch as retail prices fall, production costs rise and export demand weakens, adding pressure to one of the country’s most important food and beverage businesses.

Financialounge reported that consumer wine prices in Italy were down 2.3% in September from a year earlier, even as overall inflation was running at 4.2%. The lower shelf prices have not been enough to revive sales, with volumes still weak, according to the report.

That is creating a problem for wineries, which are selling into a softer market while dealing with higher operating costs. Financialounge, citing Unione Italiana Vini, said producers are facing direct effects in cellar operations as well as indirect cost increases tied to glass production. The group also pointed to higher spending on transport, logistics, winemaking products, packaging and other materials.

The strain is significant because wine remains a major part of the Italian economy. The sector is worth about €14 billion, according to the report, and about 55% of its revenue comes from foreign markets. Including related business activity, it supports about 900,000 people.

Exports, however, have moved lower this year. In the first half of 2026, Italian wine exports fell 6.2% by value and 4% by volume, Financialounge reported. For an industry that depends heavily on overseas demand, that decline adds to the pressure already coming from higher costs and slower domestic sales.

The downturn comes as the global wine market is also losing momentum. The International Organisation of Vine and Wine estimated that worldwide consumption in 2025 fell to 208 million hectoliters, down 2.7% from a year earlier and about 14% below 2018 levels. The organization has linked that decline in part to changes in lifestyles, social habits and generational behavior.

Those shifts are affecting wine producers at a time when consumers in many markets are rethinking alcohol consumption more broadly. Lower drinking frequency, more moderate consumption and changing preferences among younger adults have become recurring concerns for producers in Europe and other major wine regions.

For Italy, the trend is especially important because the country is one of the world’s largest wine exporters. A prolonged loss of export revenue, combined with higher input costs, could weigh on margins for wineries and distributors and intensify competition in

international beverage markets. It could also raise pressure across the wider drinks business, where companies in wine, beer and spirits are already watching packaging, freight and energy costs closely.

The current situation is unusual because cheaper prices have not translated into stronger demand. In many consumer categories, lower prices would normally support sales. In Italian wine, the latest numbers suggest that the problem goes beyond pricing and points to weaker underlying demand, both at home and abroad.

Financialounge described the issue as a challenge that reaches across the supply chain. Glassmakers, packaging suppliers, transport providers and logistics operators all depend in part on the health of the wine trade. When volumes soften and export orders slow, the effect can spread beyond vineyards and bottling plants.

The report also placed the current market weakness in a longer historical context. It noted that the European wine industry survived the phylloxera crisis in the second half of the 19th century by grafting European vines onto more resistant American rootstocks, a change that allowed many classic varieties to survive. That episode is often cited in the industry as an example of adaptation under pressure.

The comparison does not change the immediate numbers facing producers now. Wineries are dealing with falling consumer prices, weak sales and rising costs at the same time. For companies with a large export mix, the decline in foreign demand may be particularly difficult because overseas markets account for more than half of sector revenue.

The export figures are also important because value and volume both declined. A 6.2% drop in export value alongside a 4% drop in volume suggests that producers are not only shipping less wine, but are also earning less from what they sell. That matters for profitability, especially in a market where fixed costs are rising.

Industry groups have been warning for months about the cumulative impact of those expenses. Glass is a major input for bottling. Transport and logistics costs affect both domestic distribution and international shipments. Packaging materials and oenological products add further pressure at a time when wineries have limited room to pass costs

on to consumers.

At the same time, the wider inflation backdrop has offered little relief. General prices in Italy were rising at 4.2% in September, according to the figures cited by Financialounge, even as wine prices moved in the opposite direction. That gap shows how unusual the sector’s pricing dynamics have become.

The data also underline the dependence of Italian wine on changing consumer habits outside the country. If global consumption continues to fall, exporters may have to fight harder for market share in slower-growing markets. In that environment, even large and established producers can face more pressure on prices, product mix and distribution.

For now, the main indicators point in the same direction: softer demand, lower consumer prices, rising production and distribution costs, and weaker export performance in the first half of 2026. The backdrop described by the International Organisation of Vine and Wine suggests that those pressures are tied not only to the economic cycle, but also to longer-term changes in how people drink and what they choose to buy.