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Inter Rhône introduces France’s first wine price benchmarks under E.U. rules

The nonbinding levels of 132 to 193 euros per hectoliter are meant to steer 2026-2027 Côtes-du-Rhône red wine negotiations.

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Inter Rhône has introduced new reference levels ranging from 132 to 193 euros per hectoliter for red wine price negotiations in France’s Côtes-du-Rhône market, marking what trade media describe as the first French use of this kind of indicator under Article

172 ter of the European Union’s common market organization rules.

According to a presentation by Inter Rhône reported by Journal FR and dated Oct. 10, the interprofessional body set out non-binding economic guidance for the 2026-2027 campaign covering conventional, HVE and organic red wines. The figures are intended as reference points for negotiations, not mandatory minimum prices and not records of actual transactions.

For conventional Côtes-du-Rhône red wine and for wine certified HVE, or High Environmental Value, Inter Rhône presented 132 euros per hectoliter as an “equilibrium” price and 171 euros per hectoliter as a “sustainability” price. For organic red wine, the reference levels were placed at 148 euros per hectoliter for equilibrium and 193 euros per hectoliter for sustainability.

The gap between the two levels is significant in both categories. In conventional and HVE wines, the sustainability level stands 39 euros per hectoliter above the equilibrium level, a difference of 29.5%. In organic wine, the spread is 45 euros per hectoliter, or 30.4%. The organic premium over conventional and HVE wine is 16 euros per hectoliter at the equilibrium level and 22 euros per hectoliter at the sustainability level.

The references are being presented as economic benchmarks for commercial talks in a market that has faced pressure from weak consumption, shifting demand and higher production costs in recent years. By putting forward two distinct levels, Inter Rhône appears to be trying to separate a short-term balance point from a higher level that better covers longer-term economic viability. The figures could give growers, cooperatives and merchants a more structured frame for discussions over red wine pricing in the new campaign.

The initiative also carries broader importance beyond the Rhône Valley. Trade observers see it as a test case for how French wine regions may use the legal space opened by Article 172 ter. That provision has drawn attention in the farm and wine sectors because it can allow recognized interbranch organizations to publish economic indicators or reference values that support negotiations without imposing fixed prices. If the Rhône approach is seen as useful by producers and buyers, similar systems could appear in other French appellations and regions.

That possibility helps explain why the new Rhône references are drawing attention even though they do not bind either side of a deal. In practice, non-binding indicators can still influence price formation if they become widely used in negotiations or if they help establish a common reading of production costs and margin requirements. For growers facing tight margins, a published sustainability level may serve as a stronger argument in contract talks. For buyers, the equilibrium figure may function as a lower reference point tied to current market conditions.

At the same time, the limits of the system are clear. The figures are voluntary. They do not require any operator to buy or sell at a given level. They are not an official market quotation, and they should not be read as evidence that transactions in the region are taking place at those prices. The information available also comes from a secondary source, Journal FR’s account of the Inter Rhône presentation, rather than from a full primary release detailing the underlying calculations.

That caution is especially important when looking back at earlier campaigns. Direct comparison with 2025 reference points is not reliable because the methodology and product categories have changed. Any attempt to measure year-to-year movement without that adjustment would risk giving a misleading picture of whether Rhône red wine economics have improved or worsened.

Even so, the publication of the 2026-2027 guidance gives the market a new set of numbers at a time when pricing remains a central issue for French wine producers. In the Côtes-du-Rhône red segment, Inter Rhône has now put four public benchmarks on the table: 132 and 171 euros per hectoliter for conventional and HVE wines, and 148 and 193 euros per hectoliter for organic wines. How much weight those benchmarks carry will depend on whether sellers and buyers adopt them in negotiations over the coming campaign.