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Asti export value to China surges 358.72%, overtaking Prosecco among EU sparkling wines

Overall EU sparkling wine shipments to China rose 26.72% by volume, 39.95% by value, though importers warned stockpiles may exceed demand

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European Union sparkling wine shipments to China rose sharply in the first eight months of 2026, led by gains in champagne, Prosecco and especially Asti, according to EU-27 export data obtained by the Chinese wine trade publication WBO and reported on Monday, November 2.

From January through August, export volume to China increased 26.72% from a year earlier, while export value rose 39.95%. The average export price also climbed 10.44%, to 8.39 euros a liter from about 7.60 euros a liter in the same period of 2025, the data showed.

The figures stand out because sparkling wine has been one of the few imported wine categories showing clear growth in China while broader pressure has persisted across much of the imported wine market. For the beverage industry, that points to a possible growth channel for European producers and Chinese importers, but it also raises a basic question: whether more product entering the country reflects stronger consumer demand or simply heavier stocking by the trade.

Champagne remained the largest EU sparkling wine segment sold to China by value. Exports reached about 16.02 million euros in the January-August period, up 39.03% from a year earlier, and accounted for 54.33% of the EU's total sparkling wine export value to China.

Asti posted the fastest growth. Export value jumped to about 3.97 million euros from 864,800 euros a year earlier, an increase of 358.72%. That lifted Asti's share of total export value to 13.46% from 4.11%, allowing it to move ahead of Prosecco and become the second-largest EU sparkling wine category exported to China by value after champagne.

Prosecco also recorded solid growth. Its export value rose 46.91% to about 2.74 million euros, and its share of total value edged up to 9.31% from 8.87%.

The volume data showed a similar pattern, though the rates were lower than the value gains in Asti's case. Asti shipments increased 129.14% to 440,300 liters from 192,200 liters. Prosecco exports rose 55.77% to 611,800 liters from 392,700 liters. Champagne volume climbed 34.04% to 532,500 liters from 397,300 liters.

Other protected designation of origin sparkling wines, excluding champagne, Cava, Prosecco and Asti, also contributed to the growth. Their export volume more than doubled to 308,900 liters from 139,700 liters, up 121.14%, according to the data.

Prices moved unevenly across categories. Asti's average export price doubled to 9.01 euros a liter from 4.50 euros a liter, a rise of 100.20%. Champagne's average export price increased more modestly, to 30.08 euros a liter from 29.00 euros a liter, up 3.72%.

By contrast, average prices fell sharply in some other parts of the market. The average export price for protected geographical indication sparkling wines dropped 54.60% to 3.44 euros a liter from 7.57 euros a liter. For other protected designation of origin sparkling wines, the average price fell 36.22% to 4.69 euros a liter from 7.36 euros a liter.

WBO said the data reinforced a trend that had already become visible in 2026: stronger import demand in China for segmented sparkling wine categories such as champagne, Prosecco and Asti, with France and Italy as the main beneficiaries.

The sharp change in Asti has drawn the most attention inside the trade because value growth far outpaced volume growth, suggesting a significant shift in the mix of products being shipped to China. WBO noted that the Asti DOCG consortium had previously reported strong momentum in the Chinese market. According to figures cited by WBO, sales of Moscato d'Asti in China in 2025 increased 55% from a year earlier, while exports to China doubled to 2 million bottles from 1 million bottles.

But Chinese importers and distributors interviewed by WBO said the current surge may be harder to sustain than the customs numbers suggest. Yu Hongjie, founder of sparkling wine importer Qipao Tianxia, told WBO that his company's Asti imports have been growing by about 50% a year in recent years, but he said the much bigger jump seen in the EU export data appeared to come more from other importers increasing purchases.

Yu also said import growth and actual retail sell-through are no longer moving in the same way. In his view, the volume of Asti entering China already exceeds the domestic market’s real capacity, and that imbalance could become clearer in the winter selling season late in 2026.

That gap matters for producers, importers and distributors across the beverage sector because it suggests a risk of oversupply even in a category that appears healthy on paper. If inventories keep building faster than end demand, the current rise in shipments could turn into heavier discounting and weaker margins rather than a lasting expansion in consumption.

WBO reported that the increase in Asti’s export price has not matched conditions at the retail level in China. Instead, some regional markets have seen clearance selling, creating continued downward pressure on final shelf prices.

Several sparkling wine distributors also told WBO that, despite stronger interest in the category, Asti still lacks a dominant leading brand in China that can stabilize pricing and support broader consumer recognition. They said many consumers still view the style mainly as a sweet, easy-drinking wine, and retail prices generally struggle to move above 100 yuan.