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Beaujolais Nouveau posted an 8% jump in French supermarket sales

Low prices and a once-a-year launch helped the young wine outpace a broader market that continues to contract

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Beaujolais Nouveau went on sale across France on Thursday, November 19, keeping up a long-running tradition even as the broader wine market remains under pressure. The young red wine, released each year on the third Thursday of November, has shown more resilience than many other wine categories, helped by its low price, its festive image and a sales model built around a single annual launch.

RTL reported that supermarket sales of Beaujolais Nouveau rose 8% in 2025, citing a distribution industry source. That gain stood out in a market where wine sales have been weakening more broadly. According to the same report, total wine sales in supermarkets were down 5% from the start of 2026, while non-primeur Beaujolais sales fell 3.2% in 2025, according to Inter-Beaujolais.

The contrast has drawn attention in the drinks business because it suggests that price and accessibility may be helping to support demand even as consumers cut back in other parts of the wine aisle. That could matter for producers, retailers and restaurants looking for products that still bring customers in during a difficult period for wine.

Beaujolais Nouveau remains a small part of French wine production, but it still has scale. RTL said 13.5 million bottles were sold in 2025. That was below the 18 million to 20 million bottles sold in 2019, but it still points to a product that has lost less ground than much of the surrounding market.

Its positioning appears to be part of the reason. Entry-level bottles are priced at about €4 in supermarkets, according to RTL, while the more expensive labels can reach €13 or €14. In a market where many consumers are watching spending, that puts Beaujolais Nouveau within easy reach. It also avoids some of the barriers that can come with more formal wine buying. The product is marketed as simple, recognizable and tied to a social moment rather than technical knowledge.

That social element remains central to the annual release. RTL said 550 events have been recorded around the launch, including gatherings in bars, pubs, restaurants and village festivals. The wine has long had critics, and for years it was mocked for its distinctive aromas, but its image has shifted toward something lighter and more celebratory. The yearly release gives it a visibility that many other wines do not have.

Most of the wine is still consumed at home. About 70% of production stays in France, while 30% is exported, according to RTL. Japan remains the leading foreign market and takes more than one-third of Beaujolais Nouveau exports on its own. The United States and the United Kingdom follow. That overseas demand gives the wine a profile beyond France that is unusual for a product with such a short seasonal sales window.

Even so, the category is modest when measured against the full French wine industry. Beaujolais Nouveau accounts for about 20% of the Beaujolais appellation’s volume, RTL reported. Production stands at 100,000 hectoliters, a level that has been reduced by drought and by vine removal. France as a whole produces 36.7 million hectoliters of wine, so Beaujolais Nouveau remains a niche segment in national terms.

The broader backdrop is much weaker. Exports to the United States are down 10% for the French wine sector as a whole, according to RTL, which said tariffs are part of the reason. The report also pointed to a deeper shift in drinking habits. Consumers are drinking less wine worldwide, and some are moving to nonalcoholic alternatives. Sales of nonalcoholic drinks rose 13% in 2025, RTL said.

That leaves Beaujolais Nouveau in an unusual position. Its annual release still creates a clear retail and hospitality occasion, and its lower price point appears to be helping it outperform the rest of the wine shelf. For wine merchants and on-trade operators, the category offers a rare example of a product that can still generate traffic through tradition, affordability and a defined calendar moment even as demand softens across much of the market.