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Australian White Wine Shipments to China Surged 143.6% in the Third Quarter

Export value rose 51.9%, leaving the average free-on-board price at about A$2.26 a liter, roughly 38% below a year earlier

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Australian white wine shipments to mainland China surged in the third quarter of 2026, but the gain came with a sharp drop in average export prices, underscoring a split between rising volume and weaker unit value in one of the country’s most important

wine markets.

According to Wine Australia data cited by Vino Joy News on Nov. 13 and highlighted by Wine Makers Show, exports of Australian white wine to mainland China rose 143.6% by volume from a year earlier in the July-through-September period, reaching 5.26 million liters. Their value increased 51.9% to A$11.87 million. That gap means the average free-on-board export price fell to about A$2.26 per liter, down roughly 38% from the same quarter of 2025.

The third-quarter performance for white wine stood out because the broader Australian export picture was weaker. Global Australian wine exports fell 4.7% by volume to 148.25 million liters and 7.3% by value to A$520.57 million in the quarter. Shipments to the United Kingdom dropped 8.7% by volume and 12.6% by value, while exports to the United States fell 4.5% by volume and 12.5% by value.

Mainland China moved in the opposite direction overall, though at a far slower pace than white wine alone. Total Australian wine exports to mainland China increased 14.9% by volume to 17.06 million liters in the third quarter, while value edged up 1.9% to A$166.33 million. Sparkling wine also posted gains from a small base, rising 22.8% in volume to 171,818 liters and 25.4% in value to A$1.95 million. Red wine value, by contrast, slipped 0.5%, leaving whites and sparkling wines to account for the modest growth in China during the quarter.

The pricing data suggests the white wine rebound was driven less by a simple rise in demand for the same products and more by a change in what was shipped. At A$11.87 million spread across 5.26 million liters, the average value of white wine exported to mainland China was far below the average for Australia’s total wine basket sent there in the quarter. Across all wine categories, Australian exports to mainland China averaged about A$9.75 per liter, based on A$166.33 million in value and 17.06 million liters in volume.

That matters for the beverage industry because the divergence between volume and value can point to a shift in sales mix rather than a broad-based improvement in pricing power. If more lower-priced bottled wine or bulk white wine is moving into China, producers, importers and distributors may see larger shipment numbers without a

matching lift in margins. The figures may also signal a repositioning of Australian wine in China, where growth in white wine does not necessarily mean stronger returns for every segment of the category.

Wine Makers Show noted that the decline in the average white wine export price should not be read as proof that a single label was discounted by 38%. Average prices can fall quickly when the composition of shipments changes. South Australia remained the leading supplier to mainland China with A$106.55 million in exports, up 32%. The second-largest category, at A$16.78 million, was wine listed as “No Label Claim,” meaning it carried no regional origin designation. A larger share of commercial or bulk white wine alongside smaller volumes from higher-end producers would be enough to pull down the average value per liter even if premium estates held their prices.

The Chinese market still remains overwhelmingly a red wine market for Australia despite the white wine jump. White wine accounted for only 7.14% of the value of Australian wine exports to mainland China in the third quarter, while red wine represented 91.62%. Globally, white wine has a much larger role in Australia’s export mix, accounting for 27.74% of export value, compared with 70.38% for red wine.

Even so, China remains central to Australia’s higher-value wine trade. In the third quarter, mainland China bought more than twice as much Australian wine by value as the United Kingdom, even though it ranked only fourth by volume behind the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Wines exported at A$10 or more per liter free on board generated A$137.82 million in mainland China, equal to 59% of Australia’s worldwide revenue in that price band.

Market participants cited by Vino Joy News said Chinese buyers have shown more interest in Australian white wines over the past two years, especially premium chardonnays and Hunter Valley semillons. Hong Boyong, head of Shanghai importer Shanghai Pran Wines, told the publication that some consumers who once focused on Burgundy have been looking for alternatives with a different value proposition as prices in parts of Burgundy climbed. The report also said producers such as Leeuwin Estate have stepped up white wine tastings in Shanghai.

Still, the quarterly data does not show whether the recent shipments have already translated into consumer sales. Customs figures track wine leaving Australia, not bottles sold in stores or restaurants. The nine-month numbers point to a more cautious reading. In the first nine months of 2026, the value of Australian wine exports to mainland China was still down 10.4% from a year earlier at A$758.59 million, even as volume rose 8.2% to 79.31 million liters.

That pattern has led some analysts to view the third-quarter improvement as part of a post-tariff adjustment rather than clear evidence of a sustained demand boom. Wine Makers Show said the increase could reflect a gradual digestion of inventories built up after duties were lifted. The rest of Asia also offered a mixed picture rather than a regionwide upswing. In the third quarter, Singapore’s import value fell 16.0% to A$20.62 million, Hong Kong’s dropped 22.5% to A$15.00 million, and Japan’s declined 16.8% to A$10.35 million. Thailand rose 26.3% in value to A$14.67 million despite a 14.1% drop in volume, and Indonesia posted the strongest gain among Australia’s top 10 markets, with value up 59.0% to A$7.66 million and volume up 44.0%.

For Australian wine exporters, the next quarters are likely to show whether the white wine increase in mainland China reflects repeat demand or a temporary inventory cycle. The immediate numbers show a clear jump in shipments, but they also show that the bottles driving the rebound were, on average, sold at much lower export prices than a year earlier.