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Report says anomalies flipped Piedmont wine exports from 2.4% growth to a -0.3% decline

Gambero Rosso said outlying Istat entries also cut Asti’s apparent export surge to 2.3% from 28%

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Questions have emerged over the strength of Piedmont’s wine exports after a report said the official statistics behind the region’s recent celebration of a sales boom contain anomalies that overstate growth.

Gambero Rosso reported that export data from Italy’s national statistics agency, Istat, for January through June 2026 included anomalous values that changed the picture for one of the country’s most important wine regions. The regional government had pointed to a 2.4% rise in export value for Piedmont wine in the first half of the year. But according to the publication’s review, the change would have been -0.3% if the anomalous entries were removed.

The gap is even wider for Asti, one of the provinces central to the region’s wine trade. Gambero Rosso said export growth there had been presented as 28%, but would fall to 2.3% without the outlying data.

The report raises doubts about a narrative of broad-based export acceleration at a time when producers and public officials are closely watching foreign demand. A move from modest growth to a slight decline, and from a sharp jump to a low single-digit increase in Asti, would suggest a much more cautious market environment than the headline figures indicated.

Gambero Rosso said the issue lies not with a small statistical rounding difference but with data points that appear large enough to alter the direction of the trend. The publication did not describe the discrepancy as a minor adjustment. Instead, it presented the anomalies as significant enough to turn an apparent first-half expansion into near stagnation, or even a slight contraction, in value terms for the region as a whole.

That matters beyond a technical dispute over databases. Export figures are used across the drinks business by wineries, bottlers, traders, importers and distributors to gauge demand, set sales targets and make decisions on inventory, pricing and investment. If growth appears stronger than it really is, companies can end up planning around a market signal that does not reflect actual conditions. In a major wine-producing region such as Piedmont, that can affect expectations across the wider beverage sector.

The case also highlights the weight placed on official trade data in regional economic messaging. Public institutions often use export releases to show the strength of local industries, especially in sectors tied to international reputation and rural employment. When those numbers are later questioned, the problem is not only statistical. It can

also affect confidence in the public narrative around the sector’s performance.

Piedmont holds a central place in Italian wine exports, so even limited errors can attract attention from producers in other regions, trade associations and foreign buyers tracking Italy’s position in global markets. For companies comparing regional trends, an apparent 2.4% increase carries a very different meaning from a -0.3% result. The same is true for Asti, where a 28% jump would point to exceptional momentum, while 2.3% would suggest much more normal growth.

The report did not suggest that all of Piedmont’s export data were unreliable. Rather, it said the first-half results were skewed by specific anomalous values. That distinction is important because it points to a possible data quality problem within an otherwise standard reporting system, instead of a broad rejection of official trade statistics.

Even so, the episode is likely to sharpen calls for closer checks before partial-year export figures are used to support claims about market strength. In sectors such as wine, where values can be affected by product mix, shipment timing and reclassification issues, unusual entries can have an outsized effect on short-period results.

For producers facing a complicated international market, the difference is not academic. First-half export numbers are often used to assess whether demand is holding up, whether premium labels are resisting pressure, and whether to push more volume into foreign markets during the second half of the year. If those numbers are inflated, the market may look healthier than it is.

Gambero Rosso’s findings therefore introduce a more restrained reading of Piedmont’s performance in January through June 2026. Instead of a clear export boom, the revised picture described by the publication is one of a market that may have been essentially flat in value, with some local areas still growing but far less dramatically than first reported.