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Gironde’s Only Glass Bottle Plant Will Close After Bordeaux Wine Slump

The shutdown at the Vayres site, once capable of making 400 million bottles a year, will erase 161 jobs despite 60 million euros in recent upgrades

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The only glass bottle plant in France’s Gironde department is set to close permanently after a prolonged slump in the wine market, ending production at a factory that for decades supplied Bordeaux vineyards and supported one of the region’s main industrial employers.

The announcement was made on Wednesday, November 25, and affects 161 workers at the glassworks in Vayres, a town in the heart of the Bordeaux wine region. According to Franceinfo, the plant had already stopped producing bottles eight months earlier, leaving its furnaces idle while uncertainty grew over its future.

The site had been able to produce as many as 400 million bottles a year for Bordeaux wineries. Its closure underscores how France’s wine crisis is now hitting suppliers as well as growers and producers. For the beverage industry, the shutdown is another sign that weaker wine demand can ripple through packaging and manufacturing, potentially leading to more concentration of bottle production among a smaller number of plants.

Employees reacted with anger and disbelief after the decision became final. Workers interviewed by France 2, whose report was published by Franceinfo, said the closure felt especially hard to accept because the plant stood in the middle of one of the world’s best-known wine regions and had recently received heavy investment.

The factory’s American owner had already taken steps to cut activity at the site. In 2025, the company shut one of the plant’s two furnaces and eliminated 80 jobs, citing weak conditions in the wine market, which was the facility’s main outlet. The latest decision goes further, ending operations entirely and shifting production to the group’s other seven factories in France.

Union representatives said the closure wiped out years of recent spending on the site. Yohann Villaneau, secretary of the works council and a CGT union representative at O-I Glass Vayres, told Franceinfo that the plant had received 50 million euros for a new decarbonized furnace in 2022 and another 10 million euros in investment this year. In his account, roughly 60 million euros had been committed over four years, only for the site to be shut down.

Workers linked the plant’s difficulties to broad changes in the French wine business. Some said bottle prices had risen and sales had weakened. They also pointed to vineyard removals in several parts of France, a response to lower demand and oversupply in some wine regions, as another factor reducing orders for glass bottles.

The closure is expected to send a shock through Vayres, a rural town where the factory has been one of the main sources of industrial employment. Residents interviewed in the France 2 report said the loss of jobs would weigh heavily at a time when households are already under pressure from fuel and grocery costs.

For many employees, the labor market outlook looks uncertain. Some workers said finding new jobs would be difficult, especially for those in their mid-50s. Their comments reflected a wider concern that a factory closure in a specialized industrial business leaves few nearby alternatives for people with long careers in the plant.

The case also highlights how the downturn in wine is affecting businesses that are not directly involved in growing grapes or making wine. Bottle makers, label printers, logistics firms and other suppliers depend on a steady flow of orders from wineries. When wine sales soften and vineyard acreage shrinks, those linked industries can also lose volume. In that sense, the Vayres shutdown may signal broader strain across the drinks supply chain, particularly in wine-heavy regions.

At the same time, the factory’s owner is seeking a buyer for the site, according to Franceinfo. Any takeover would offer a chance to preserve at least part of a facility long tied to Bordeaux’s wine economy, though no purchaser had been announced as of Wednesday, November 25.

The plant had long been seen as a symbol of the local wine industry’s industrial base. Its closure leaves Gironde without its only glassworks for bottle production, even as Bordeaux remains one of France’s largest and most recognized wine-producing areas.