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Irish wine imports surge in 2022, recovering from a tough 2021

Ireland's wine import surges by 6.3% in volume and 5.7% in value in 2022, with Chile overtaking France as top supplier

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The Irish wine import market witnessed a significant increase in 2022, with a 6.3% rise in volume to 81.8 million liters and a 5.7% surge in value to $330.3 million, based on data from Irish Customs. This marked a partial recovery from the previous year's downturn following record highs in 2020.

The average price saw a slight drop of 0.6% to $4.03/liter, a turnaround from the notable increase in 2021. Since the start of the 21st century, Irish wine imports have grown at an average annual rate (CAGR) of 3.2% in terms of both value and volume, with the average price remaining relatively stable (from $4.09 to $4.03/liter). In absolute figures, Irish wine purchases have doubled over these 22 years, growing from 40.5 to 81.8 million liters and from $165.8 to $330.3 million.

Packaged wine largely dictated the overall trend of Irish wine imports, accounting for 95.4% of the volume and 91% of the total value in 2022, with 78 million liters (+7.2%) and $300.4 million (+6.5%). Sparkling wine, although losing its position as the second most imported wine, saw its average price jump 9.4% to $9.20/liter, the highest in over a decade.

In 2022, Ireland imported wine from 54 suppliers. In a significant shift, Chile outpaced France in volume to become the top supplier for the first time since 2010. In terms of value, however, France continued to lead with $71.4 million (+4.3%), followed by Chile with $50.9 million (+22.5%). Spain moved down from the third to fifth place, seeing an 18.3% decrease to $30.3 million, while New Zealand marked a record high with a 32.7% rise in value to $33.6 million.

Brexit played a significant role in reshaping Ireland's wine import market. Despite not being a major wine producer, the UK has historically acted as a crucial distributor of New World wines to Ireland. However, following Brexit, Ireland dramatically cut its wine imports from the UK. Concurrently, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States have risen in prominence, suggesting that the majority of these UK-sourced purchases were wines from these three providers.

In the sparkling wine import segment, Italy and France collectively represented 74% of the volume and 82% of the total value in Ireland in 2022. Despite this, Ireland spent almost three times as much on French sparkling wine ($16.9 million) than on Italian ($5.7 million), with French sparkling wine having a considerably higher average price of $15.8/liter.

With respect to packaged wines, Chile maintained its position as the leading volume supplier, with 15.3 million liters (+21.6%), followed by France with 12.7 million liters (+0.8%). France kept its lead in value, with nearly $54.2 million (+1.8%), closely followed by Chile with $50.6 million (+46.7%).

In summary, the Irish wine import market underwent fascinating dynamics in 2022. As the world continues to grapple with economic uncertainties, the evolution of these trends in the coming years will undoubtedly be of interest.