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Global Champagne shipments fell 8.2% in 2023

Champagne exports totaled 299 million bottles, according to new data released by the Comité Champagne

Tuesday, January 23, 2024



In the world of sparkling wines, Champagne has long stood as a symbol of luxury and celebration. However, the recent data released by the Comité Champagne indicates a significant shift in the market dynamics of this prestigious beverage. In 2023, global Champagne shipments witnessed a notable decrease of 8.2% compared to the previous year, settling at 299 million bottles. This change reflects a complex interplay of market

forces and consumer behavior post the Covid-19 pandemic.

The year 2023 marked a return to what the Comité Champagne describes as a 'steady pace' of orders, aligning with pre-Covid levels. This period follows an erratic pattern over the last three years, where the Champagne industry experienced a dramatic downturn during the lockdowns of 2020, followed by a robust rebound in 2021 and 2022. The fluctuation in Champagne shipments during these years mirrors the global economic and social upheavals brought on by the pandemic.

Despite the reduction in shipment volume, the total value of Champagne shipments in 2023 remained impressively above €6 billion. This resilience in value is largely attributed to the sustained demand for high-end cuvées, particularly in export markets. David Chatillon, president of the Union des Maisons de Champagne and co-president of the Comité Champagne, acknowledged the decline in shipments as an expected outcome. However, he emphasized the optimism within the Champagne industry for future prospects, tempered by a cautious awareness of the global geopolitical landscape and economic conditions.

The 2023 Champagne shipment data also reveals intriguing trends in domestic versus export markets. Both France and its export markets experienced comparable rates of decline in volume. However, the impact of inflation on French household budgets has been particularly pronounced. This economic strain has led to a shift in consumer preferences within France, with a noticeable pivot towards alternative sparkling wines, ranging from domestic Crémant styles to Italian Prosecco, as reported by France-based BFMTV.

In France, Champagne shipments still accounted for 127 million bottles in 2023. Yet, the export market continues to grow in its share of overall sales, a trend that has been consistent over the past decade. In 2023, exports represented 57% of total shipment volumes, amounting to 172 million bottles, a significant increase from 45% a decade earlier.

Despite the downturn in total volume, France retains its position as the largest individual market for Champagne. Maxime Toubart, president of the Syndicat Général des Vignerons and co-president of the Comité Champagne, views the 2023 shipment

figures as indicative of a return to market stability. He highlights the unique nature of Champagne as a protected appellation, produced within a strictly defined area and governed by stringent regulations. These factors inherently limit the potential for sustained volume growth in the long term.

The Champagne industry's journey through the past few years showcases its resilience and adaptability in the face of global challenges. While the decline in shipments points to shifting market dynamics, the sustained value and evolving consumer preferences underscore the enduring allure and prestige of Champagne in the world of wines.