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China’s Wine Imports Plunge 21% in 2025 as Market Weakness Deepens

Italian exports hit a decade low while New Zealand and Germany gain ground with surging white wine sales

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In recent weeks, public debate in the wine industry has focused on concerns about higher tariffs announced by the United States and disappointment over the stalled free trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur. However, the challenges facing wine producers extend beyond these issues. China, once seen as a promising market for imported wines, including those from Italy, is now showing clear signs of

difficulty.

According to data from Wine Monitor by Nomisma, total wine imports into China reached €1.3 billion in 2025. This figure represents a sharp 21% drop compared to the previous year. The decline is significant and has forced many in the industry to reconsider expectations that were set before the Covid-19 pandemic. The growth seen in 2024 was largely due to the return of Australian wines to the Chinese market after a three-year absence caused by tariffs exceeding 200% imposed by Beijing. With this temporary boost now gone, underlying weaknesses in the Chinese wine market have become more apparent.

Italian wine exports to China have also suffered. In 2025, exports stopped at €82 million, marking the lowest level in a decade. This result highlights the difficulties Italian producers face in an increasingly competitive environment. Yet Italy is not alone; very few wine-producing countries have managed to increase their sales to China in recent years.

Two exceptions stand out: New Zealand and Germany. Between 2020 and 2025, New Zealand’s wine exports to China grew by 140%, while Germany saw a 34% increase over the same period. Both countries have benefited from a growing Chinese interest in white wines. New Zealand’s Sauvignon Blanc and German Rieslings are leading this trend. In fact, 54% of Germany’s still wine exports to China are protected designation of origin (Dop) wines from Mosel and Rheinhessen regions.

This shift suggests that Chinese consumers’ preferences may be changing. Traditionally, red wines dominated the market, but recent data points to a gradual move toward whites. This development could challenge long-standing assumptions and force producers to rethink their strategies for positioning products in China.

The slowdown in China comes at a time when global trade tensions are already affecting the wine sector. Uncertainty over relations with the United States and the halt of the EU-Mercosur agreement have added pressure on producers worldwide. The difficulties are not limited to one region or country but are widespread across major markets.

Wine companies now face tough decisions about where to focus their efforts and how to adapt to rapidly changing consumer habits. The situation in China serves as a reminder that no single market can be relied upon for growth, especially when global conditions remain uncertain and competition intensifies.