New Zealand wine exports fall 9.9% in February as US shipments halve

Read online: https://nzwineexports.com/reports/2022-02

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Wine exports dropped to $122.1 million in February 2022, pulled down by a sharp 45.6% decline in shipments to the United States, though the UK and Australia posted strong gains.

February shipments retreat from prior-year levels

New Zealand exported $122.1 million worth of wine in February 2022, down 9.9% on the same month a year earlier. Export volume fell 16.7% to 16.7 million litres, with the average price across all formats reaching $7.33 per litre. The February result followed January's $114.8 million, marking consecutive months below the $130 million threshold after a robust second half of 2021.

Rolling annual total surges on anomalous comparison

The 12 months to February 2022 recorded total wine exports of $1,924.2 million, up 601.6% year-over-year. This extraordinary annual comparison reflects the depressed base period during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, when global logistics and hospitality demand were severely disrupted.

Divergent fortunes across key destination markets

February's export performance varied sharply by market. The United Kingdom led all destinations with $32.9 million in shipments, capturing a 26.9% share and growing 19.5% year-over-year. Australia ranked second at $30.4 million (24.9% share), surging 41.6%.

The United States, typically New Zealand's largest or second-largest market, fell to third place at $27.6 million-down 45.6% from February 2021-and accounted for 22.6% of total exports. Canada also declined, dropping 12.3% to $7.9 million.

Among smaller markets, emerging growth patterns appeared in unexpected quarters. Russia recorded $2.1 million in shipments, up 75.2%, while Bulgaria reached $1.0 million, climbing 141.1%. Latvia posted the sharpest percentage gain at 385.0%, though from a modest base to $0.5 million. China grew 44.4% to $3.0 million.

Conversely, France fell 67.1% to $1.7 million, and Hong Kong declined 49.0% to $0.8 million. New Zealand wine reached 45 destination markets during the month.

Bulk exports prove more resilient than bottled

The packaging split in February revealed contrasting trajectories. Bottled wine in containers of two litres or less-including sparkling-accounted for $89.4 million, down 12.2% year-over-year. Bulk shipments in containers exceeding 10 litres totalled $32.4 million, slipping just 2.6% and representing 26.5% of total export value.

The price differential between formats remained substantial: bottled wine averaged $9.52 per litre compared with $4.51 per litre for bulk. This $5.01 gap underscores the distinction between premium consumer-ready products and commodity wine destined for blending, bottling or private-label programmes in importing countries. Bulk's relative resilience suggests sustained demand for New Zealand wine as a blending component or contract bottling input.

Provisional data subject to revision

New Zealand wine export figures are drawn from Statistics New Zealand customs data. Readers should note that statistics for the most recent month are initially provisional and subject to revision as late declarations are processed and classifications finalised.