New Zealand wine exports surge 56% in February on booming US demand

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February 2023 · Generated 6 July 2026 · Source: Stats NZ overseas merchandise trade (HS 2204)

Wine exports jumped to $190.3 million in February 2023, powered by a 148% spike in shipments to the United States and strong growth across most major markets.

Robust February performance

New Zealand exported $190.3 million worth of wine in February 2023, up 55.8% on the same month last year. Export volume reached 25.6 million litres, an increase of 53.5% year-over-year, with the average price per litre rising to $7.44.

The February result continues a strong run for the sector. Rolling 12-month exports to the end of February totalled $2,343.0 million, up 21.8% on the previous 12-month period.

Recovery from January lull

February's performance represents a significant rebound from January's $146.6 million, which traditionally marks a slower period in the export calendar. The latest result sits comfortably above February 2022's $122.1 million, though remains below the peak months seen later in 2022, when exports exceeded $250 million in four consecutive months from September through December.

United States drives growth

The United States dominated February's export performance, accounting for $68.6 million or 36.1% of total wine exports. The market's 148.4% year-on-year surge underscores its importance to New Zealand wine exporters.

Traditional strongholds the United Kingdom and Australia also posted solid gains. The UK imported $40.6 million worth of New Zealand wine (21.3% share, up 23.5%), whilst Australia took $38.5 million (20.2% share, up 26.4%). Together, these three markets commanded more than three-quarters of February's exports.

Canada recorded steady growth of 31.4% to $10.4 million, maintaining its position as the fourth-largest market.

European and Asian markets accelerate

Several European markets delivered exceptional growth rates. France surged 207.8% to $5.3 million, Germany climbed 153.8% to $6.7 million, and Belgium jumped 560.3% to $0.7 million. The Netherlands rose 96.8% to $2.4 million.

Asian markets showed mixed results. Japan posted remarkable growth of 324.3% to reach $1.3 million, whilst South Korea grew 211.2% to $2.9 million. However, China declined 12.9% to $2.7 million, continuing its retreat as a destination for New Zealand wine.

Ireland stood out as the notable weak spot, falling 46.3% to $1.0 million.

New Zealand wine reached 55 destination markets during February.

Bulk wine gains ground

Bulk wine in containers exceeding 10 litres accounted for $54.6 million of February exports, representing 28.7% of total value. Bulk shipments grew 68.8% year-on-year, outpacing the 49.1% growth in bottled wine, which totalled $133.2 million.

The packaging split reveals a significant price differential. Bottled wine (in containers of two litres or less, including sparkling) averaged $9.32 per litre, whilst bulk wine averaged $5.07 per litre. This $4.25 gap reflects bulk wine's role as an input for overseas bottling operations rather than a finished retail product, with the format typically used for value-tier wines or as blending stock in destination markets.

Data note

These figures are drawn from Statistics New Zealand's overseas merchandise trade data for the HS 2204 commodity category. Monthly figures for recent periods are provisional and subject to revision as late declarations are processed.