New Zealand wine exports surge 30% in March to $198m, powered by European growth and bulk shipments

Read online: https://nzwineexports.com/reports/2023-03

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Wine exports climbed sharply in March 2023, driven by extraordinary triple-digit gains in European markets and the fastest bulk wine growth in more than a year.

Strong month extends rolling-year boom

New Zealand exported $198.1m of wine in March 2023, up 30.1% on the same month last year, with volume rising 24.4% to 25.1m litres. The average price across all formats reached $7.89 per litre.

The result pushed the rolling 12-month total to $2,388.9m, itself 24.4% higher than the previous year, underscoring sustained momentum in offshore demand for New Zealand wine.

March matches seasonal pattern

March's $198.1m tally sits comfortably above the $152.2m recorded in March 2022, though remains below the peaks seen during the main shipping season between August and December, when monthly values exceeded $250m. The result follows February's $190.3m and represents a steady start to the second quarter of the calendar year.

United States holds steady as European markets surge

The United States remained the dominant destination, accounting for 40.6% of March exports with $80.4m in shipments, up 27.3% year-on-year. The United Kingdom ranked second at $41.3m (20.8% share, +12.9%), while Australia took third place with $29.2m (14.8% share, +41.4%).

Canada, the fourth-largest market, contracted sharply, falling 28.6% to $10.2m and highlighting the uneven performance across major destinations.

The standout story was Europe. Germany surged 419.7% to $6.3m, the Netherlands climbed 274.9% to $4.4m, Belgium rose 254.0% to $1.7m, and France jumped 243.0% to $3.9m. Ireland also posted exceptional growth, up 125.1% to $3.1m.

Asia-Pacific markets showed mixed results. China lifted 94.4% to $3.3m, Hong Kong rose 143.7% to $1.4m, and South Korea gained 44.3% to $2.7m, while Singapore advanced more modestly at 9.3% to $1.9m.

New Zealand shipped wine to 54 destination markets during the month.

Bulk wine outpaces bottled as price gap widens

Bulk wine-shipped in containers larger than 10 litres-grew 39.6% by value to $48.7m, outstripping the 24.7% growth in bottled wine, which reached $146.0m. Bulk accounted for 24.6% of total export value in March.

The packaging mix reveals a pronounced price differential. Bottled wine averaged $9.83 per litre, nearly double the $5.04 per litre achieved by bulk shipments. The gap reflects bulk wine's role as an input for offshore bottling and blending operations, particularly in price-sensitive markets, while bottled wine carries New Zealand provenance and branding through to the consumer.

The faster growth in bulk shipments suggests offshore partners are securing greater volumes of New Zealand wine for their own packaging and distribution chains.

Provisional data subject to revision

These figures are drawn from Statistics New Zealand's overseas trade data for March 2023. Monthly trade statistics are initially provisional and subject to revision in subsequent releases as late declarations are processed and classifications finalised.