New Zealand wine exports surge 36.6% in May as bulk shipments triple

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Wine exports reached $171.5 million in May 2024, driven by a dramatic 217% increase in bulk wine shipments and strong growth across key markets including the United States, Australia and Canada.

Headline figures

New Zealand exported $171.5 million of wine in May 2024, up 36.6% on the same month last year. Shipment volumes rose even faster, climbing 44.3% to 20.8 million litres. The average export price stood at $8.23 per litre. Wine reached 55 destination markets during the month.

Year-over-year momentum masks longer-term decline

The strong May result marks a substantial rebound from May 2023's $125.5 million. However, the rolling 12-month picture remains subdued: total wine exports for the year ending May 2024 were $2.11 billion, down 12.7% on the previous 12-month period. May's performance follows April's $153.3 million and sits well below the peaks recorded in late 2023, when monthly exports exceeded $200 million in September, October and December.

United States leads growth across major markets

The United States remained New Zealand's largest wine market by a considerable margin, importing $61.2 million worth in May-a 35.7% share of total exports and a 61.7% increase year-over-year. Australia surged 100.7% to $22.4 million, claiming third place behind the United Kingdom.

The UK, New Zealand's second-largest market, took $38.9 million in May, representing 22.7% of exports but declining 8.7% from the previous year-one of the few major markets to contract.

Canada recorded the second-strongest growth rate among significant destinations, more than doubling to $16.8 million (up 109.8%). Ireland likewise doubled its imports to $5.3 million, up 102.5%.

The most dramatic percentage gain came from France, where exports jumped 793.5% to $6.3 million, giving it a 3.7% market share. Other notable risers included the United Arab Emirates (up 152.0% to $1.1 million), Singapore (up 88.1% to $1.5 million) and Japan (up 66.1% to $1.9 million).

Asian markets showed more modest gains: China imported $2.6 million (up just 3.6%) and South Korea $2.0 million (also up 3.6%).

Bulk wine drives volume growth

The packaging breakdown reveals the primary driver behind May's surge. Bulk wine exports-shipped in containers larger than 10 litres-totalled $45.2 million, representing 26.4% of total export value and an extraordinary 217.0% increase year-over-year.

Bottled wine (in containers of two litres or less, including sparkling) accounted for $126.1 million, growing a more moderate 13.4%.

The price differential between formats was stark: bottled wine averaged $10.72 per litre compared with bulk wine at $4.99 per litre. This $5.73 gap reflects the different market positions of the two formats-bulk wine is typically shipped for bottling offshore, while bottled product captures more of the value chain and generally represents premium positioning in destination markets.

Provisional data

These figures are drawn from Statistics New Zealand's overseas trade data for May 2024. As with all recent monthly trade statistics, the most recent month's figures are provisional and subject to revision as late declarations are processed and classifications finalised.