New Zealand wine exports rise 5.8% in May as Canada surges and volume shipments jump

Read online: https://nzwineexports.com/reports/2026-05

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Wine exports climbed to $167.7 million in May 2026, lifted by an 18.6% jump in volume and strong double-digit gains in key Commonwealth markets, though the United States continued to slide.

Headline figures

New Zealand exported $167.7 million of wine (HS 2204) in May 2026, up 5.8% on the same month last year. Volume shipments rose 18.6% to 22.7 million litres, while the average unit price fell to $7.40 per litre. The rolling 12-month total to May reached $2.10 billion, edging up 0.3% year-on-year in a sign of modest but sustained growth across the sector.

Volume leads value growth

The sharp disparity between volume and value growth points to a shift in the export mix. While exporters shipped nearly a fifth more wine than in May 2025, the value increase was substantially more modest, reflecting pressure on per-litre returns. May's result lifted total exports above the $150.5 million recorded in April, though the month remained well below the peaks seen in August and October 2025, when shipments exceeded $215 million.

United States slips as Canada and Australia power ahead

The destination market picture showed widening divergence among New Zealand's major buyers. The United States remained the largest market at $54.6 million, accounting for 32.6% of total exports, but shipments fell 4.7% year-on-year-continuing a troubling trend in the country's most valuable market.

By contrast, growth accelerated elsewhere. The United Kingdom rose 13.7% to $39.5 million, claiming a 23.6% share. Australia jumped 24.9% to $20.4 million. Most striking was Canada, where exports surged 84.7% to $19.2 million, securing an 11.4% share and cementing its position as the fourth-largest destination.

Among smaller markets, Taiwan led percentage gainers with a 1,946.0% leap to $0.7 million, while Bulgaria rose 139.9% to $0.8 million. The Netherlands climbed 50.1% to $2.7 million and Hong Kong gained 31.8% to $1.6 million.

Losses were concentrated in Europe and Asia. France plunged 56.7% to $2.3 million, Germany dropped 33.9% to $2.6 million, and China fell 25.9% to $4.9 million. Ireland declined 22.9% to $3.5 million. New Zealand wine reached 56 destination markets during the month.

Bulk exports outpace bottled wine

The packaging breakdown underscored the volume story. Bulk wine exports-shipped in containers larger than 10 litres-rose 13.4% in value to $27.9 million, representing 16.7% of total export value. Bottled wine (in containers of two litres or less, including sparkling) grew a more modest 4.2% to $139.5 million.

The price gap between formats remained stark: bottled wine averaged $10.41 per litre compared with $3.04 per litre for bulk. The faster growth in bulk shipments suggests increased demand for New Zealand wine destined for offshore bottling or blending, a lower-margin but volume-driven segment of the trade.

Provisional data

These figures are drawn from Stats NZ merchandise trade data for May 2026. Statistics for the most recent month are initially provisional and subject to revision as late declarations are processed and classifications finalised.