

## Australian Wine Exports to Canada Surge as Premium Demand Accelerates

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Australian wine producers are seeing renewed momentum in Canada, with new export and sales data along with feedback from importers pointing to a surge in demand for premium, regionally distinctive wines.

In the 12 months to March 2026, Australian wine exports to Canada rose 24 per cent in value to \$188 million and 15 per cent in volume to 69 million litres and lifting the number of Australian exporters active in the market to 220 businesses.

While 2025 restrictions on US wine imports reduced the availability of American products across Canadian liquor boards, producers say the strong performance of Australian wine over this period reflects groundwork laid over several years. Sustained engagement with buyers, retailers and sommeliers has strengthened understanding of Australia's quality, diversity and regional strengths, positioning Australian wine to expand as shelf space becomes available.

New sales data from EzFocus shows Australian wine increasing in both volume and value across Canada's four largest provinces. Gains have been particularly strong in Ontario, where sales volume rose by around 30 per cent year on year and market share grew from 6 to 9 per cent.

All price segments are experiencing growth - including mid-priced wines (\$8-\$14.99), which is traditionally a strong segment for Australia, as well as a visible lift in premium bottled wines over \$15. Cabernet Sauvignon has emerged as the standout performer, particularly in Ontario, where volumes rose by more than 70 per cent, followed by Shiraz and Chardonnay. Across provinces, producers are also reporting rising demand for lighter, fresher styles, sparkling wines and regionally distinct offerings.

Matt Fowles of Fowles Wine said the category's momentum reflected renewed consumer interest in premium Australian wines with a strong sense of place.

"Our focus is firmly on fine wine, and it's clear customers value having these wines back on shelves," Fowles said.

"When the regional story and provenance are understood, the category lifts quickly."

Producers and importers point to ongoing trade engagement as a critical factor in converting opportunity into listings and long-term growth. Over the past two years, buyers from major provincial liquor boards, including Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia, have visited Australian regions through inbound programs, while ongoing in-market activity, including tastings,

masterclasses and trade education, has strengthened understanding of modern Australian wine.

Collectively, these visits have contributed to 177 new liquor board listings, expanded training for retail and on-premise staff and strengthened advocacy among sommeliers.

Vancouver-based importer Peter Marshall of Sur Lie said firsthand experience has played a critical role in shifting buyer confidence.

“Buyers who have travelled to Australia approach the category with far greater confidence,” Marshall said.

“That firsthand experience reshapes their perceptions and opens the door to more distinctive and adventurous Australian wines.”

Libby Nutt, General Manager Marketing and Export Sales at Casella Family Brands, said engagement with buyers had strengthened relationships and delivered consistent commercial outcomes.

“Our relationships with the liquor boards have always been strong, but they’ve deepened significantly as more buyers travel to Australia,” Nutt said.

“These visits have driven real alignment, and we’ve secured new listings every time we reconnect. Each engagement is opening new doors and strengthening our presence in the market.”