If Cava changed its name, would it taste better?

scritto da Stefano Montibeller | 2 Novembre 2026



Some experts suggest that Spain's best sparkling wines should abandon the name Cava to escape a reputation weakened by volumes. The article questions whether a new name alone can raise prices, since distribution, positioning and collective value remain unchanged, and shows how marginal Cava is in Italy. A new name works only as the result of a project.

Faced with a weakened reputation, changing the name is a formidable temptation: it costs less than changing the market. **But if tomorrow Spain's best sparkling wines stopped being called Cava, would consumers really be willing to pay more for them?**

Carlos López de la Calle of Artadi argues that the name has been damaged by volumes and that the top end needs a

territorial identity. Sarah Jane Evans MW even proposes a threshold: Cava under 18 months of ageing, another name for the superior wines.

The diagnosis contains a truth. In 2025 the DO marketed 190 million bottles and almost 88% belonged to the basic category, Cava de Guarda. If the name appears mainly on affordable products, more months on the lees are not enough to make it a symbol of prestige. Removing the name Cava from the best labels would mean leaving it to the products that weakened its perception. **Would it be a cure or a surrender?**

In Italy the problem comes even earlier. A survey of the digital catalogues of Carrefour, Vino.com and Callmewine returned at least 18 names between brands and producers. In the three large-scale retail chains checked, only three emerge: Freixenet, Heretat El Padruell and Fantini/Cala Rey. **It is a sample, not the national total, but it points to a fragmented presence.**

The volumes confirm the marginality: in the Datos Económicos 2023 of the DO Cava, the latest report in which the breakdown for our country is available, Italy ranked twenty-fourth with 765 thousand bottles. **In the Global Report 2025, instead, it no longer appears among the denomination's top twenty foreign markets.**

We had already observed in February on Wine Meridian that between 2009 and 2025 Spanish sparkling wines had grown by 22%, against 276% for Italian ones, with an average price of 3.76 dollars per litre. **These are problems of positioning, distribution and collective value: no vocabulary can solve them.**

The provocation concerns Italy too, where the Qualivita Observatory counts 522 PDOs and PGIs of wine. **How many struggling denominations could blame their own name?** And how many, after changing it, would discover that consumers

continue to ignore them?

Corpinnat or a new territorial identity can work if they make stricter rules, origin and quality visible: the name thus becomes the consequence of a project. **If instead it serves to escape low prices and a weak reputation, it is only a new label on the same problem.**

Key points

1. **A new name** cannot fix reputation, distribution or prices on its own.
2. **Cava de Guarda** made up almost 88% of the 190 million bottles marketed in 2025.
3. **Italy is marginal**: 765 thousand bottles in 2023, absent from the top twenty foreign markets in 2025.
4. **Corpinnat or similar identities** can work only when they make stricter rules and quality visible.