

# Ningbo Manufacturers Build Global Bridges Through Trade and Engraved Seals

By Jin Yuhan

From South America to West Africa, Ningbo manufacturers are expanding their global reach—not only trading goods but also promoting cultural exchange and dialogue with international partners. Beyond showcasing products at trade fairs, they are displaying graphic seals that highlight Ningbo's culture, strengthening cross-cultural connections.

## Ningbo Exporters Cross the Pacific for Trade Expo in Chile

Ningbo businesses showcased their products on the other side of the Pacific at the 3rd Chile-China Investment and Trade Fair & Chile Houseware Expo 2025, which opened September 8 in Santiago. Nearly 40 Ningbo companies put up their booths across a 1,000-square-meter space, displaying cleaning supplies, household goods, auto parts, and handicraft items.

Undeterred by the distance, Ningbo's exporters remain committed to the principle: "If there's an exhibition, we'll be there."

This year's event, co-hosted by the Ningbo Municipal Bureau of Commerce and the Chile-China Industrial Economic Development Association, is a cornerstone of Ningbo's strategy to independently organize overseas trade fairs. The occasion also marks the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Chile. According to a bureau representative, the goal is to strengthen the global presence of Ningbo's manufacturers while helping Chinese companies forge meaningful connections with the South American market, boosting business cooperation between the two countries.

The expo also featured a cultural display area highlighting Ningbo culture



Graphic seals highlight Ningbo's culture. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

alongside Chilean traditions, along with a photo exhibition of Ningbo's landmarks that had previously toured abroad. Many participants engaged with the displays and took photos.

Organizers reported a 30% increase in registered professional visitors compared with the previous edition. Attendees also came from Argentina, Peru, Uruguay, and other countries, reflecting growing regional interest.

Ningbo Tianyuan Import & Export Co., Ltd., specializing in cleaning tools and plastic household products with an annual export value of around \$35 million, participated to expand their distribution network in South America. "Good quality is the best draw for clients. But we also offered panda plush toys and silk scarves to visitors as a way to build goodwill and promote Chinese culture along the Belt and Road," said a company representative.

Several Ningbo companies have participated for three consecutive years. Some were able to secure key client connections on the first day. All share the common goal of broadening the global footprint of Ningbo's manufacturing.

## "Imprints of Two Cities" Brings Ningbo and Benin Closer

At the 15th Benin (West Africa) China Commodity Exhibition on September 10, a cultural display titled "Imprints of Two Cities" drew wide attention by blending the heritage of Ningbo and Benin.

Engraved seals featuring Ningbo landmarks—Tianyige, China's oldest existing private library, and the bustling Ningbo Zhoushan Port—were paired with designs of Benin's Royal Palaces of Abomey, palm trees, and ship fleets. Visitors eagerly pressed the seals into vermilion

ink, stamping scrolls and bookmarks that they later took home as keepsakes.

The activity added a cultural dimension to the trade-focused fair. "These seals gave me a more vivid picture of Ningbo Zhoushan Port. I hope to visit Tianyige and the port in person one day," said a Beninese merchant.

The initiative was organized by the Benin-China Economic and Trade Development Center, a collaborative project between China and Benin's governments run by Zhejiang Teams International Economic and Technical Cooperation Co., Ltd. Over the past 17 years, the center has facilitated partnerships between more than 2,500 Chinese and African enterprises, generating trade worth over \$200 million.

"Trade connects economies; culture connects hearts," said Chen Weiwei, the center's Domestic Affairs Director. "Through activities like 'Im-

prints of Two Cities,' we want African friends to understand both Ningbo's advanced manufacturing and vibrant culture. This would hopefully foster more people-to-people connections for enhanced business cooperation."

With Africa's population surpassing 1.5 billion and strong demand for infrastructure, daily necessities, and energy, opportunities for Ningbo-manufactured products are expanding rapidly. Benin, as major commercial and trade hub in West Africa, is emerging as a strategic gateway for Chinese companies looking to tap into a regional market of 358 million people.

The stamped scrolls and bookmarks may be small tokens, but they capture the spirit of a partnership that is steadily deepening—where trade builds bridges, culture cements bonds, and Ningbo's ties with Benin open new possibilities across continents.



# Ningbo Port's auto exports top 250b yuan

By Jin Lu

Automobile exports at Ningbo Port hit 257.2 billion yuan (\$36.15 billion) from January to August, surging 61.1 percent year-on-year, according to Ningbo Customs.

Countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative drove much of this growth, accounting for nearly 90 percent of total exports.

The Middle East stood out, with exports soaring to 112.1 billion yuan, a 191.5 percent increase. The United

Arab Emirates led the Middle East region with 77.1 billion yuan, up 204.5 percent. Brazil and the Europe Union followed as Ningbo's second and third largest auto export destinations.

New energy vehicles (NEVs) were the primary growth engine. In the first eight months, NEV exports hit 151,000 units, up 280.9 percent, making up 60 percent of total auto exports. August alone saw 2.38 billion yuan in NEV exports, up 272.5 percent, representing the fourth straight month above 2 billion

yuan.

"Exports in August reached 7,500 units, up 22 percent year-on-year," said Chen Xue, deputy general manager of Ningbo Sovel Supply Chain Management Co., Ltd. Chen expects continued growth, citing rising global demand and improved logistics.

Customs and port upgrades have played a key role. "We've optimized the entire export chain," said He Jian at Meishan Customs, noting smarter checkpoints and faster vehicle transfers have boosted efficiency across the board.



Automobile exports at Ningbo Port hit 257.2 billion yuan. [Photo by Zhang Peng]

## From Barren Hills to Thriving Vineyards: Fenghua's Grape Revolution

By Zhao Yu

As the wine grape harvest season approaches, Jia Weizhong, head of Shuangyangu Ecological Farm in Fenghua, Ningbo, is busier than ever. From inspecting grape growth and recruiting seasonal pickers to overseeing wine-making equipment and connecting with enthusiasts, the agricultural entrepreneur has little time to rest.

After years working outside the region, Jia returned to his hometown in 2015 to launch a new venture with his wife Chen Xiaoping, contracting barren hills in Qiaopeng Village to trial wine grape cultivation. A decade later, their efforts have transformed 79 hectares of once-neglected land into thriving vineyards. The farm is now designated as a municipal-level Grape Efficient Ecological Planting Standardized Demonstration Zone.

"Previously, these hills were overgrown with weeds and shrubs. Over the past ten years, we have reclaimed the land and expanded the vineyard to about 79 hectares," said Chen. Despite the poor soil, the mountains' ample sunlight makes them ideal for grape cultivation.

Since 2015, Jia and Chen have sought advice from experts at the Guangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences and other institutions, accumulating substantial expertise in vineyard management. "After harvesting, branches must not be pruned immediately; waiting for the sap to return ensures next year's grapes are nutrient-rich. During the rainy season, careful attention is needed to prevent fungal infections," Jia explained.

Turning grapes into quality wine required further investment. Since 2016, the couple has invested over 5 million yuan in modern wine production equipment, gradually establishing a presence in the region's wine market. Shuangyangu now produces four varieties: dry red, dry white, brandy, and semi-sweet, supported by a well-equipped wine-making workshop and a 400-square-meter cellar.

The farm has brought economic benefits to the local community. More than 30 villagers work at the farm, and last year residents of Qiaopeng Village earned nearly 500,000 yuan in land rents and farm wages. "After the farm was established, Mr. Jia provided jobs for everyone, and villagers received stable incomes from land rents," said Chen Shijie, a local villager who earned over 20,000 yuan part-time last year.

Looking ahead, Jia hopes to bring Ningbo's high-quality wine to international markets. Next year, Shuangyangu Ecological Farm plans to expand exports to Southeast Asia and Africa, aiming to grow both the brand and prosperity for local villagers.

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