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THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com  
August, 2000 Issue #1  
http://www.grapestompers.com Brant Burgess, Editor

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By subscription only! Welcome to the premiere issue of "THE STOMPER".  
A newsletter of winemaking hints and wine-related articles. You are receiving this newsletter because you requested a subscription and/or have an interest in home winemaking. Unsubscribe instructions are at the end of this newsletter.

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\*^\* Hot Tips are sprinkled throughout the newsletter

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FEATURE ARTICLE: The STOMPER Is Launched!  
By Brant Burgess, Webmaster

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Since you're reading this, you already know our big headline for the month... grapestompers.com now has a monthly newsletter!

Each month we will bring you articles of interest about the art of home winemaking, as well as some tips and tricks that will help you make great tasting wine with a minimal amount of effort - even for beginners!

Many of you have signed up to receive this newsletter months ago, but we wanted to make sure all the kinks were worked out of the system before we went live. We appreciate your patience and trust you will find this publication a useful tool in helping make the best wine possible.

To all of you who have supported our efforts to publish this e-zine, we thank you. Now on to the good stuff!

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THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL

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grapestompers' specials for the month of August 2000 are:

SAVE 10% on selected 45-day wine kits from Cellar Classic

AND

Save over 17% on the Fermtech AutoSiphon

Item #	Description	Regular Price	SPECIAL Price
2224	FermTech AutoSiphon	\$13.90	\$11.58
3231	CC Chardonnay	68.25	61.43
3237	CC White Zinfandel	58.25	52.43
3128	CC Cabernet/Merlot	81.70	73.53

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TOM'S CELLAR: 10 Most Common Questions At grapestompers  
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

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This month, I'd like to share with you five of the 10 most popular questions we get from our customers. We'll cover the last five FAQ's next month.

1. What is the difference between an imperial gallon (mentioned on the instruction sheet provided by the manufacturer) and the US gallon?

FIVE imperial gallons equals SIX US gallons - which is about 23 liters. Therefore, when the manufacturer's instructions mention their 'five-gallon kit', they are talking about six of our gallons. Six gallons of wine will fill approximately 30 bottles.

2. How much will my shipping cost?

grapestompers.com uses two primary means of shipment - UPS and US Postal Service. Before shipping, we shop both vendors to see which will save you the most money. Generally speaking, it is more economical to ship smaller packages (those weighing 3 pounds or less) via US mail. We will send an e-mail letting you know your total cost (including shipping) when we receive your order.

HINT: It is extremely difficult to ship bottles without breakage occurring, so we recommend saving your old wine bottles and recycling them.

3. What are the correct temperatures for fermentation and storage?

A good rule of thumb for primary fermentation (in the fermenting bucket) is 70 degrees Fahrenheit, while a temperature of 60 is good for the clarification and bulk aging process. After bottling, you should keep your bottles in a cool (55 degrees) environment.

The hotter the fermentation temp, the faster your yeast works out... so keep it in the temperature ranges mentioned above. Be sure to see Harry Bradley's comments about fermentation temperatures, in our Guest Column below.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

When buying corks for standard size (750 ml) bottles, be sure to select corks that are 1.75" long. Not only will they last longer, but you'll lessen the risk of 'corkscrew pop-thru' (and the resulting nasty floating cork trash) when opening your wine!

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

4. How do you use this siphon thingy?

AH! You must be speaking of the racking cane - some folks call it the siphoning tube - that comes with the True Brew Gold basic winemaking equipment set (Item #1001).

To begin, let's practice with a carboy full of water - we certainly don't want to waste wine while learning!

Place the siphoning tube in the carboy, with the curved

end sticking out of the top. Place another vessel (like a fermentation bucket) below the carboy to catch the 'wine'. Now, pick up a piece of vinyl tubing and hold both ends in one hand (the tubing will look like the letter U). Fill the tubing full of water - no air bubbles allowed! Place one end of the tubing onto the curved end of the siphoning tube, and immediately turn the other end downward into the bucket... and the 'wine' will really start flowing!

When you do the siphoning with real wine, you'll want to have a secondary vessel available to catch the water that precedes the wine as it travels out the distal end of the tube. Once the water has washed out, shift the end of the tubing to the main vessel (bucket, etc.) so the wine will land in there. Do it quickly, or you'll waste a lot of wine and spill it on the floor.

Some folks we know still begin a siphon the old-fashioned way - by sucking on the tubing to start the flow of wine. While you don't have the extra water to deal with, we don't exactly recommend doing this for sanitary reasons. But hey, you DO get a nice taste!

There is an easier way to start a siphon without the danger of spillage - see the following article about the FermTech AutoSiphon.

NOTE: Be sure to sanitize all your equipment before allowing it to come in contact with your wine.

#### 5. What should I do if my wine has a tart taste?

For an immediate cure, slowly add small amounts of wine conditioner (Item #2739) until the wine swings to your taste. Otherwise, we recommend patience... you'll be amazed how much time (6-24 months) helps!

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#### PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT: FermTech AutoSiphon

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Our customers have told us that starting a siphon with a racking cane, tubing, and puckered lips is one of the most difficult things for a beginner to do properly because it requires a lot of dexterity and timing. Even with practice, it's hard to start a siphon without wasting a bit of precious homemade wine.

With the FermTech Auto Siphon, siphoning has become a snap and nary a drop of wine is splashed during racking. Just attach some tubing, insert one end of the FermTech AutoSiphon into the carboy, and give the pump handle a couple of strokes on the other end. Within seconds, a siphon is started and wine begins moving to the other vessel.

Even experienced winemakers prefer this siphoning method because it's quicker and more sanitary than the old-fashioned way!

Item # 2224  
1/2 inch OD (outside diameter)  
Regular Price: \$13.90  
This Month: \$11.58

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#### FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

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As you might imagine, our office receives quite a bit of correspondence - mostly through e-mail - but we chat with dozens of folks like you every day on the phone, too.

The vast majority of comments we receive is positive; your comments about our web site, low prices, and customer service tell us we're doing a lot of things right... and frankly, we're glad you appreciate the human touch we offer.

By no means are we perfect, but we try to learn from each small bump in the road. We depend upon you - our valued customers - to provide us with ideas on how we can improve our product line and customer service, because our goal is the same as yours: to make the greatest bottle of wine possible!

So please send us your feedback - good or bad - and who knows, YOUR comments might be in THIS SPACE next month.

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GUEST COLUMN - Take Your Time  
by Harry Bradley, Canada

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Wow! What an honor to be asked to pen a column for the world famous (or soon to be) grapestompers very first newsletter. Just hope that I am up to it!  
Oh well - Tom is a forgiving type - So here goes...

I have been making my own wine for 10 or 12 years and am having a ball. Learned a lot from experimenting with juice and kits and from my days back with the in-laws in the vineyards of Switzerland. Every time I go down to the wine cellar (a garage which will never see a car parked therein again!) I think of the byline made famous by two fine Italian wine making brothers -

"WE WILL SERVE NO WINE BEFORE ITS TIME"

What these fine fellows are saying is this...

Let the grape do its thing - don't rush to bottle your wine. I have used short term kits and long term kits and now I pretty well use long term kits exclusively (juice can get messy and grapes even messier even when stomping by foot) ... Now HERE IS MY SECRET:

I have never bottled a kit batch of wine unless it was a minimum of four months old - four months from start day until bottled.

Doesn't say that in the kit does it?

Let the wine mature - We are not talking about aging, we are talking about maturing. Now here is another part of the secret - When the kit tells you to bottle at 45 days or 28 days, instead of bottling, put 1/2 teaspoon of Potassium-Metabisulphite in the carboy the previous day, rack the wine and put the carboy in a cool dark location and let it do its thing for another 2 1/2 to 3 months. So, for example: Start a batch of wine August 1 and bottle sometime after December 1.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*  
Whenever you purchase a wine kit, be sure to tell us what you want written on your FREE personalized wine labels. Just write the text of your labels in the 'Comments' section of the order form.  
\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Some other useful tips I have discovered:

1. During the primary fermentation period of

- 6 to 10 days keep the temperature at 75-80 F
2. During the secondary fermentation stage, in carboy, keep temperature at 65-70 F
3. Racking your wine is good for it - If the wine is not clearing as fast as you would like, rack it again. You can always use a fining agent and a 10-minute stirring to drive the CO2 away.
4. I haven't soaked corks for the last 2 years, and never had a leak or a bad bottle.

As I once told Tom, "Just keep working with your wine and it will be fine. You just cannot screw it up."

I don't want to be accused of forcing a person to drink, but it's important to keep tasting your wine... It will give you a clue about where the wine is going. When you are happy with the result of your "Labor of Love", then (and only then) bottle it!

You can contact the author at his e-mail address:  
willows\_estate@yahoo.com

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#### How To Be A Guest Columnist For STOMPERS Newsletter

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If you'd like to be our next guest columnist, simply send your article to [articles@grapestompers.com](mailto:articles@grapestompers.com). If your article is selected for use in a future newsletter, you'll receive a coupon good for 10% OFF your next grapestompers order.

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#### CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

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##### Decanting

- A process for separating the sediment from a wine before drinking. Accomplished by slowly and carefully pouring the wine from its bottle into another container.

Look for other wine-related definitions by clicking on the 'Glossary' button from our home page at <http://www.grapestompers.com>

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#### NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

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- Tom continues his Top Ten list of winemaking FAQ's
- grapestompers Announces Its New Winemaking Video
- More Specials
- Another Guest Column - We'd Love YOUR input!
- Customer Testimonials
- New Products

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#### LIST MAINTENANCE

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Beginning next month, past issues of the STOMPER can be found at <http://www.grapestompers.com/newsletter/archives>

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You are welcome to pass along this newsletter to your winemaking friends, as long as it is sent in its entirety.

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