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THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com  
September, 2000 Issue #2  
http://www.grapestompers.com 1-800-233-1505

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Welcome to the latest issue of "THE STOMPER", a newsletter of winemaking hints and other wine-related articles.

You are receiving this newsletter because you requested a subscription and have an interest in home winemaking. Unsubscribe instructions are at the end of this newsletter.

Feel free to pass along this newsletter to your winemaking friends; we only ask that it be sent in its entirety.

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

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FEATURE ARTICLE: Just Released - Guide to Winemaking Video  
By Brant Burgess, Editor

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Ever tried to learn something new from a book? Depending upon the subject matter, chances are it was extremely difficult, unless the directions were full of pictures and you could follow along without having to put the book down. As a webmaster and computer nut, I tend to buy a lot of software user manuals, but often when I set the book aside to try out something, the book closes on itself and I lose my place... and then I forget what I was trying to do. Very frustrating!

It's probably fair to say that most people tend to learn new things more easily when they SEE what's going on - rather than reading about it - and that's the idea behind grapestompers' latest project... a video aimed at showing new home winemaking enthusiasts how easy it is to make great wine from a kit.

We first had a notion that a video might be a good idea when we noticed that customers who made their wine at our retail location (in Laurel Springs, NC) tended to have more initial success than newbies who taught themselves at home. We figured it had to have something to do with SEEING the winemaking process taking place before they dived in with both feet... and we think you'll agree.

While Hollywood obviously isn't ready for Tom, we figured YOU might be... especially if we offered you a way to see the video RISK FREE!

This month, we're offering you the first opportunity to view the winemaking video - if you decide not to keep it, simply return it within 30 days and we will cheerfully

refund the purchase price of \$19.95.

We know of no one else in the home winemaking business who has made their own video, much less offered to share it with a risk-free guarantee upon its initial release.

If you'd like to see a 30-second clip of the video, simply point your browser to:

<http://www.grapestompers.com/download/video/trailer.mpeg>

Due to the high quality of the trailer, we should tell you that the file is 7.3 Mb in size, and is only available in MPEG format. The tape itself is in VHS format for normal television viewing.

After you see the 23-minute tape, we think you'll agree that it's a great visual aid for learning how to make wine from a kit. If you don't agree, feel free to send it back for a full refund!

You can order the video by asking for item # 6100.

Here's to you... and Happy Winemaking!

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3rd ANNUAL WINE COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL ANNOUNCED  
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

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grapestompers is gearing up for the third anniversary of its annual wine festival, to be held at 3:00 PM, Sunday October 1 in Laurel Springs, North Carolina.

Home winemakers are encouraged to enter samples of their wines in a competition that will begin on September 18.

Wines will be judged in four categories:

- White wine from kit
- White wine from scratch
- Red wine from kit
- Red wine from scratch

Wines may be made from anything (not just grapes!), so have fun! Just let us know which category applies to your wine. You may enter as many as four bottles in the competition, but only one bottle per category will be allowed.

The winners of the wine competition will be announced during the wine festival on October 1; ribbons (and bragging rights for the year) will be awarded by top judges in each category.

#### WINE FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

- September 15  
Deadline for entries in wine competition. All bottles must be on site by 5:00 PM Eastern Time.
- September 18  
Wine judging begins
- October 1  
Wine Festival begins at 3:00 PM (wine tasting, music, fellowship, tours and announcement of winners in the winemaking competition)

Bottles entered in wine competition may be reclaimed by their owners following the awards ceremony. You must be present to pick up your bottle(s), since we are unable to ship any bottles not claimed in person.

Admission to the wine festival is free, but be sure to

BYOG (Bring your own wine glass) for sampling!

If you would like more information about this year's festival, please call 800-233-1505 or e-mail Tom Burgess at tom@grapestompers.com

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THIS MONTH'S SPECIAL

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grapestompers' specials for the month of September are:

SAVE over 16% on a great 28-day wine kit from Vino del Vida

AND

Save over 17% on the Fermtech AutoSiphon  
Save 10% on our Bottle Rinsers (featured item)

Item #	Description	Regular Price	SPECIAL Price
2224	FermTech AutoSiphon	\$13.90	\$11.58
2253	Bottle Rinsers (Vinator)	14.71	13.24
3220	VDV Chenin Blanc	34.58	28.95

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

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This month, we'll continue with five more of the 10 most popular questions we get from our customers.

6. My wine is too sweet! What can I do now?

Don't worry... there is a solution, and it's simpler than you think! Just make a similar wine much drier next time, then blend the two together to suit your taste.

Ideas to make your wine drier: limit the amount of sugar, add a little acid blend (item # 2730), or use less pure juice.

7. When ordering online, if I accidentally type in the wrong item number (but enter the correct item description), which item will be sent to me?

We realize it's very easy to make a typo when entering a product number, so we always go by the product description whenever there's any doubt.

8. I am interested in learning how to make wine from scratch. What books or other aids do you recommend?

In my opinion, the best book for the money is the "Winemaker's Recipe Handbook" (item # 2801). It shows you how to make wines from most common fruits, many of which might be growing in your own backyard. At \$2.75 it's a real bargain!

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*  
When buying or picking fresh berries for home winemaking, you can get a lot more juice from them if you freeze them and then thaw them before getting the juice. It may sound crazy but it works!  
\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Also, grapestompers.com has recently produced a video entitled "Guide to Winemaking" starring yours truly, which is a visual guide useful for first-time wine

makers. I may never get an Oscar for acting, but I do show you how easy it is to make great wine from a kit.

You can order the video risk-free for only \$19.95. If you don't agree it's a great resource for learning how to make wine from a kit, simply return it within 30 days for a full refund. Just ask for item # 6100.

9. These kits make 30 bottles. What am I supposed to do with all this wine?

AH! You obviously haven't tasted this wine, or else you'd want it all for yourself! Seriously, wine made from kits keeps a long time (up to three years without adding extra sulfites), so you have plenty of time to drink it.

Besides, once the neighbors find out about your new hobby, you'll always have a house full of people waiting to sample your latest batch!

I'd recommend holding a few bottles back for Christmas or birthday gifts, or special treats for your friends who drop by. Lots of folks we know make wine for their wedding and share it with guests during the reception. Wine makes a great gift for the wedding party, and you can save some to celebrate your anniversaries!

10. Do I really get wine labels for free? What's the catch?

Yes, we provide free wine labels with each wine juice kit sold. There's no real catch, but you do have to tell us what you want on the label!

Note: To print your labels, we'll need to know

- a) Your winery's name
- b) The type of wine
- c) The year of the wine
- d) Any other special text

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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT: Bottle Rinsers

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After you've made wine a couple of times, you'll probably notice that you spend just as much time washing, rinsing, and otherwise prepping bottles as you do actually making the wine... and who among you got into this money-saving palate-pleasing hobby because you liked doing dishes!?

Thankfully, someone has figured out a way to make things move along more smoothly - witness the wonderful bottle rinsers by Vinator...

Use this spring-loaded contraption to effectively squirt sanitizing solution or rinsing water into your upended bottles. Just fill up the small reservoir with either liquid, place the mouth of your bottle over the nozzle, and push the bottle down. This motion shoots the liquid inside the upended bottle... et voila! You're ready to do the fun stuff of actually making wine in no time. This time-saving device will literally pay for itself the first time you use it.

Some experienced winemakers we know actually own TWO bottle rinsers - one to squirt the sanitizer solution, and another to rinse with. Now that's what we call real efficiency!

Item # 2253

Manufacturer: Vinator

Regular Price: \$14.71

This Month: \$13.24

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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 - here are some comments we've recently received:

Hi Tom,  
Today is D-Day. I finally got to taste my wine so please excuse my spelling and maybe slurrriing my words. I can't believe how this wine tastes (Merlot) it is just great, my wife even liked it. You were right about giving it to friends, they get none. I'm waiting for my next batch to get done then I will choose between them, thank you very much. I'll be in touch soon. Thanks again.

-- Ed Csencsi  
Hellertown, PA

Hi Tom and Bonnie,  
I bottled my first batch of wine on Friday - White Zinfandel. You sold me everything I needed to make the job easy. The bottle washer, rinser, B-Brite, corker, etc. really made the job easy. Of course, I couldn't wait to try some, so I opened a bottle that evening. Even without aging the wine tasted good! I already had a bottle of Glen Ellen White Zin open, so my wife and I did a blind tasting. We both liked my wine better! Very lite and crisp. Now onto my Merlot!

Thanks again for all your help.

-- Brian Bantz  
Fanwood, NJ

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GUEST COLUMN - Cork Sense  
by Paul Wagner, California  
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There are a number of critical factors to address in the proper use of corks. The challenge is to condense all of that into two or three paragraphs. Perhaps from the home winemakers' perspective, the single biggest issue is the corker itself.

Unless you have a corker with moveable jaws, to compress the cork evenly before it goes in the bottle, nothing else really matters. Most of the mistakes that home winemakers make in regards to corks (soaking them in SO<sub>2</sub>, for example) are done primarily because their corking machine is ruining the corks.

It is critical to get the moisture content of the corks between about 5 and 7 percent. If they have more moisture than this, they will almost surely begin to mold. If they are drier, they will crumble when you try to put them into the bottle. Some home winemaking shops make the mistake of increasing the paraffin coating, to make the corks easier to use. In fact, this paraffin will make the corks very hard to remove later.

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

When starting your wine in the fermenting bucket (on day one), be sure to elevate it 3-4 feet off the ground before walking away. That way, it will already be in the correct position to promote draining into your carboy, greatly decreasing the risk of disturbing the sediment at the bottom of the bucket.

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

The third element I would stress is to use cork appropriate for the bottle. The seal between the cork and the neck of the bottle is all that matters, and for most home winemakers, this means using a 45 mm cork or so. Only bottles with very long and cylindrical necks will benefit from a longer cork.

-\*- Moderator Note: a 45 mm cork is equivalent -\*-  
-\*- to a one and three-quarters inch cork (1.75") -\*-

If you put a longer cork (48mm or 54mm) into a traditional Burgundy or Bordeaux bottle, you will not only make the removal more difficult -- you will also increase the possibility that there will be seepage at the bottom of the cork. And that seepage, through capillary action, will quickly increase the number of leaking bottles in your cellar!

AUTHOR BIO--For years Paul was the executive director of the Cork Quality Council -- a trade association dedicated to improving the production and use of corks. He has given lectures on corks at the Australian Wine Research Institute, the Northern Portuguese Cork Producers Association, Napa Valley College, and The Society of Wine Educators National Conference, among many others.

You can contact the author at his e-mail address:  
BalzacCom@aol.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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##### Enology

- The science and study of winemaking. Also spelled oenology.

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's Cellar - A Little Chemistry Never Hurts
- Take the grapestompers Survey and Win Prizes
- More Specials
- Another Guest Column - We'd Love YOUR input!
- Customer Testimonials
- New Products

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