
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
June, 2001 Issue #11
http://www.grapestompers.com 1-800-233-1505

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

FEATURE ARTICLE: New Web Host for grapestompers.com
By Brant Burgess, Editor

If you're a frequent visitor to our web site, you may have noticed our site's reliability has been suffering of late. Some of the problems we've encountered are e-mails that fail to reach their destination, orders that don't go through, and generally slow server response time. We're not happy with this situation, and we're sure you're not.

Our goal (at least as far as the web site goes) is to provide you with a pleasurable, error-free surfing experience, and we apologize for the current situation.

Part of the problem can be explained by the growing popularity of the Internet (more surfers means the infrastructure must grow to compensate), but most of the fault lies with our current web host, Interland.

The situation has become so unreliable that we end up calling their help desk at least three times a week to ask them to restart services and double-check the mail server.

Let me offer you an example of Interland's "99.5% uptime": One of their e-mail hubs was down for THREE DAYS... not only did this mean we didn't get your correspondence, but Interland failed to notify us of the situation and only admitted responsibility after we documented our case.

If you've been affected by this situation, first of all, please allow us to apologize for any difficulties you have experienced. Because our Interland cannot (or will not) correct deficiencies with their web hosting facilities we have decided to take the drastic step of changing web hosts.

This month, grapestompers.com has been working to secure a new web hosting contract, and we're happy to announce that a vendor has been selected and the process of moving our files over to the new server has begun.

We estimate the changeover will take another two weeks to complete, because some of our scripts will not work in our new environment and require some re-writing.

We appreciate your patience as we convert from one web host to another, and we sincerely thank you for your patronage and your business.

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

BONNIE'S BIN: Would You Believe This?
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

We apologize for releasing the STOMPER a little late this month, but as you'll see (read Tom's article below), Tom has been a bit under the weather lately. The grapestompers crew has worked hard to compensate, and some duties (like filling your orders and answering your questions) took precedence over our newsletter.

We appreciate your understanding, and hope you'll join us in wishing Tom a speedy recovery.

Look for a more complete STOMPER next month...

Hope all the Dads out there have a wonderful Father's Day. Until next month!

Life is too short... to drink bad wine... so make your own!

You can write to Bonnie at bonnie@grapestompers.com

THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

grapestompers' specials for the month of June 2001 are:

Save over 10% on VDV White Zinfandel

AND

Save over 12% on 3 gallon carboys

AND

Save an additional 10% on our already discounted Basic Winemaking Equipment Kit

AND

Save over \$70 on the purchase of a Complete Winemaking Starter Kit which includes a RED or WHITE Concentrate (see wine kit selection below)

Item #	Description	Regular Price	SPECIAL Price
3229	VDV White Zinfandel	43.95	39.50
2205	3 US Gallon Carboy	13.15	11.50

1001	Basic Winemaking Equip Kit	49.40	44.46
3200	Complete White Starter Kit	246.68	175.00
3100	Complete Red Starter Kit	259.79	185.00

Here's what you get with the COMPLETE Starter Kit:

If choosing the Complete WHITE Kit, your choice of either:
Fume Blanc, Piesporter, or Chenin Blanc VDV concentrate

If choosing the Complete RED Kit, your choice of either:
Valpolicella, Shiraz, or Cabernet/Merlot VDV concentrate

PLUS ALL THESE GOODIES:

Tom's Winemaking Video	Bottle Rinsers
Fermenter Bucket with lid	Three-Piece Airlock
6-Gallon Glass Carboy	Carboy Brush
Bung (stopper)	Bottle Filler
Five feet of vinyl tubing	B-Brite Sanitizer
Portuguese Hand Corker	FermTech AutoSiphon
2 Cases of 750-ml Bottles	Spoon or Paddle (our choice)
Bottle Washer Adapter	Brass Bottle Washer
Bottle Drainer, 45 station	

AND YOU GET THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FREE (\$16.59 value):

- Free Wine Labels (text of your choice)
- Free \$5 coupon towards your next concentrate purchase
- Free Corks (30 corks, enough for one batch)

Just think: This complete kit offers EVERYTHING a brand-new hobbyist would need to begin making his own wine. All you need to decide is which wine kit you want!

And don't forget... you can always return your winemaking video and receive a credit for \$19.95 on your next purchase... that's like getting the video for free! All we ask is that you return it in good condition.

This is the best deal we've ever offered on a complete kit, so don't miss out... order one for yourself or a friend today. Ask for RED Complete Kit # 3100 or WHITE Kit # 3200 and be sure to let us know which wine concentrate you want.

NEW! Now you can "personalize" your Complete Kit - Let's say you don't need or want some of the items that normally come with the Complete Kit... just give us a call at 1-800-233-1505 and let us know which items you don't need, and we will adjust the price of the equipment kit accordingly.

TOM'S CELLAR: Spiders And A Funny Wine Book
by Tom Burgess, Owner

The title says it all... Tom is a bit under the weather at the moment, having suffered a brown recluse spider bite. He was bit on the leg while doing some yard work and had a nasty reaction to the spider's poison.

All told, Tom was in the hospital for eight days, and is now home recuperating. If you'd like to send him a get well card, you can send it to his e-mail address shown below.

Now, onto his story about a funny wine tasting book he recently discovered:

-----HOT TIP-----
I've found it hard to keep the vacuum in
Page 3

the siphon from the carboy to the bottles. When in the final stage, transfer the wine into a clean, sanitized fermenting bucket, the kind with the spigot at the bottom.

Attach a small piece of tubing to the spigot and use the spigot to control the flow. Next place the bottles in a large, sanitized pot & move the tubing around as you fill the bottles.

Any spillage will be caught in the pot which can be either used to fill another bottle or drank at your leisure afterwards.

Thanks to Mike Leib of Mechanicsburg, PA for this tip.

Have a tip you'd like to submit?
Send it to tips@grapestompers.com

-----HOT TIP-----

When you enter into our Bodega (that's Spanish for winery, by the way), you will find some fabulously funny wine tasting illustrations posted along the wall. We got the illustrations from a special book by Ronald Searle. Everyone who sees these images leaves with a smile and I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO ALL WINE LOVERS.

The title of the book is "The Illustrated WINESPEAK - Ronald Searle's Wicked World of Winetasting" (that is what WWW really means - not the World Wide Web!!!!) The ISBN number is 0 285-62592-6 and it was copyrighted in 1983. From what we've pieced together, Ronald Searle is an English chap with a nose for wine and a sense of humor similar to that of the late Benny Hill.

I ran across this book in Oregon while touring YAMHILL COUNTY where there are over 50 wineries in the Pinot Noir Country.

Which reminds me: If you choose to make a Pinot Noir kit, you must give it 18 months to come up to your expectations. I have taste compared my Pinot Noir with a reserve that I brought back from Oregon and I was mighty pleased with my results. In fact, I made some for my granddaughters for their wedding and one of them is only 2! In case you'd like to know, I used the Cellar Classic kit.

You can write to Tom at tom@grapestompers.com

FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

As you might imagine, our office receives quite a bit of correspondence - mostly through e-mail - here are some comments we've recently received:

Tom and Bonnie,
Thanks for your attentiveness to my order. It is quite refreshing to deal with an online business that is concerned with their customer's satisfaction.

I appreciate that, especially since I'm just an individual, and not a big company who is spending thousands of dollars.

-- Toni

Dear grapestompers,

When I bought my wine at the stores, I typically kept the per bottle cost below 20 bucks, and usually around \$12-15. So I wasn't buying cheap stuff, but not real expensive stuff, either. I am meticulous about sterility of everything.....

In a past life I made beer. In my early brewmeister days, I got an infected batch of beer. YUK! I actually find wine easier to make, and more fun...

-- Scott Cook

Tom,
We met you a few weeks ago at the Barn Dance when we were staying with friends at their cabin. You gave us a tour of grapestompers and also kindly gave us a nice bottle of wine.

We wanted to thank you for being so generous! We drank the bottle of wine and loved it! You have a very nice operation and are a great tour guide!

We hope to return soon to the Barn Dance and beautiful North Carolina. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

-- Heather & Brad Peters

[Moderator comment] Tom and his wife Nancy also operate a bed and breakfast and barn dance (bluegrass and old time music) in Laurel Springs. You can check it out at: <http://www.breakfastinn.com/>

WHAT'S OUR MOST POPULAR WINE?
by Bonnie

Several folks ask us which wine is the most popular... in other words, which varieties do we sell the most of?

Hands down, White Zinfandel is our # 1 seller.

We believe the major reasons are:

1. White Zin is a great "first" wine for new wine enthusiasts. It has a smooth taste and doesn't bite the uninitiated palate like some drier wines can.
2. White Zin is enjoying immense popularity because it is liked by folks who are either loyal "red wine fans" or "white wine fans".
3. This particular wine kit can easily be "tweaked" to your individual taste. Several of our customers live in what we call "split" households... that is to say, one partner likes the sweeter wines, while the other partner prefers a drier wine. For these couples, it is typical for them to finish the wine to dryness, bottle 1/2 the carboy (15 bottles worth), then sweeten for the other half for the person who prefers a sweeter wine.

From our perspective, at least, white wines are outselling the red wines, the reverse of 10 years ago.

Here's the rundown of our 10 most popular wines, both whites and reds:

WHITES:

- 1 - VDV White Zinfandel

- 2 - (tie) VDV Johanni sberg Ri esl i ng, VDV Pi esporter
- 3 - (tie) VDV Chen i n Bl anc, CC Whi te Zi nfandel , and
VDV Chardonnay/Semi l l on
- 4 - VDV Sauvi gnon Bl anc
- 5 - VDV Li ebfraumi l ch
- 6 - VDV Verdi cchi o
- 7 - (tie) VDV Chardonnay, CC Johanni sberg Ri esl i ng
- 8 - CC Gewurztrami ner
- 9 - (tie) CC Chardonnay, CC Sauvi gnon Bl anc
- 10- VDV Whi te Burgundy

REDS:

- 1 - VDV Val pol i cell a
- 2 - VDV Merl ot
- 3 - VDV Chi anti
- 4 - (tie) VDV Cabernet/Merl ot, VDV Cabernet/Shi raz
- 5 - VDV Bergamai s
- 6 - VDV Shi raz
- 7 - (tie) VDV Red Burgundy, CC Chi anti , CC Shi raz, and
CC Rosso Grande
- 8 - VDV Red Bordeaux
- 9 - VDV Cabernet Sauvi gnon
- 10- CC Cabernet/Merl ot

KEY:

VDV stands for Vi no del Vi da wi ne ki ts

CC stands for Cell ar Cl assi c

Both wi ne ki ts are made by Spagnol ' s.

 GUEST COLUMN - Pl ease Pardon Our Mi stake
 by Brant Burgi ss, Edi tor

Last month, we wanted to pause and thank those folks who have contributed wi nemaking arti cles for i ncl usi on i n The Stomper thus far, but we mi stakenly i denti fi ed one of ourcontri butors.

For that, we offer our sincerest apol ogi es to Jack Keller, an award-wi nni ng vi ntner who hai ls from Pl easanton, Texas. We i ncorrectly i denti fi ed him as "Jack Webb" i n l ast month' s newslet ter.

Jack Keller has one of the best "how-to" wi nemaking si tes on the web. If you haven' t seen i t yet, we hi ghly recommend a vi si t. Surf on over to:

<http://wi nemaki ng. j ackkel l er. net/>

to see what I' m talki ng about. Hi s si te contains a l ot of great wi nemaki ng i nformati on, from the hi story of wi ne-maki ng to reci pes, hi nts and secrets.

-----HOT TIP-----

Rack your wine one extra time at the end, then wait another day to bottle. Your wine be clearer. Some of the heavier wines will actually do very well with a couple of extra rackings... just watch the splashing so you don' t oxi di ze your wine too much. Racking an extra time or two also lessens the risk of getti ng sedi ment i n your bottle too.

Have a tip you' d l i ke to submi t?
 Send i t to tips@grapestompers.com

-----HOT TIP-----

Incidentally, Jack Webb is a real person... he is one of many vi ntners who parti cipate i n the wi nemaki ng newsgr oup

at rec.crafts.winemaking - and I guess my wires got crossed when it came time to write the article.

This brings up another point:

If you haven't participated in the discussions in that group, we highly recommend you do so. It's a great place to ask questions from fellow winemaking enthusiasts, and newbies as well as experienced vintners participate in lively discussions about the art of winemaking.

Need a recipe? Just ask. Learn a new way to rack wine? Tell someone! The winemaking newsgroup is a great place to hang out.

How To Be A Guest Columnist For STOMPERS Newsletter

If you'd like to be our next guest columnist, simply send your three- or four-paragraph article to articles@grapestompers.com. If your article is selected for use in a future STOMPER newsletter, you'll receive the attention of thousands, a coupon good for a discount on your next grapestompers.com order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Nose

- The characteristic smell of a wine or liqueur; bouquet.

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

NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

- More Winemaking Tips from Tom's Cellar
- Another Surprise from Brant
- More Specials
- The next article from Bonnie's Bin
- Another Guest Column - We'd Love YOUR input!
- More Customer Testimonials
- New Winemaking Products

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