
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
February, 2002 Issue #19
<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: How to Oak Your Wine
By Brant Burgiss, Editor

Greetings from the mountains of North Carolina!

If you've ever wondered how to replicate the great oak tastes of your favorite wines in your own batches of homemade wine, have we got a treat for you! This month, we'll show you the ins and outs of oaking your wines to bring out the best aromas and flavor.

You'll see how easy it is to "oak" your homemade wine - even if you don't have an oak barrel or deep pockets!

Our latest article explains how to use oak chips and oak powder to add complexity to your wine, so be sure to check out the newest page on our web site:

http://www.grapestompers.com/articles/oak_wine.htm

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

NEW PRODUCTS

Here is a list of products recently added to our catalog:

- Item #3157 CC Montepulciano Reg \$89.87 Special \$80.88
- Item #3159 CC Grande Shiraz Reg \$82.41 Special \$74.11
- Item #3163 CC Vieux Chat du Roi \$91.47 Special \$82.22
- Item #3161 Grand Cru Petite Sirah \$44.11

- Item #3269 Cru Select Plat. Mel on De Bourgeron \$66.00
- Item #2105A Stretch Hock bottle, blue, doz 375 ml \$10.78
- Item #2280 Gum stopper, drilled #2 \$0.33
- Item #2239A Straining Bag, 20" x 22" elastic top \$2.47
- Item #2237A Straining Bag, 24" x 36" extra large \$5.18
- Item #2606A Precision Vinometer (4-15%) \$12.43
- Item #2716A Acidometer \$12.43
- Item #2645 Crystalbrite Filter Pads (Vinbrite) \$6.35
- Item #5106 Cork Opener, Quick Silver \$59.99
- Item #2834 Book - Baking with Sourdough \$4.18
- Item #2836 Book - Cooking with Honey \$4.18
- Item #3158 Sherry \$34.21
- Item #2748 Calcium Carbonate, 4 oz. \$1.33
- Item #2723 Potassium Bicarbonate, 5oz. \$2.43

And don't forget to order your FREE personalized wine labels anytime you purchase a grape concentrate kit. Call us at 1-800-233-1505 and ask us about them.

BONNIE'S BIN: Is Winter Really Gone?
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

I feel like a big reminder: VALENTINE'S DAY IS NEAR! Get shopping and planning for those special people in your life. May it be peaceful for all.

It's pretty hard to think of those winter wines when most of us have had such wonderful weather. I have had to put my wines downstairs to chill them so they will clear out better. Not complaining, just chatting along.

Have you noticed some of your plants getting new growth? I am leery as to what will happen to them if we get winter back. Keep the extra sheets and blankets ready as if it were the late spring freeze!

I have been hearing about blending wines to get some interesting flavors. If you are not real fond of one of your wines, open a bottle and blend it with one you really like. JUST ONE BOTTLE AT A TIME HERE! See what it does to each one. You could come up with an all time favorite! Please do let us know the results if you will share it.

Tom came up with some "different" blends in our shop. I will let you know how they turn out! This is supposed to be fun ya know! You see each of your wines almost as a best friend when you get them aged to perfection, but when you start blending it is one step up from that.

We have a new couple helping us at grapestompers.com, Faye and Harry. I think we mentioned that in the January issue. It has really been so fun. It is bringing back the excitement of that "first batch". Fun to watch their expressions and hear the comments. Makes me re-think and review what is important and what is not. You get a certain amount of this with each new customer, but they are only there for a bit. Faye and Harry are often in, so I get extended interest. Bring a friend in to acquaint them with your winemaking process. It does you as much good as it does your friend! There are still so many missing out on a great hobby AND an end product!

Have a wonderful February ya'!!! Be safe!

Bonnie

P. S. There is a wonderful web site that I spend hours in called www.epicurious.com. There is a wine guide, not about homemade wines, but still very informative. Lots of ethnic recipes. I even saw a recipe using sake lees!!!

Check it out if you have a chance.

May wisdom be with our leaders today.
May we all help to raise wise leaders for tomorrow.

'Tis a wonderful day in the mountains. . .

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 February 2002 are:

Save 10% on ALL Cellar Classic Wine Kits

AND

Save over 10% on VINO DEL VIDA Merlot

AND

Save nearly 15% on our Portuguese Hand Corker

AND

Save over 13% on the Fizz-X Mixer

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 | Reg. Price | SPECIAL |
|--------|---------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 3117 | VDV Merlot Wine Kit | 50.38 | 45.22 |
| 2262 | Portuguese Hand Corker | 15.13 | 12.88 |
| 2607 | Fizz-X Mixer | 23.05 | 19.99 |
| 3230 | CC Chablaise (Chablis) | 58.85 | 52.88 |
| 3231 | CC Chardonnay | 75.08 | 67.55 |
| 3232 | CC Chardonnay/Semiillon | 70.58 | 63.44 |
| 3233 | CC Chenin Blanc | 58.58 | 52.66 |
| 3234 | CC Gewurtztraminer | 70.68 | 63.55 |
| 3235 | CC Johannisberg Riesling | 65.91 | 59.22 |
| 3245 | CC Ruisseau Blanc | 65.95 | 59.33 |
| 3236 | CC Sauvignon Blanc | 67.74 | 60.88 |
| 3237 | CC White Zinfandel | 66.00 | 59.33 |
| 3127 | CC Bourgeron (Burgundy) | 75.08 | 67.55 |
| 3128 | CC Cabernet/Merlot | 89.87 | 80.88 |
| 3129 | CC Cabernet Sauvignon | 87.95 | 79.11 |
| 3130 | CC Cabernet Shiraz | 89.74 | 80.66 |
| 3131 | CC Chianti | 75.35 | 67.77 |
| 3133 | CC Merlot | 90.75 | 81.66 |
| 3157 | CC Montepulciano | 89.87 | 80.88 |
| 3134 | CC Pinot Noir | 77.00 | 69.22 |
| 3143 | CC Rosso Grande | 89.87 | 80.88 |
| 3135 | CC Shiraz | 80.58 | 72.44 |
| 3159 | CC Grande Shiraz | 82.41 | 74.11 |
| 3132 | CC Valpolicella | 78.76 | 70.88 |
| 3163 | CC Grande Vieux Chat du Roi | 91.47 | 82.22 |
| 3136 | CC Zinfandel | 90.29 | 81.22 |
| 3200 | Complete White Wine Starter Kit | 246.68 | 175.00 |
| 3100 | Complete Red Wine 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 | Long Handled Spoon |
| 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. Likewise, if you'd like a different wine kit, just let us know and we can adjust the price.

TOM'S CELLAR: To Filter Or Not: Should You?
by Tom Burgess, Owner

As more and more wine filtering instruments arrive on the scene, more and more folks are beginning to ask questions about this subject. My general answer is that filtering takes away from the wine. In fact, are you aware that some filters are so fine that it can take away the color? Yet more and more people are wanting to use the filters.

Why, you may ask?

Well, for starters, most homemade wine (from fruits and berries) are cloudy - and I'll bet there is not a winemaker around who wants a milky-looking product. Naturally, they want their wine to look "polished". Racking wine in order to clear it certainly takes more time, but the process of racking does not take away the color or flavor.

The grape concentrate kits that we stock (all of which are made by RJ Spagnols) are scientifically balanced and need no filtering, so long as you follow their directions.

By following the suggested temperatures properly, 55 degrees can help much in clearing your wine. Some folks use a refrigerator (too low makes it cloudy) to achieve this; some of us just use concrete floors (attached to the earth) that give a very suitable finishing up temperature.

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

When oaking your wine, add oak chips or oak powder to a sanitized nylon straining bag, then place the bag in the wine until the desired results are achieved...

Racking is easier and cleaner that way!

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

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

Bentonite and Kieselsohl, already included in the Spagnols wine kits, do an excellent job in giving the winemaker a "polished" look to the wine. Bentonite (white bag) is best fixed the following way:

PREPARING BENTONITE

- Get out the old blender, and add a cup of HOT water.
- Turn the blender on.
- While it is running (and the water is a 'sloshing), add the bentonite slowly. This prevents "clumping".
- Let the blender run about 1 minute, THEN RUN LIKE EVERYTHING and pour the bentonite/water solution in the fermenter bucket ALL AT ONE TIME.
- Stir the wine VIGOROUSLY for 1 minute.
- Wait 15 minutes and do it again.

I must confess that I just use my Fizz-X mixer on my drill and let her go. You will be like Gomer Pyle, "surprise, surprise, SURPRISE!" You will not believe how fast that mixer works! The Fizz-X is on special this month - it is the arm- and wrist-saving buy you'll always enjoy!

So the bottom line: with our RJ Spagnols kits you keep your money in your pocket where filters are concerned. I expect someone may take me up on this subject and say, "Tom, you're blowing smoke through your ears!" Come on with the rebuttal; meanwhile, I call the next case!

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:

Dear Tom,

Thanks for a [web] site like this. I've been trying to make homemade wine, but needed to get the ingredients, like nutrient, the right yeast, and maybe some other things. But I'm also quite interested in the ART of wine-making. Thanks again for the interesting site.

-- Angela Gibson

Tom,

Thanks for the newsletter. I look forward to receiving it each month. I hope that this will be a GREAT YEAR for you and your family.

I live in Birmingham, AL and have a mini vineyard, (24 Muscadine Vines - 9 varieties). I started making muscadine wine in 1977 and then I got pretty serious in 1981. The toughest part of home winemaking is removing labels off the bottles that you accumulate.

A tip in your newsletter from Robert Klaus of Houston, TX about the use of Oxi Clean is absolutely a home winemakers' dream come true. It really does work, and on all but a few of the bottles, the labels literally come off on their own.

Thanks again for your great newsletter and a SPECIAL THANKS TO ROBERT KLAUS OF HOUSTON!

-- Wayne Champion
Birmingham, AL

Thank you, Tom for usual prompt and friendly judgment and manner. (Sent in response to our message that shipping his order via priority mail would be less expensive)

-- Glenval Harris
Batesville, AR

Hi, received our first order (The Schaeffer-Root Cellar) - we are tickled to death. We will be starting our first batch over this weekend and can't wait for the results. The equipment and everything is every bit the quality we hoped for and everything arrived packed wonderfully.

I especially wanted to tell you how happy we were with the labels you sent.... The Schaeffer-Root Cellar - Beginner's Luck Zinfandel.... the picture of the wine cellar is perfect and we would like that every time we receive any labels, unless we specifically order something special of course. They were great, perfect for what we envision for our cellar in fact. Keep up the great work.

-- Terry and Ellen
Lancaster, PA

Tom,
THANK YOU SO MUCH for the very wonderful labels!! The cat looks just like our Wolfgang!

Everything got here intact and FAST! Your store is most definitely the best internet wine store in the world!

Thanks again!

-- Madeline & Catherine
Wouters, Houston, TX

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT - Montepulciano Wine Kit

This is about one of our new wines we are introducing this month - Montepulciano.

I had an interesting conversation with the Research and Development director at RJ Spagnols who developed this new and unique wine. For those of you who may not have heard, this wine is sort of in the "Chianti Family" in taste, aroma, and body.

One of our customers (Robert Klaus from Houston, TX) heard about our stocking this new wine and he sent along these

"pearls" about the area of Montepulciano:

Set atop a narrow limestone ridge and enclosed by thick stone walls, Montepulciano is one of Tuscany's most coveted destinations. It is also famed for the local production of vino nobile di Montepulciano, which prompts wine aficionados to make the winding trek along the central corso in search of wine tastings.

It's an interesting place to go on the last Sunday of the month of August. They host the Barrel Race, where people dressed in ancient costumes roll barrels up the steep street of the Corso while battling a fake war. Every day the numerous wine shops offer free samples of the wines they sell, and a tourist can walk from one winery to another and have his/her own private wine tasting festival!

Robert, thanks a lot for the research - it certainly sounds like fun. When are you going??

Tom

GUEST COLUMN - Nobody's Home

Sorry, but there is no guest column this month.

Any volunteer contributors out there? We'll give you full credit for your home winemaking article, as well as a link to your web site or e-mail address.

Read on to find out how to be our next guest columnist...

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

Bentoni te

- An inorganic fining or clarifying agent made from diatomaceous earth. Learn how to prepare bentoni te for addition to your wine by reading Tom's article above.

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 Stories from Tom's Cellar
- Another Surprise from Brant
- More Specials
- The next article from Bonnie's Bin
- Our Next Guest Column
- More Customer Testimonials
- New Winemaking Products

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