
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
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<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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FEATURE ARTICLE: Descriptions of Wine Kits Now Online
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Every now and again, a customer will call or write, asking for a description of the wide array of wine kits we stock.

Which ones have oak? What about elderberries?

Can you describe the body of this wine? Is it light, medium, or full?

How sweet is this wine? Can I sweeten it further?

The answers to all of these questions may be found in our latest web page:

http://www.grapestompers.com/wine_kit_descriptions.asp

This page also provides a nice description of the wine, which usually includes information about taste and aroma.

We hope you'll enjoy this new page on our web site... and will refer to it again and again whenever you have the occasion to place your next order.

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 #3140 Cellar Classic Bergamais Wine Kit \$77.00
- Item #2117 500 ml Olive Bottles, 12 to a case, \$5.50
- Item #3238 Pinot Grigio (Italian Style) \$73.33
Bolero Full Strength Sterile Must - 23 liters
Balanced for acidity, sugar, and pH.
Comes in its own bucket, ready to ferment!
Made by the vintners at RJ Spagnols.

BONNIE'S BIN: Bonnie in Wonderland (apologies to Alice)
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

Editor's Note: Bonnie and her husband Don recently returned from the annual Wineries Unlimited winemaking show in Lancaster, PA and reports they had a ball. She mentioned something about "feeling like Alice in Wonderland"!

I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date, THE STOMPER!

Sorry for the delay, but my husband and I took a very important trip to Florida recently and now I am more behind than ever. Ain't life great?! Others must be behind too, because I have not received any little "reminder" e-mails from Brant.

I have a Traditional Ice Wine going. Can't wait until it is done. In fact, I couldn't wait. I have already sampled it and the flavor is excellent! Now if it does nothing but get better I will have several wonderful bottles for Christmas baskets!

Now that the weather is getting nicer, don't forget to get the wine out when you do your grilling. What rich flavor it adds to the meats. Also add some wine to your salad dressings. Did you know that full wine glasses hold down the table cloth? But you had better not rely on them; if your wines are great, they won't be full for long!

Enjoy your spring. See you again in May.

Save the water... Drink Wine!

Bonnie

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 April 2002 are:

Save over 10% on 6 different Wine Kits

AND

Save over 16% on our Basic Winemaking Equipment Kit

AND

Save over 16% on our popular 1.5" agglomerate corks

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
3278	CM Raspberry White Zinfandel Kit	45.37	40.77
3282	CM Kiwi Gewurztraminer Wine Kit	38.41	34.55
3280	CM Peach Chardonnay Wine Kit	38.41	34.55
3164	CM Blackberry Merlot Wine Kit	45.37	40.77
3142	VDV Jermillon Wine Kit	51.26	46.11
3227	VDV White Bordeaux (Bordeaux)	39.38	35.44
1001	Basic Winemaking Equipment Kit	49.40	39.77
2308	#9 x 1.5" Agglomerate Cork (100)	12.00	9.98
3200	Complete White Wine Starter Kit	246.68	175.00
3100	Complete Red Wine Starter Kit	259.79	185.00

All wine kits shown above will make about 30 - 750 ml bottles of great wine in as little as 28 days.

Be sure to stock up on these agglomerate corks - they work great with hand corkers! Please remember... you'll need to buy at least 100 corks to get the special price.

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: Which Wine Should I Get?
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

Which Wine?

The question often arises here at grapestompers... "White Wine or Red Wine... which should I get?" the customers ask.

I will pass along for your information the following from our sales here at grapestompers.com:

- a. We sell more red wines than white wines.
- b. The #1 selling red wine for us is Cabernet/Merlot
- c. Our #2 selling red wine is Merlot
- d. The #3 selling red wine is Valpolicella

The number one white wine seller is White Zinfandel, then in second place comes Riesling, followed by Pinot Gris (a newcomer this year).

In our Wine Coolers, our best seller is Peach/Chardonnay, followed by Blackberry/Merlot, and finally Raspberry/White Zinfandel.

Of all of our wines, White Zinfandel is our overall best selling wine. This is the second year in a row that White Zin has led the sales race. For the record, the #2 overall selling wine for us is Cabernet/Merlot.

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

When putting wine labels on your bottles of wine, start by placing the middle of the sticky label against the bottle, and work your way towards the ends of the label.

It's easier to see and correct alignment problems, and there's less chance of air bubbles forming underneath the label.

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

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

If you look historically nationwide, you will run across this scenario -

Long ago, red wines were the most popular - then white wines ran along even, finally overtaking the red wines. Now the two types are about even again. I find that more doctors are recommending red wines - and actually we have many physicians purchasing wine kits from us, so they are certainly "practicing what they preach"!

Sweet wines sales are going down as many customers are switching over to drier wines as their palate matures. It reminds me of more folks drinking 2% or skimmed milk instead of whole milk. Once you get used to a drinking the healthier skimmed milk, it is hard to go back to whole milk again because it taste like cream!

Well, the same seems true for wines; once you acquire the taste of a drier wine, it is difficult to revert back to a sweet wine! So this is what makes the world go around -

different folks like different flavors and we hope we can continue to supply your needs here at grapestompers.com with the wine you are looking forward to bottle.

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,
Thanks for the update. The order arrived tonight. I'll be getting to it in a couple of days.

All my friends and neighbors are looking forward to trying this "new" wine. New for us, I've got them curious to try each new batch I make up. Seems like the more times I make up a new batch, there's less for me to enjoy. But it all works out in the end; I like seeing my friends enjoying the wine as much as I enjoy making it.

Besides, this way I can say I am enriching their experience and introducing them to new tastes. Maybe I can even talk them into purchasing their own from you too.

You know to show them how much joy they can experience by sharing their wine with me!!!!

Thanks for your effort,

-- John Barilone
Augusta, GA

Dear Tom and Bonnie,
Thank you! I really appreciate your genuine interest in satisfying your customers. I hope, no matter how big your business grows, you'll keep this philosophy.

-- Marie Eldred
Cambri dge Spri ngs, PA

Dear Tom,
Thank you so much for your offer [to provide instructions about a new floor corker], but Bonnie already e-mailed me with instructions, which were very helpful and highly successful.

I used the corker this weekend and it made the whole process a lot of fun! I had been using a hand corker with limited success, so I was very pleased with my new "toy".

I really appreciate your professionalism and helpfulness and I look forward to doing much more business with you in the future.

Sincerely,

-- Sheryl Meilner
North Liberty, IN

Tom,
A web site should be a resource of information, not a bunch of crap about something I don't care about. Yours is easy to navigate and if I am looking for something specific, I

can find it... good job...

-- Brandon Lowery
Huntersville, NC

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Just Call Us!
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

The telephone rings frequently here at grapestompers.com, with folks asking all kinds of winemaking questions. Often you may experience a busy signal or a ringing phone that reverts over to our voice mail system. We apologize for this, but we DO want to speak with you. If you should reach our voice mail, please leave a detailed message so we can call you back. We could install more phones, since either Bonnie, Brant or myself always like to give the advice on a one-to-one basis. We appreciate your patience when you cannot reach us at your first attempt.

We do not, at anytime, want you to guess what to do if you are stuck with a winemaking problem; so please don't hesitate to call before taking action. We will help take the guesswork out for you. Our winemaking video (VHS or DVD) does a good job of covering the basics of making wine from a concentrate and by observing it, 95% of your questions can be answered.

If you are unsuccessful at reaching us "live" on your first attempt, you can help us keep costs down by returning a call to us yourself. By calling our 800 number, you get a free call and we get a better rate when compared to us returning a call via standard long distance. Our 800 number gives us a block of minutes by the month, saving expense to our overhead - which helps us to continue offering lower prices on the web. Thanks!

GUEST COLUMN - Who's Next?

Sorry, but there is no guest column this month. We had a couple of nibbles out there, but were unable to "land the big one" 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. You'll even get a discount on your next purchase, as well as our thanks.

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??

WEATHERING THE STORM - Corks Fly in Laurel Springs, NC
By Tom Burgiss, Owner

Just yesterday we had a mystery here in our Bodega!

Brant and I were both out in the warehouse checking in a truckload of supplies, and upon re-entering the Bodega we saw this red wine all over the place. Seeking out the

source we found it!

A customer of ours (as so many do) had brought in a bottle of his homemade muscadine wine for us to admire. Placing it in our clay tile rack to get some more age, we had not checked it recently. It turns out that the wine was still working... and had gathered up enough "steam" to blow out the cork! It took us a while to find the cork... it had flown across the Bodega and landed inside of an open box.

In the meantime, that red wine was everywhere. Believe me, I mean EVERYWHERE!!

So this brings to mind a couple of items not to overlook when you bottle your homemade wine from your fruits or backyard grapes:

1. Wine should not be bottled in temperature under 59 degrees F (the coolness will mask the fact that the wine could still be working and when it warms up, fermentation will start again).
2. The "fill heights" should allow plenty of headspace between your wine and the cork, thereby eliminating the small "ups and downs" of temperature variance in your storage area. We recommend a headspace of around 3/4" to one inch.

Corks are very important part of the equation, and if you read our newsletter each month, I touch on this subject often. The reason is simple - Good natural corks are virtually impossible to find and if you do get your hands on them, the cost is almost unbelievable.

We get samples in from several cork companies, test them, and not once have we found a company with a consistently good quality of natural corks. Plastic closures (never use the word "cork" for this group) are becoming more popular with wineries only because they, too, have difficulty in finding a good consistent cork. And now, many are talking of screw caps. Believe me, no winery wants to go this route, but because of the demand on the cork industry, all may someday have to resort to this!

Our best cork is the grapestomper corks # 2320 and # 2322. It is a molded cork that has good consistency. It is a tough cork and requires a lot of strength to put in the bottle with a hand corker. We basically recommend this to be used with a floor corker. For those of you who have hand corkers, we recommend corks #2308 and #2310.

To show you our interest, the next time you order from us, just request a sample of corks under the "comments" section of your order. Then you can see the corks for yourself!

CORKY' S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Chaptalize

- The process of adding sugar to grape juice that does not naturally possess enough sugar (brix) to make good wine.

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
- More Customer Testimonials
- New Winemaking Products

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