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THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com  
August, 2002 Issue #25  
<http://www.grapestompers.com> 1-800-233-1505  
Hours: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM Eastern Monday - Friday

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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 it. Instructions to cancel 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: Thistle Meadow Winery Launches  
By Brant Burgess, Editor

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Howdy folks! Hope your August is a little cooler than our sweltering July. Even though we're located in the "cool" mountains, the temps were really hot!

We were really curious when some of our customers' records indicated they were buying LOTS of wine concentrates - in quantities almost too big to imagine!

Tom gave these customers a call... and guess what the unanimous explanation was?

They were using OUR WINE KITS in a commercial winery to make their own wines! They've been selling the "fruit of the vine" for about two years now, and we hear their customers are raving for more...

Well, that set Crazy Tom's brain a-tickin'... and for those of us who know him, we knew it was time to duck! What in the world was he going to do now?

You guessed it... Tom decided it was time to start his own mountaintop winery!

When I look back on it, though, it almost seems like a natural progression. You see, visitors to our bodega can sample different types of wines that have been made from our extensive line of wine kits made by RJ Spagnols. The reaction to our wines is about 50/50 - half the people are ready to purchase a wine kit on the spot, while the other half simply want to purchase a case of the stuff.

Without the appropriate ABC license, of course, we couldn't

sell any of our finished product.

But that has recently changed... Late last month we heard from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) that our winery application had been approved!

If you want to read the official news release, simply go to the latest addition to our news page:

[http://www.grapestompers.com/news/tm\\_winery\\_approval.htm](http://www.grapestompers.com/news/tm_winery_approval.htm)

We will start making wine as soon as all the paperwork is finalized on the federal and state level. We plan on shooting for quality not quantity, so we'll be using the Cellar Classic and Grand Cru type of concentrates in our wines.

But don't worry... our primary focus remains with you - the home winemaker. Tom, Bonnie, and the rest of the gang will continue to offer their own special brand of customer service, one customer at a time.

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

You can write to Brant at [webmaster@grapestompers.com](mailto:webmaster@grapestompers.com)

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#### NEW PRODUCTS

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

- Item #2785 Black Beauty Capper, \$9.99
- Item #2113 Frosted 375 ml Stretch Hock bottles, 24 per case, \$27.50

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BONNIE'S BIN: Summer Wines Run Dry  
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

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A good August to all of you.

Let's hope that it is cooling down a bit so making wine is easier! It takes some of the fun out of it when you have to cool it down.

My summer wines are about gone. I might make it until the middle of August before I am digging into our winter supply! I didn't plan well enough this spring. I started a Fume Blanc recently, but it will not be ready until the first of September. Boy, that last word was hard to type! September is right around the corner.

We have a fresh supply of wine-related T-shirts in the store now. We should have them on the web site some time in the near future. They make good gifts for that person that you can't find the right thing for. Like for the person who has it all and loves wine. Give us a call or an e-mail and we will describe them for you.

It is now time to get things cleaned and scoured and ready for the coming harvest. Make sure you have all the items that you need and that they are in good condition. Do a good check of supplies so you aren't waiting for the US Mail to get them to you yesterday!

Since I am enjoying a vacation with one of our sons and his family I will let you off easy this month.

Bonnie

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

You can write to Bonnie at [bonnie@grapestompers.com](mailto:bonnie@grapestompers.com)

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THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS  
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grapestompers' specials for the month of August 2002 are:

Save 12% on 4 different wine kits

AND

Save nearly 10% on our 5 US gallon glass carboy

AND

Save 11% on our already discounted  
Basic winemaking equipment kit

AND

Save 21% on Sambuca (Licorice) Liquor Quick essence

AND

Save up to 25% on selected winemaking chemicals & yeast

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
3130	CC Cabernet Shiraz	89.74	78.88
3232	CC Chardonnay Semiillon	70.58	61.88
3273	GC Pinot Chardonnay	63.80	55.88
3222	VDV Johannisberg Riesling	39.55	34.88
2204	5 Gallon Glass Carboy	15.35	13.88
1001	Basic Winemaking Equip. Kit	49.40	43.88
2758	Liquor Quick Sambuca Essence	3.64	2.88
2733	Fermax Yeast Nutrient	2.23	1.88
2701 - 2705	Red Star Wine Yeast	0.34	3 for 0.88
2730	Acid Blend, 3 oz.	1.92	2 for 2.88
3200	Complete White Wine Starter Kit	246.68	175.00
3100	Complete Red Wine Starter Kit	259.79	185.00

The four wine kits shown above will make about 30 - 750 ml bottles of great wine in as little as 28-45 days.

The Basic Winemaking Equipment Kit includes these items:

- Primary Fermenting/Bottling Bucket with Lid, 7.8 gallons
- 6 Gallon Glass Carboy
- Multi-fit Stopper with hole for airlock
- 3-Piece Airlock
- 15" X 1/2" OD Bottle Filler
- 26" X 1/2" OD Curved Cane & Racking Tip
- 5 feet of 7/16" ID Flex Tubing
- Fast Flow Bottle Spi got

Add Sambuca essence to a fifth of vodka... it tastes just like Ouzo or Pastis (licorice tasting liqueur) at less than half the price!

Wine kit abbreviations explained:  
CC = Cellar Classic wine kit

GC = Grand Cru wine kit  
VDV = VINO DEL VIDA wine kit  
CSP = Cru Select Platinum wine kit  
CSG = Cru Select Gold wine kit

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 (\$26.59 value):

- Free Wine Labels (text of your choice)
- Free T-shirt (sizes available: M, L, or XL)
- 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, as well as the size T-shirt you need.

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.

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TOM'S CELLAR: Sun Ruins Wine Fun  
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

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I enjoy "chatting" with our Stomper subscribers each month and passing along a couple of hints that will help you, the home winemaker, enjoy more success in making a better tasting wine.

Even though it's a sad story, I must relate to you the one about a home winemaker who had the misfortune of leaving his wine in a closed vehicle during the day. It was a very hot day (over 100 degrees outside) and every bit of his wine was ruined by the high temperature...

So one of my helpful hints is DON'T DO THIS!!!!!!!!!!

Store your wine in a cool place!

Another helpful reminder - if you have a question, please call us toll free at 1-800-233-1505. That way, you can talk directly to us and avoid the small delay that ensues with the exchange of e-mails.

The best time to call is 7:00-9:00 AM or from 10:00 PM to midnight Eastern Daylight Time. You may wonder, "Why that time of day or night?" Well, you can get me before you go to work or after you get home from work, and there's less of a chance you'll reach a busy signal. But please don't call us after midnight Eastern... we know you folks on the West Coast are still hopping, but I have to get some shut-eye sometime!

For orders, we do prefer that you fill out our secure online order form. Also, when you receive your order, please check it against your enclosed packing slip. If anything is broken or missing PLEASE CALL US. DO NOT WAIT.

When packing your boxes with winemaking goodies, we use every nook and cranny to save you on shipping. So please look inside every box! If ordering a wine concentrate, your free wine labels are usually packed with the invoice in an envelope.

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

Here's a neat way to reduce bottle shock caused by the corking process:

What I have used is a .050 weed trimmer line with the Altec corks when corking. You might want to use a .040 line with a natural cork.

With the line inserted in the bottle, you drive the cork in and then pull the line out after corking. It relieves the air pressure of the cork being driven in the bottle.

This eliminates the oxidation of free SO<sub>2</sub> in the wine and nearly eliminates the bottle shock caused by bottling.

Our thanks to Keith Pritchard from Slate Run Vineyard for this great tip.

Have a tip you'd like to submit?  
Send it to [tips@grapestompers.com](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)

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

The outpouring of get-well wishes overwhelmed me following my rotator cuff surgery. Thanks for sending the cards and e-mailed comments concerning my recovery.

I have framed one special get-well card that features a cartoon image of me and a poem about my injury. When you come to see us in Laurel Springs, I know that it will bring a smile to your face (as it did to me).

Being active all my life, I am just not cut out for doing nothing... but doing nothing is what the doctor ordered, and the physical therapy gang at the local hospital say my recovery is speeding along nicely.

This slower pace gives me an opportunity to give thanks and realize what great folks I have helping at the Bodega! Bonnie is like a thrashing machine from the Midwest, packing boxes with a flurry of activity. Faye and Harry come in during the rush at a minute's notice. Brant holds

up under the stress of taking orders from Dad!

Because of the extra work placed upon everyone else during my recovery, Bonnie, Harry and Faye have been packing with great speed, trying to provide quick turnaround on your orders. Quite candidly, the increased pace has not allowed us to reach our goal of 100% accuracy. We appreciate your understanding in this matter; we simply want the very best for you, our customers... by all means, please let us know if your order is missing an item. In our hearts, we are making an effort to continue serving you.

Thanks, Tom

You can write to Tom at [tom@grapestompers.com](mailto:tom@grapestompers.com)

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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:

Bonnie,  
I got my order Friday at noon - SUPER SERVICE. I love the recipe book.

You sure have come a long way with the free labels. I love them; using "Vine Street" on one and "Cercone Cellars" on the other was great. It really shows you guys are taking the extra step dealing with your customers.

I had been shopping around looking for a dealer closer to get a better break on shipping, and I found one in Indianapolis, but the product he was peddling and his wine making tips were laughable. I will stick with you guys, no sense fixing something that isn't broken. Hope you had a nice Fourth.

-- Ed Cercone  
Rensselaer, IN

Bonnie,  
Thanks for the special treatment; you guys have been good to me with all my orders. I hope to one day soon come down to NC and visit your shop and meet the both of you. I just wanted to let you know I enjoy ordering from you guys!

Keep up the good customer service! Thanks again!

-- James Coburn  
Church Road, VA

Tom,  
Hope you are doing OK with your cuff surgery.... just wanted you to know how much we enjoyed our overnight stay with bochi, and bottling wine. We've told our friends that we bottled 30 bottles, but they didn't believe it until we showed them our special label. And yes, I have managed not to open it yet....

We hope to start a new wine making hobby... we're trying to figure out a "temperate" storage area. Our pictures turned out great.

Take care,

-- John & Margie  
Shelby, NC

Dear grapestompers,  
Received shipment today. Thank you for the expert service and help. I bottled the wine today and the bottles are beautiful! And the wine's not bad either!

Sincerely,

-- Beverly Cook  
Newark, OH

Dear grapestompers:  
I am greatly impressed!!! I have been treated with such kindness and respect by your associates. I e-mailed your company and Bonnie answered me right back with the information I requested (quite pleasantly too).

I had a wonderful phone conversation with Brant who went to great lengths of explanation to answer my questions. I must say the business in our country needs a heads up to pay attention to your way of doing business. I call your form of business (in the most positive intent) "The Good Ol' Boy Way".

It has truly been a pleasure. Thanks.

-- Frances M. Tankersley  
Newberry, FL

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GUEST COLUMN - Converting Old Wine Recipes  
by Don Schiller, Minnesota

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Old family wine recipe? Make it new!

Nearly everyone has an old family recipe for making "granddad's favorite wine". Those recipes may still work, but with a little adjustment, they can be even better.

Let's start with the basics. To make wine, you need a flavor source (fruit), a fermentation source (sugar in the fruit or another sugar source) and yeast to ferment the sugar. Beyond that, we make improvements.

Many older recipes make 1 gallon of wine, but most home winemakers make 5-gallon batches. The fruit and sugar in the 1-gallon recipes should be multiplied by 5, as should most other ingredients with the exception of the yeast.

If you are using a fibrous pulp fruit, freezing helps break down the cells giving better juice and flavors. Rhubarb, raspberries and elderberries freeze well. If not able to freeze, heat the water, remove the water from the heat, then add the fruit. Softer fruits such as strawberries and peaches extract juices well in hot water. Do not boil the fruit.

Granddad's recipe probably called for a measured amount of sugar. It would be better to test and adjust the fermentable sugars. Grab your hydrometer and test the specific gravity of the must. How specific do you need to be with your specific gravity (okay-another bad pun)? That answer is 'not very'. Ideally you want to be about 1.085 for most grape wines and something less for fruit wines. Add about one half to three fourths of the sugar called for in the recipe, mix into the must, and test. Repeat until you get the S.G. to the right level.

Now, let's fine-tune the recipe. Granddad's recipe probably doesn't call for sulfite (metabisulfite or Campden tablets), yeast nutrient or pectic enzyme, but your wine would be improved if you add them. Add sulfites or Campden (to help reduce bacteria) and the pectic enzyme (to break down the fruit structure and enhance color) on day one when you are crushing/thawing or heating your fruit. The must should be about room temperature before adding chemicals. Let the must sit for a day, or better yet, two days - then add the yeast nutrient (gives a more complete fermentation with less chance of H<sub>2</sub>S smell). Rehydrate the yeast with warm water for 15 minutes and add the yeast to the must. Some of Granddad's recipes may use wild yeast on the fruits; believe me, wine yeast will give a better fermentation and better flavors.

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

If you accidentally over sweeten a wine, you can reduce the sweetness by blending it with a dry wine that is of a similar or complementary ingredient.

Start by blending small amounts of wine first, until you nail "the formula".

Learn the secrets of blending here:

[http://grapestompers.com/articles/blending\\_wine.htm](http://grapestompers.com/articles/blending_wine.htm)

Have a tip you'd like to submit?

Send it to [tips@grapestompers.com](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)

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

Granddad's recipe may not have fermented completely and could possibly have had bacteria which may have caused cloudiness and off flavors. Using modern methods, racking the wine and cleaning it up quicker should help make your versions of Granddad's wine a success. Granddad would be happy to brag about this good wine from his recipe.

If you would like some help on converting Granddad's recipe, send it to me. I will review it and offer some suggestions. E-mail me at [vi ntner@prodi gy.net](mailto:vi ntner@prodi gy.net).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - Don has recently retired as the Vice President and newsletter editor for the Purple Foot Wine Club in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. In addition to writing articles for the "PurpleFootnotes", he also sometimes shares articles for Grapestompers. If you have suggestions for articles or wine questions, you can contact Don at [vi ntner@prodi gy.net](mailto:vi ntner@prodi gy.net).

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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 three- or four-paragraph article to [articles@grapestompers.com](mailto: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](http://grapestompers.com) order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

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CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

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Top Up

- To add liquid back to a wine to minimize dead air space in the container (i.e. a carboy). Topping up is usually done after racking, to replace the wine that couldn't be

drawn off due to sediment. Examples of liquids used to "top up" are finished wine of the same type, grape juice, sweetened or plain water. Topping up prevents problems such as oxidation of wine (wine turning to vinegar).

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

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#### LIST MAINTENANCE

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Past issues of the STOMPER can be found at <http://www.grapestompers.com/newsletter/archives>

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