
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 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

FEATURE ARTICLE: Coming Soon: Free WineRemind Service
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Welcome, Old Man Winter... we've been waiting for you!

I don't know about the rest of you, but as I write this the ground is covered with snow and the trees are covered with ice... and we finally got our electricity back on after two days of "camping out" indoors.

We hope Santa will be good to all of you and bring everyone the winemaking stuff you've been wishing for!

I want to relate something that happened to me the last time I made a batch of wine... it shames me to admit it, but I got so busy doing other things that I forgot to check the specific gravity and rack my wine on time according to the wine kit directions.

Has anything like this happened to you when you were making a batch of wine? It occurred to me that perhaps I wasn't alone when it came to forgetting when I should do something with my wine.

So that started my programming wheels a-turning... wouldn't it be great if there was a way to get an automatic reminder that gently nudged you to let you know when it was time to rack or bottle your wine?

I'm in the middle of designing such a system. We call it the WineRemind(tm) system, a free web application that works off a database and sends automatic e-mails to its subscribers.

It isn't ready yet (it's one of those projects that gets bigger each time you look at it), but I am making good progress towards its completion.

We think the WineRemind(tm) system will be a great service for busy folks who tend to lose track of time, so hang in there and watch our web site for the unveiling soon!

P.S. All of us at grapestompers.com wish you and yours a safe, wonderful, and fulfilling holiday season.

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 #3258 CSP Sauvignon Blanc, New Zealand, \$73.36
- Item #2234A #3 Drilled Rubber Stopper (bung), \$0.53
- Item #4624 Wine Bottle Tags, 50 reusable, \$4.99
- Item #2716C Vinoferm Iodic (SO2) Solution, 100 ml, \$7.79
- Item #2732A Potassium Metabisulfite, 1 lb, \$4.04
- Item #2732B Potassium Metabisulfite, 5 lb, \$16.41
- Item #2824 Book: Techniques in Home Winemaking, \$22.55
- Item #5120 Wine Cellar Express (see article below)

Wine Cellar Express

During the years, you have been subjected to many claims and testimonials and have found them to be inaccurate. Movie stars are paid tons of bucks to stand in front of a camera and endorse products and services they have never heard about before they were offered the job.

Well, here at grapestompers.com we really do try out new products ourselves before we offer them for sale... and we often ask our walk-in customers to participate along with us in our testing to provide honest feedback.

In the case of this particular product, even I did not believe its claims to be possible. But I have an open mind, so I listened to the Canadian company's salesperson and agreed (but not eagerly so - I always hedge my bets) to try out their product called Wine Cellar Express.

It came in and I put it to an immediate test. It worked! Was it my imagination? How could this "thing" possibly work? In our Bodega, I persuaded 10 folks to volunteer for the blind test. They took a "young" Cabernet Sauvignon and placed the bottle on this special doohickey for 30 minutes (as per directions). Afterwards they taste tested the "treated" Cabernet Sauvignon; after that, they tasted the "young, undeveloped" Cabernet. It was fun to watch their eyes. No one could believe it!

What is it? In layman's terms, I guess you'd call it a pound and a half magnet coaster! On the box it says "It reduces the harsh, bitter tannins, unmasking the full fruit flavor of the wine".

I am so excited, I want to offer you a deal. The Wine Cellar Express normally retails for \$50.00, but I bought a bunch of them and can let them go for only \$44.49 apiece - and this includes FREE shipping by priority mail East of the Mississippi. Beyond that (Western US), add \$2.00.

This will make an excellent gift for that special someone

who enjoys good wine! Remember at the top of this article we wrote about claims? This is one we can back. If you say it does not work, send it back. You'll get full credit (less the shipping cost) back on your credit card. There is one disclaimer - Please do not test when you have a cold or stopped up nose (that's the pharmacist in me coming out)!

To qualify for free shipping, we need to have your order in by December 14th. That way, we can get it to you by mail in time for Christmas. Prefer FedEx or UPS? Cut off date for ordering is the 17th of December. Please add \$3.50 extra for UPS or FedEx delivery.

Learn more here:

<http://www.winecellarexpress.com/wce.html>

BONNIE'S BIN: Smells Like Christmas
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

I think it is getting closer to Christmas by the amount of packing we are doing! I also think a lot of people are getting some really nice gifts! I hope they realize how this new hobby will take over their entire life! What a way to go, eh? Making wine is SO much fun!

I wish you could walk into our office area at the Bodega. Wow, the aromas that hit you are awesome. We have all of the wines going in the bonded winery area, and combined with the grapestompers.com wines it is enough to make you smile. Is this a job with perks or what? They also look beautiful in all the different stages of fermentation and aging.

We are going to do the best possible job during this Holiday Season. Please get your orders in during the second week of December so we can get them to you in time for gift giving. Remember that the US Mail, UPS, and FedEx are on overload now too... Things will be a bit slower so it is up to all of us to do our part early. See Tom's article below for specific "order by" dates for your region of the country.

We had so much packed today that UPS could not get it into one truck and had to call in another one!!! I didn't hang out to see what happened with the FedEx truck. It would have been interesting to see how much was left behind for the next day's run. We worked really hard today because of the Winter Storm Watch that is out for tomorrow. We wanted to get packages on their way in case of the storm didn't allow for runs tomorrow.

One last reminder... Please be safe, kind, and helpful during this Holiday Season.

The Best of Holiday Wishes for all of you! See you next year!

Bonnie

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 December 2002 are:

Save up to \$30 on our NEW Super Wine Kit

AND

Save 10% on ALL Cellar Classic wine kits

AND

Get 30 FREE corks when you purchase any VDV wine kit

AND

Save over 11% on the Buon Vino Auto Bottle Filler

AND

Save nearly 20% on the Twin Blade Cork Puller

AND

Save a whopping 16% on our Quick Silver Corkscrew set
(while quantities last!)

AND FINALLY

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
2688	Bon Vino Auto Bottle Filler	16.94	14.99
2902	Cork Puller, Twin Blade	4.35	3.50
2914	Wine Pump Bottle Saver w/1 seal	8.25	7.40
5106	Quick Silver Corkscrew	59.95	49.99
2308	30 Free corks w/purchase of any VDV wine kit (Agglomerate #9 x 1-1/2")		
WOW!	10% off all Cellar Classic kits	Varies	Varies
2010	Super Wine Kit- Merlot	120.03	89.99
2020	Super Wine Kit- Sauvignon Blanc	110.90	89.99
2030	Super Wine Kit- White Zinfandel	113.60	89.99
3200	Complete White Wine Starter Kit	246.68	175.00
3100	Complete Red Wine Starter Kit	259.79	185.00

The CC wine kits are designed to make about 30 - 750 ml bottles of great wine in as little as 45 days. VDV kits are designed to make the same amount of wine in 28 days.

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 SUPER Wine Kit:

- Your choice of either a Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, or White Zinfandel VDV wine kit (limited quantities - order while our supply lasts!)
- Primary and Bottling Bucket with Lid, 7.8 gallons
- 6 Gallon Glass Carboy
- Drilled Rubber Stopper
- 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 Spigot
- B-Brite sanitizer (8 oz. tub)
- Hand corker (double lever Portuguese model)
- 30 corks (#2308)
- 30 Free wine labels

Don't forget... our supplies for the SUPER Wine Kit are limited. Order now to get the wine you want!

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

If choosing the Complete WHITE Kit, your choice of either:
Fume Blanc, Pinot Noir, 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 (\$16.79 value):

- Free Wine Labels (text of your choice)
- Free triple scale hydrometer
- 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 text you want on your free wine labels.

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: Testing, 1-2-3
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

Through the years, I've successfully used Consumer's Guide as a resource to help guide me in the purchase of "big ticket" items whenever I felt the need for a fully researched answer.

Here at grapestompers.com we are not an official consumer's guide on home wine products, but we do feel obligated to share what we've learned during our research with our customers and "Stomper" subscribers.

We are always striving to find better quality products and equipment. As an example, for years we have purchased grape concentrate kits and tested them out to see if the manufacturer meets our standards for taste and enjoyment. So far, we have gone through 4 different companies and Spagnols product line seems to be the best. Now does that mean we have stopped? No, not at all!

At this moment we are running tests on 6 different grape concentrate kits to check them for taste, quality, and consistency. We have adopted a policy of always being open for suggestions from you, our customers. I won't mention the manufacturers we have tested, but if you know of a superior grape concentrate that meets your needs, please contact us by e-mail at tom@grapestompers.com. If we have not tried that particular company, we'll give it a shot!

NOTE: Please, no manufacturer's reps or persons working at such companies may contact us... only our customers may participate.)

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

Giving away some wine as a Christmas gift?

Why not include an inexpensive 2-pc pocket corkscrew and tie it onto the bottle with your bow?

The receiver of the gift will appreciate your thoughtfulness, and all this for less than a buck!

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

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

While I have your attention, allow me refer you an article in the October-November 2002 issue of Winemaker Magazine. It's found on page 48, in the first column (bottom paragraph and refers to "Buon Vino's Super Automatic Bottle Filler".

This particular item is one of our specials we are running this month... for only \$14.99. My advice to you is to buy it!! It's a real time-saver no serious home winemaker should be without. Fill your wine bottles lickety-split! If it's not on your wish list, let your family and friends know... it's a great affordable gift for any vintner.

Speaking of Winemaker Magazine... I also must comment about the December 2002 - January 2003 issue. In it, there's an article entitled "Wine Kit First Aid" by Tim Vandergift. It's an excellent article and I highly recommend reading it!! I was so excited that I called Brad Ring, the publisher, to tell him what a great reference his magazine has been for winemakers, both hobbyists and professionals. In my opinion, just that one article was worth the price of a subscription.

This past month was a record-breaker for grapestompers.com. We wish to thank our fine customers, but at the same time we want to acknowledge that at times our service did not meet our own standards. Orders were coming in so fast... we had to add more staff (thanks, Jason!) and on-the-job

training is difficult to accomplish in the midst of about ten million (I might be exaggerating here) phone calls... We were pushed, to say the least, so we thank you for understanding!

Sometimes we had 3 phone calls buzzing at the same time. So if you do not get through on your first attempt, please don't give up. Our agreement with the phone company for our toll-free number allows us as many calls as we can take on a monthly basis... so if we don't answer the first time, PLEASE CALL US BACK. By doing so, it saves our overhead (because an inbound 800 call to us is virtually free when compared to an outgoing long distance call) and allows us to keep our costs down - in turn, this means lower prices for you!

We're here to help and answer your questions, so please call us anytime we're open (our hours are shown at the top).

Now for the perfect Christmas Gift - How about a wine kit for a friend - and invite yourself over each time they are bottling? It is a gift that keeps on giving and giving and giving... to you!!

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,
I just wanted to thank you and your staff. I received my order on Monday and it all worked perfectly. I appreciated both the ease and speed at which, with your assistance, I was able to solve what I thought was going to be a major issue - where do you find clean, usable glass wine bottles when someone gives you homemade wine in a plastic cider jug.

Again, thanks for your help and I'll be sure to pass along your name and company to my local winemaker.

Sincerely,

-- Marybrigid Vanaria
Situata, MA

Jason,
I received my order today. Thank you for the prompt attention. I look forward to doing more business with your company.

Take care,

-- Harwick W. Kiser, Jr.
Walmartown, NC

Tom,
We are eagerly waiting for the new wine kits. [Also,] a special thanks...

The instructions you gave us on how to sweeten the Liebfraumilch we bottled this week was right on time and target. The wine turned out to be one of the finest

we have bottled. Once again thanks for being there when we really need good advice you have never let us down.

-- Johnathan & Deborah Fisher

Christmas Delivery Schedule
by Tom Burgess

In order to ensure delivery of winemaking supplies in time for Christmas, here's our recommendation for ordering:

For deliveries to NC, VA, or SC, please ensure your order is placed (received by us) by December 17th.

For deliveries to OH, PA, CT, RI, NJ, MD, DE, WV, KY, TN, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR, IL, or IN please ensure your order is placed (received by us) by December 16th.

For deliveries to ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, WI, MN, IA, MO, MI Eastern NE, OK, KS, or TX please ensure your order is placed (received by us) by December 15th.

For deliveries to ND, SD, Western NE, Eastern CO, NM, and AZ please ensure your order is placed (received by us) by December 14th.

For deliveries to all other states on the west coast, (CA, OR, WA, UT, NV, MT, WY, Western CO, ID) please ensure your order is placed (received by us) by December 13th.

This schedule is based on deliveries made NLT 21 December, and allows one extra day to compensate for possible bad weather.

GUEST COLUMN - Tea Bag Wine
by Frank Buffone, Williamson, NY

Dear Grapestompers,

I'd like to submit a wine recipe for your consideration. It's not an original of mine, but one that I've extensively modified.

A dry tea wine is useful for blending with other wines that may seem a little flat or dull, due to low tannin content. The finished wine is characteristic of the initial tea used. This is a wine to make at any time, perhaps when other ingredients are not readily available.

TEA BAG WINE

Makes 5 gallons of table wine (or for blending with a sweet grape wine)

Ingredients (mind how they're added below!)

Group A:

40 to 50 teabags, depending on the strength desired. If flavoring/aroma is desired, add additional 15 to 20 herbal or fruit flavored tea bags of your choice.

3 lb. chopped raisins or sultanas

3 medium oranges, well washed and chopped in a food processor

2 lemons, well washed and chopped in a food processor

1 cup Steen's Pure Cane Syrup OR 2 cups pure maple syrup

10 lb. white sugar

1 lb. brown sugar

Group B:

2 tsp. acid blend

3 tsp. yeast nutrient

1 tsp. yeast energizer

3 tsp. pectic enzyme

3 campden tablets, crushed

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

Make sure you have a good airtight seal between the bung/airlock and the carboy during fermentation.

If not, you may not have a visual indication (bubbles in the airlock) that fermentation is still taking place. Worse yet, oxygen can get in the carboy and ruin your wine.

Best of all - use a hydrometer to measure specific gravity to ensure fermentation is progressing as expected.

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

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

Dissolve all of group B in 250ml warm water.

Day 1: Make 2 gallons of tea with ingredients from group A. First bring water to a rolling boil and then add the tea bags. Allow to steep for about an hour or until water has cooled to around 100 F. Remove the tea bags. Add remaining Group A and all of group B ingredients. Stir mixture until everything is dissolved. Transfer all of this mixture, including fruit pulp, into a primary fermenter and add 2 more (boiled and cooled) gallons water. Cover fermenter with plastic lid or Saran Wrap and allow to rest overnight in a dark place.

Group C:

250ml warm (not hot) tap water. Add 1 packet of Cote De Blanc wine yeast (made by Red Star) to water. Allow yeast to rehydrate for 30 minutes in just water. Then add a small pinch each of yeast nutrient and yeast energizer.

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. sugar

Leave it alone for a few hours to start working.

Day 2: Prepare group C. Give this about 4 hours to come alive and pitch into primary fermenter. Gently stir the mixture and cover.

Days 3 to 6: Punch down must and very gently stir mixture daily.

Day 7: Strain the must into a carboy or demijohn; top up

to the shoulder with 70 F water.

Beyond: Ferment to dry. Rack when necessary and add a crushed campden tablet at each racking. Make all required SG, and pH checks throughout the entire process. Leave to clear before bottling. Sparkaloid works well for clearing. Add potassium sorbate / campden tablet prior to finishing.

Not too bad on its own, but as I mentioned above, I like to use it as a blend with sweet wines.

FRANK'S QUOTE: The universe and the Vintner's psyche are exactly the same -- They're just folded differently. You can reach Frank at fbuff@ashly.com

Like 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](http://www.grapestompers.com) order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Fortification

- Adding alcohol to a wine in order to make it stronger and take on a different character. This process also lessens the possibility of further fermentation, since many wine yeasts can't survive in a higher alcohol environment. Sherries, Madeira, and Ports are examples of fortified wines.

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 (will he finish his app?)
- More Specials
- The next article from Bonnie's Bin
- More Customer Testimonials
- (Hopefully) Another Guest Article - Submit yours today!
- New Winemaking Products

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