
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of [grapestompers.com](http://www.grapestompers.com)
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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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FEATURE ARTICLE: Feed Your Yeast with Nutrients
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Happy New Year, everyone! All of us at [grapestompers.com](http://www.grapestompers.com) hope you and your family had a great (and safe) holiday. We are happy to report that we had a White Christmas at our mountaintop location in North Carolina... we got a dusting of snow just in time for Saint Nick!

Let me ask you a question... would you run a marathon without eating supper the night before? Or take a long drive without filling up the car with fuel?

Of course not.

Unfortunately, many home winemakers forget (or else don't know how) to "feed" their yeast before asking those little critters to perform the arduous task of making wine from must. Adding nutrients is a simple and inexpensive task, and when done properly, can help ensure your wine has enough nutrients to last throughout fermentation. The addition of nutrients can even help prevent H₂S from ruining your wine!

Learn how to add nutrients to your wine yeast by reading our newest winemaking article:

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

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter; your comments are always welcome.

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 #3700 Complete Beermaking Kit, \$169.99 (see below)
- Item #2600A 14" Plastic Test Jar, \$3.03
- Item #2111 Recycled Amber Beer Bottles, 24/cs, \$6.16
- Item #2720 C Brite Sanitizer, .8 oz (for beer), \$0.36
- Item #2265 FermTech Blast Bottle Washer,
Reg \$7.62 - on sale this month \$6.80

AND

Just arrived... 2 NEW Cellar Classic Harvest wine kits from Spagnols: Carmenere and Malbec. Call for pricing and item numbers; it's a limited release! Learn more at: http://www.rjspagnols.com/wine_ccHarvest.asp

The Complete Beermaking Kit (Item #3700) offers everything you'll need to make great tasting beer at home. All of our no-boil beer kits are made from 15 liters of premium all-grain wort, yeast, and other standard additives (such as dextrose, for use as priming sugar) and make 5-6 gallons (approx. 50-60 12 oz. bottles) of beer.

Take a look at all you'll get:

- Your choice of your favorite Brew House Beer Kit; choose from Pilsner, Pale Ale, Mexican Cerveza, Stout, Munich Dark Lager, or Oktoberfest (in season)
- Fermenter Bucket with lid
- 6-Gallon Glass Carboy
- Bung (stopper)
- Five feet of vinyl tubing
- Bottle Capper
- 2 Cases of Beer Bottles
- Bottle Washer Adapter
- Bottle Drainer, 81 station
- Three-Piece Airlock
- Carboy Brush
- Bottle Filler
- 5 pkg C-Brite Sanitizer
- FermTech AutoSiphon
- Long Handled Paddle
- Brass Bottle Washer
- Bottle Rinsers (Vinator)

AND YOU GET THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FREE (\$17.51 value):

- Free Beer Labels (text of your choice)
- Free triple scale hydrometer
- Free bottle caps (144 caps, enough for 2-3 batches)

BONNIE'S BIN: New Friends Abound at the Bodega
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

Well, winners, all's still hoppin' at the Bodega and in our daily life!

We have a new employee this month; a warm welcome to Jane! Tom is SO lucky in getting his employees. When the time is right, they just drop into his life! HONEST! Things should smooth out now. Since Tom will be gone quite a bit this winter, I for one am really happy for our little group!

Thanks, Scott, Jason, and Jane! You guys make it possible.

OK, now for some wine talk. My husband is so excited about the larger wine glasses for his red wine. He says how much better his wine tastes in them. It is true; you must try it. I am not sure why... maybe the fact your nose is right down in taking in the aroma? It just works.

A friend is making his beer in our basement. We gave him the kit for Christmas. I cannot describe to you how excited he was. He has been enjoying my Pilsner but had mentioned Oktoberfest, so that is what he got.

The aroma is awesome! I might even be sorry that I gave it to him, because you can't get Oktoberfest any more this year. It's a seasonal beer so we are both hoping we can get more next fall. It is really a beautiful color, too. I will keep you informed on its outcome.

We have also been testing some new flavors of fruity wines. They are surprising us with the rich flavor. We will also keep you informed on those. They are not quite ready to bottle, but look and taste like keepers. How about Strawberry? Grapefruit? Black Cherry??? Sounds pretty interesting, eh?

OK, enough for one day. We will be looking forward to seeing you all in the Bodega some day. We're getting calls weekly about "Hey, we are going to be in your area (such and such a day)... are you guys going to be in?" This is another FUN part of our daily routine - getting to meet all of you!

Watch the temperature of your wines, especially the first 7 days. It really needs to be warmer than the barn I sometimes use for winemaking. To remedy this, I am using a trouble light, a safe distance away from the quilt that covers my buckets! Add a few extra days if it is not near the recommended 72 degrees!

Happy Wining, kids!
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 January 2003 are:

Save up to \$30 on our NEW Super Wine Kit
(while quantities last!)

AND

Save over \$21 on our NEW Complete Beermaking Kit

AND

Save 19% on wine clarifier

AND

Get a free bumper sticker
when you purchase a Grand Cru wine kit

AND

Save over 11% on the Vinfoerm Acidometer

AND

Save nearly 11% on the FermTech Blast Bottle Washer

AND

Save almost 12% on our plastic wine thief

AND

Save over 13% on the Fizz-X wine agitator

AND

Get a free pocket corkscrew
when you purchase a Cellar Master wine kit

AND

Save almost 18% on our floating thermometer

AND

Save over 14% on our universal carboy cap

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
2711	Wine Clarifier	1.48	1.19
2716A	Vinoferm Acidometer	12.43	10.99
2265	FermTech Blast Bottle Washer	7.62	6.80
2601	Plastic Wine Thief	5.50	4.87
2607	Fizz-X Wine Agitator	23.05	19.95
2608A	Floating Thermometer w/suction cup	4.84	3.99
2610	Carboy Cap (one size fits all)	2.08	1.78
5410	Free bumper sticker w/purchase of any GC wine kit (sticker says "Pick Me, Squeeze Me, Make Me Wine")		
2904	Free pocket corkscrew with the purchase of any or Cellar Master wine kit. Carry your corkscrew with 2905 you anywhere... you never know when you'll need it!		
3700	Complete Beermaking Kit	191.82	169.99
2020	Super Wine Kit - Sauvignon Blanc	110.90	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
CM = Cellar Master 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:

- Sauvignon Blanc 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 Spi got
- 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, 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 (\$16.79 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.

If you prefer, 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: Will The Best Wine Please Stand
by Tom Burgess, Owner

Often we are asked which are our "best" wines. Everyone has an opinion on this - we all have a favorite wine - and no two people are alike in their tastes! Hopefully I can

shed some light on this, by sharing with you our leading concentrates (ranked by units sold during 2002), so you may see what other folks are ordering:

White Wines:

1. White Zinfandel (VDV)
2. Peach Chardonnay (Cellar Master)
3. Pinot Gris (Grand Cru)
4. Johannisberg Riesling (VDV)
5. Raspberry/White Zinfandel (Cellar Master)
6. White Zinfandel (Cellar Classic)
7. Sauvignon Blanc (VDV)
8. Chardonnay/Semiillon (VDV)
9. French Colombard (VDV)
10. Piesporter (VDV)

Red Wines:

1. Merlot (VDV)
2. Cab/Merlot (VDV)
3. Chianti (VDV)
4. Cab/Sauvignon (VDV)
5. Cab/Shiraz (VDV)
6. Red Zinfandel (VDV)
7. Shiraz (VDV)
8. Pinot Noir (VDV)
9. Cab/Shiraz (Cellar Classic)
10. Cabernet Sauvignon (Cellar Classic)

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

It's a good idea to always have an extra packet or two of wine yeast available in case your wine doesn't "start" well.

Nothing is worse than needing some yeast when you don't have any, and the nearest source is miles away!

Luckily, dry wine yeast is inexpensive (less than a dollar a packet) and it keeps well in the refrigerator until needed.

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

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

We have observed a trend by our more experienced customers - those who have made 4 kits or more over the past couple of years - who are moving over to the CC (Cellar Classic) brand of wine kits to take advantage of the richer body and aroma, smoother taste, etc. This wine takes 45 days versus the 28 days for a VDV kit, which indicates that these customers are beginning to build their wine cellars in earnest. These kits cost a bit more than their VDV cousins but the difference in taste is worth it.

It is amazing (and humbling) to read the good news and stories that come in the mail each day... many of our vintners are writing to say they are building new wine cellars to store their goodies!

Good wine like this is like money in the bank! The stock market may go down in value, but thank goodness, great wine increases in value each year (especially the reds). So as Robert Browning once wrote, "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be!"

Cheers for 2003... Tom

PS: Believe it or not... you can order today and make your own personalized wine (with special labels of hearts)in

time for VALENTINES DAY!! Order now and be the envy of the neighborhood.

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:

Hi!

I want to thank you for the super fast shipment of my order! I received it in only two days, from out of state, during the Christmas rush!

Everything looks great! I'm sure my Dad will love this year's gift!

Thanks again, and Happy Holidays!

-- Michelle Spinelii

Dear Bonnie,

The [country] ham and the [Pilsner] beer were very good! I was surprised that the beer was so clean and pleasant tasting. The other home brews I have seen have a lot of sediment and don't taste very well -- especially from the first batch!! I was expecting a bad aftertaste, but it was rather smooth. There was not as much carbonation as many commercial beers, but I liked it. It didn't make me have to burp all the time.

-- Brent Brown
San Diego, CA

Hello Tom,

Glad to hear you have electricity again. Hope all is well. Thanks for your help with the hand corker! We did just as you suggested (dipping the corks & getting them quickly into the corker & bottle) and it works perfectly...

Our wine kits arrived promptly, along with the kit we had you to send to California. Thanks!

-- Lynda & Louie Karnath
Jacksonville Beach, FL

[Editor's note: Like many folks along the East Coast, we were hit by a big snow and ice storm recently, and were without power for a couple of days.]

Tom,

I just wanted to drop you a note and say you are in a great profession. I spent 37 years working for various pharmaceutical wholesalers.

I thought that pharmacy was such a great profession, that I talked my nephew into going to school to become a RPH. He did and he now is very happy and making good money. In fact, he bought 50 acres of land and planted Cabernet Sauvignon grapes about 4 years ago. Guess where I get my grapes?

Free, the harvester leaves the end vines unpicked, and we

go in and try to beat the birds to what's left. I made 20 gallons this year and intend to make more next year. Why not? I am 100% Italian, and we drink a lot of WINE.

Well anyway, I commend you for your commitment to both this "hobby", and your profession... am sure this takes up an enormous amount of time.

[Editor's note: Actually, Tom is retired from his long career in pharmacy, and now spends his time making wine and teaching others how to make it themselves.]

I appreciate the newsletter, it is always interesting and informative. Keep up the great work. Happy Holidays to you and your family too.

-- Nicholas D Canepa
Sacramento, CA

Tom & Bonnie,
Thanks a million for your attention to this order. It arrived today, less than 24 hours from submission to receipt. What quick service!

Thanks for this Christmas present.....

-- Johnathan Fisher
Grovetown, GA

[Editor's note: The following question was sent to the manufacturer of Wine Cellar Express, one of the items we placed on sale during the month of December, by a customer of ours. Read Dave's note below and the reply from Bi shu.]

I just purchased a wine cellar express through Grapestompers. Can WCE be used on an unopened bottle of wine that may not be uncorked for a period of time? A week? A month? etc. Is the miracle process permanent once applied?

Thanks, Dave Bridge

Dear Dave,
Thank you for purchasing Wine Cellar Express. I am sure your enjoyment of wine will be greatly enhanced from now onwards.

Sure, you can treat your uncorked bottle of wine and leave it for a later day to enjoy. Once a bottle is treated with WCE, it retains the properties.

Since 30 or less minutes is not a long time to wait for treating your wine with WCE, we usually recommend the treatment before uncorking the bottle, but that's just an option.

Thank you and Merry Christmas.

-- Bi shu Mukherjee
President
B & M Marketing (Canada) Inc.

GUEST COLUMN - Magnetism Beats Heavy Breathing
by Jim White, Napa, CA

Theory: If you open a young bottle of wine half-an-hour before drinking it, the wine has a chance to breathe,

softening the rough edges and making the wine more enjoyable.

Hypothesis: If a little aeration is good a good thing, then maybe a lot of aeration is better.

Test: I assembled a panel of four of Napa Valley's top winemakers and set before them, in a blind tasting, five masked, identical bottles of great, tight young Cabernet, each bottle treated to a different time, or type, of aeration (breathing).

The Challenge: Could they perceive a difference? Is one method of letting wine "breathe" superior to another?

Here's what I did: I acquired five bottles of Baringer Napa Valley Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 1997, one of the great wines to come out of Napa Valley in one of the best vintages of the decade. I chose this for the test because it is still tight and young, because it is available across Canada (about \$150), and because I like it.

I made sure that no bottle was corked or flawed. One bottle was opened 30 minutes before being tested; one bottle was opened two hours ahead of the tasting; one wine was agitated in a blender for 15 minutes; one bottle was placed unopened on the Wine Cellar Express coaster, a new gizmo that claims to hasten the aging of wine with magnets in the coaster; one bottle was opened immediately before being tasted with no breathing time.

The judges have professional, discriminating palates. They were Julianne Laks, winemaker at Cakebread Cellars; Scott McLeod, winemaker at Niebaum-Coppola; Joel Aiken, director of winemaking at Beaulieu Vineyard; and Rob Lawson, winemaker at Napa Wine Co. Surely, I figured, if anyone could distinguish nuances in the different - but same - wines, these tasters could. But to keep things on the up and up, I didn't reveal what they were sipping, or the hypothesis of the tasting.

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

Finding it hard to insert a synthetic cork?

Try adding a miniscule amount of food-grade glycerin to the jaws or mouth of your corker and repeat the process every 10 corks or so. Those pesky corks will go right in!

Be sure to wipe off any excess glycerin from the corker when finished corking. This will keep prevent dust from accumulating on your corker.

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

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

We met at Cakebread Cellars. Each judge was asked to rank the wines in order of preference. To blend the judge's rankings, five points were ascribed to the wine liked most by each judge, four points to each judge's second favorite, three points to each judge's next favorite, and so on. In this fashion, the most preferred wine of the tasting might garner, at most, five (points) x four (judges) = 20 points. The wine least liked might potentially have as few as one (point) x four (judges) = 4 points.

I had already set up this panel tasting to determine the optimum time for letting wine breathe when Wine Cellar

Express came into my life. The press material that accompanied the magnetic coaster made such seemingly outrageous claims that I felt I had to include it in our test.

"Simply place your bottle of red wine, unopened, on the Wine Cellar Express coaster 15 to 30 minutes and the wine will have a better nose, a richer, smoother taste than a wine not treated". That's what the company says. The coaster-makers claim that the gizmo gives the same results as if you aged your wine in your climate-controlled cellar for years. Which sounds like so much hokum - but the judges, in our blind tasting, rated this method of "softening" wine the best - if only by a margin of two points (see chart below).

The wine liked second best by the group was the bottle that had breathed for two hours. The exposure to air softens the tannins and helps highlight some fruit components.

The wine opened for 30 minutes and the wine opened just at tasting time shared a common score in third place. Judges preferred the wine that had profited from longer air exposure, ranking the two-hour aerated wine higher.

The least liked wine was blender-spun. It had cooked flavors from the friction of the blades. I thought that perhaps this form of hyperventilation might "open" the wine more quickly, but, in fact, it killed the wine.

"Just pulling a cork and letting the wine breathe in the bottle for 30 to 60 minutes is not sufficient", says Scott McLeod, speaking for his peers. "Nothing beats decanting a young California Cabernet and letting it breathe, in the decanter, 45 to 60 minutes". All the judges agreed.

The Wine Cellar Express coaster actually performed exactly as the press release said - it softened the tannins and acids in the unopened wine and gave a balance, which was not evident in the "straight" bottle that also was opened, poured and tasted. The Wine Cellar Express coaster is available across Canada in stores where wine accessories are sold. Get details at www.winecellarexpress.com.

[Editor's note: You can obtain the Wine Cellar Express from grapestompers.com; just ask for Item #5120.]

Chart #1: Blind Taste Test of Baringer Napa Valley Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, 1997.

Total Points (out of 20)	Breathing Method
16	Wine Cellar Express magnetic coaster
14	Breathing 2 hours
12	Breathing 30 minutes
12	No breathing - opened and poured
6	15 minutes in blender

Courtesy: Wine Access Magazine, May 2002
Canada's Essential Guide to Good Wine & Spirits

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 order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Fading

- Describes a wine that is losing color, fruit or flavor, usually as a result of age.

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
- A Guest Article from Frank Joseph - Submit yours today!
- New Winemaking Products

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