
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
February, 2003 Issue #31
<http://www.grapestompers.com> 1-800-233-1505
Hours: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM Eastern Monday - Friday

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: New Dealership Now Open in Texas
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Good news for our customers in Texas! A dealership is now available to ship and sell winemaking supplies from Texas via the latest new division of grapestompers.com known as: Fi neVi neWi nes.

The proprietor is George Cornelius, a vintner himself, who visited with us in the home office here in North Carolina. George is very knowledgeable and will make every effort to please you and provide great customer service.

The advantage for winemakers in Texas is obvious - having a local grapestompers dealership will help save on shipping charges and provide faster service.

George's shipping area will cover zip codes 75000 through 79999. His toll free number is 800-417-1114; his hours are from 6-10 PM weekdays and from 8 AM -10 PM on weekends.

You can reach him via e-mail at george@grapestompers.com

Our hope here at grapestompers is to set up dealerships in every state in the USA, since this will allow us to provide faster service and charge less for shipping charges. Our dealerships are NOT considered franchises (which normally require monies for the brand name). It is a business that you run by yourself... and we only offer dealerships to vintners who prove themselves dedicated to the subject of winemaking and who desire to give great and friendly service to fellow home winemakers!

For those who might be interested in opening a grapestompers dealership, we do require a visit to our home office in

Laurel Springs, NC. grapestompers.com has an excellent reputation for integrity and honesty and we will make a personal evaluation of interested parties. We will talk with anyone via the phone first and send the necessary information for your consideration.

If you're interested, please contact Tom at 800-233-1505.

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:

From the Wine-Art Country Mist line:

- Item #3173 WA Black Currant Merlot, 5.5L, \$45.37
- Item #3274 WA Black Cherry Pinot Noir, 5.5L, \$45.37
- Item #3288 WA Pink Grapefruit Blush, 5.5L, \$45.37
- Item #3287 WA Strawberry White Zinfandel, 5.5L, \$45.37

From the Cru Select Platinum line (RJ Spagnols):

- Item #3283 CSP Vignier, \$73.34
- Item #3186 CSP L'Collage (France), \$80.68
(a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot & Cabernet Franc)
- Item #3184 CSP RQ Chianti Riserva (Italian), \$80.68
- Item #3175 CSP RQ Old Vine Zinfandel, \$86.99

Other Items:

- Item #2646 Brew Belt (maintains optimum ferm temp) \$17.43
- Item #2250 Carboy Drying Stand, \$8.72
- Item #2794 Cherry Flavor for Beer and Wine, \$5.34
- Item #2795 Strawberry Flavor for Beer and Wine, \$4.68
- Item #2743 French Oak Chips, one pound, \$8.25
- Item #2421 Capsules, Green, Push On, \$0.15 each

Soon to be back in stock... call for details:

- Item #2727 Yeast Energizer (powder), \$1.65
- Item #3155 CSP La Rioja Nueva, \$80.68

Learn more about NEW Cru Select Restricted Quantities 2003 wine kits (mentioned above) offered by RJ Spagnols:
http://www.rjspagnols.com/wine_rq2003.asp

BONNIE'S BIN: Jabbing My Way to Valentine's Day
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

Wow, what a speed wagon we are on. Time goes faster each month, especially when you are trying to write a note for the STOMPER! If I could "talk" online it would be easier!

My aunt is known as "Jabber Fingers"; she is giving me lessons so I can be Jabber Fingers Jr.! Need I say this trait runs in our family? If you're curious to know what a "Jabber Finger" is, call me!

I am here to remind you all that Valentine's Day is here again. That was pretty speedy too. Take that sweetie out to dinner, breakfast, or even just for a drive. Be sure to have a nice glass of wine on that day so you will both be healthy and here for the next one! How is that for working wine into this conversation? Did you think I could avoid

wine for this month? NOT!

We have had a wonderful time tasting the four new fruity wines from Wine-Art. The additional 2% alcohol (8 to 9% alcohol by volume for these kits, versus the 6 to 7% offered by the Cellar Master "Mist" wines made by RJ Spagnols) is quite a nice touch. "Kick 'er up a notch!" so Emeril says! Subtle fruit taste and not so sweet; a really well-balanced wine.

Speaking of Emeril, do any of you catch that program? It is interesting how he incorporates wine into his recipes... and did you ever notice how the audience gets a little bit rowdier? It is great to add wines to our everyday cooking, in sauces, dressings, marinades, soups, stews... Even a bit in canned soups does wonders! Or try a shot of beer in your next bowl of canned soup! Is it lunch time yet? Hahaha!

As cold as the country has been, I bet there's a lot of soup being consumed these days. I do hope you are all staying safe and warm. Spring will be here, someday! At least we have holidays to look forward to, and they will make the winter seem nicer. Such as VALENTINE'S DAY... ST. PATRICK'S DAY... well, that one is for next month's note. Not to say that "holiday of the green" is not nice!

If you are a skier, snowboarder, snowmobiler, or any fan of winter sports, it gets mighty long and cold in between runs. Add spice to one of your wines, then a cinnamon stick, warm it a bit, then snuggle in to enjoy the rest of this wonderful season called winter.

See you soon...
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 February 2003 are:

Save up to 13% on assorted winemaking kits

AND

Save 14% on selected colors of bottle sealing wax

AND

Save up to 20% on our wine enhancer

AND

Get free corks with the purchase of any case
of 750 or 375 ml wine bottles

AND

Get 15 free capsules when you buy a Cellar Classic wine kit

AND

Get a free pocket corkscrew when you buy a VDV wine kit

AND

Save over \$21 on our NEW Complete Beermaking Kit

AND

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

NOTE: All customers who make a purchase during February will automatically be entered to win a package of Wine Glass Charms by Hamilton. One drawing each week! Employees and dealers of grapestompers.com not eligible.

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	SPECIAL
3280	CM Peach Chardonnay	38.41	33.33
3225	VDV Sauvignon Blanc	41.25	35.55
3149	VDV Zinfandel	53.13	46.66
3158	Sherry (12 liter kit)	38.39	33.33
3108	Port (12 liter kit)	50.59	44.44
2718	Wine enhancer, red	3.52	2.99
2719	Wine enhancer, white	3.12	2.49
2407	Bottle Sealing Wax, Red	6.96	5.99
2412	Bottle Sealing Wax, Burgundy	6.96	5.99
Var.	Get free corks (#2308) - one for each bottle - when you purchase a case of 750 or 375 ml wine bottles		
Var.	Get 15 free capsules w/purchase of any CC wine kit (style and color of our choice)		
2904	Free pocket corkscrew with the purchase of any or Vino del Vida wine kit. Carry your corkscrew with you anywhere... you never know when you'll need it!		
2905			
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 and CM kits are designed to make the same amount in 28 days.

Sherry and Port kits make about 16 bottles of wine, and require a 3-gallon carboy for fermentation.

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 Spigot
- C-Brite sanitizer (8 packets - each makes 2 gallons)
- 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 | C-Brite Sanitizer (8) |
| Portuguese Hand Corker | FermTech AutoSiphon |
| 2 Cases of 750-ml Bottles | Long Handled Spoon |
| Bottle Washer Adapter | Brass Bottle Washer |
| Bottle Drainer, 45 station | Adhesive Thermometer |

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 or her 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: Cruisin' For A Good Wine
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

This past month, I took a ten-day cruise on what I call the "fat farm ship" to the Mexican Riviera and observed many,

many humongous BIG folks. Naturally, I watched my diet along with our wine each evening and came back the same size!

I remembered in France seeing no overweight folks so this has convinced me that the French know how to keep their figures under control.

While on the ship I attended a broad wine tasting with about 200 other folks. Never have I been rushed through a tasting in such a hurry. Folks around me were gulping it down so fast it might as well had been "Windex" (as in the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding").

It would appear that the wine never hit their taste buds!

After that "fast experience" I decided to go for the gold, a very exclusive wine tasting. So at 25 bucks a head, we experienced a slower-paced tasting later in the week. I ran across some folks there who really did appreciate good wine. During this time my wife, Nancy, and I ran into an interesting couple who lived in Alaska. They revealed that during the dark days of winter, they have absolutely no trouble in passing the time away with their glasses of wine. Needless to say, they love Alaska!

After experiencing both wine tastings, my final analysis was that the ship's best wine would not come close to my own Cellar Classic Montepulciano or Cellar Classic Rosso Grande! So if it was great wine I was after, I should have stayed at home!

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

On bottling day I use a large plastic cooler to sit my bottles in to prevent any messy spills and drips. The cooler usually holds 10 bottles, which is just about the right number for corking with my hand corker.

I then load the cooler with the next batch of empty bottles and continue the production line.

Our thanks to Frank Joseph from Beaver Falls, PA for this great tip.

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

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

News Alert on the Wine Cellar Express Magnet Coaster:

We have sent out dozens of these little jewels and our feedback is just what I expected! Our customers cannot believe how much it improves young tannic wines with a "bite". Our good friend Robert Klaus wrote a comment that I think you might find interesting, so we're including his letter in the "From Our Customers" section below.

I must say that the Wine Cellar Express does not work on homemade sweet wines or white wines (as opposed to red wines) because they have less tannin!

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,
We received as a gift a 1.5 L of Corbett Canyon, Cabernet Sauvignon. The stuff was so harsh and bitter you could hardly drink it. I rebottled it in two regular wine bottles and placed one bottle on the magic coaster [Wine Cellar Express]. Left it there for 18 hours. A totally different wine, like a magic trick.

I remain totally amazed. Thank you so much.

-- Robert and Pat Klaus

Brant,
Please update my e-mail address as I would not want to miss any issues of The Stomper. You do a real good job on the newsletter, especially this month.

Thanks and keep up the good work.

-- Bill Dewar

Tom & Bonnie,
Thank you so much for sending me the stuff so quickly. It arrived on the 9th. I was so excited, I tore into the boxes and had everything cleaned and put together as soon as I got home from work. The Cellar Classic kit was started that evening. I even started a batch from Welch's 100% juice since then.

-- Jim Moake
Carbondale, IL

Hi folks,
So glad to hear from you. Thanks for all the tips... Keep them coming!

-- Bob Stewart
Ten Mile, TN

Tom and Bonnie,
I wanted to contact you to have you change my e-mail address on your computer and mailing list. Please update my information in your files. [I] look forward to [getting] the newsletters.

Also, thanks for the Johannisburg Reisling juice; it made an excellent wine, by far exceeding any Reisling on the shelves that I've had under \$25/bottle. Look forward to more juice in the future.

Thanks again,

-- Dan Lucas

Dear Tom,
It's Kim from Tampa, Florida... I called you yesterday after we bottled our first batch. We had a bottle last night and it was great! Today we bought a \$10 bottle to compare it to and did a blind-folded test to see if we could tell which was the store bought and which was ours-- neither my husband nor I could tell which one was from a winery!

Thanks so much for all your assistance! I placed an

online order for my second batch and we can't wait to get it and start again!

-- Kim and Barry Glover
Tampa, FL

GUEST COLUMN - My Corking Solution
by Frank Joseph, Beaver Falls PA

I am a relative neophyte with wine making kits (7 so far). I would like to share my limited experience with anyone who is considering this hobby. I use a simple two-handed lever corker for bottling my wine. My first bottling experience was somewhat frustrating because of the inconsistencies in this critical step in wine production.

I practiced my corking skills with the hand corker in anticipation of the actual corking process of my first kit. I had read a number of articles on how to treat corks. It seems that there are dozens of opinions on soaking vs. not soaking vs. how long to soak and what sulfite mixture to use to sanitize the corks. I even made a cork humidor that I had read about on the Internet. None of these helped because the corking operation was the critical step of the operation and it was a bit of a disaster.

The corks were difficult to insert into the bottles. The depth of insertion into the bottles was very inconsistent. I had a number of corks that weren't inserted far enough and the only way to get the corker off the cork was to break the cork in the bottle and remove the partial cork with a corkscrew.

Needless to say, I thought that my winemaking history was going to be short-lived... [and] my first wine kit would be my last! I am stubborn and knew there was a solution to this critical step. I researched all of the alternatives and realized that one of my favorite commercial wines used a synthetic cork.

I was not married to the idea of sticking to tradition of only using real cork; I was interested in eliminating the frustration in my winemaking.

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

An update to last month's tip on how to insert a synthetic cork:

It is not desirable to lubricate the iris of any corker with silicone, synthetic lubricant or even vegetable oil. A much better approach is to add a little glycerin to the sulfite solution that you soak your corks in prior to bottling.

Just add about 1 fluid ounce of glycerin to each liter of warm water. Add a crushed Campden tablet and then soak your corks for 20-30 minutes.

The glycerin will not harm the wine or leave a film as do most other lubricants. It is actually good for the cork too. It keeps it soft and pliable, thereby enhancing its function to keep out oxygen and provide a longer shelf life.

Our thanks to Joe Vernice for providing this tip!

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

I researched the synthetic corks and found that the "cork" I wanted to try was a "nomacorc". I found a nearby supplier and bought some to try on my next wine kit that was working. I thought I would try these corks along with the natural corks that I still had a supply left from my initial purchase.

When bottling my second kit, I used 8 natural corks and the frustration returned. I then tried one of my new "nomacorc's" and was amazed at the ease of insertion of these "corks". They were easy to use and were aesthetically pleasing to look at. Each one was the same depth in the bottle. The bottles looked very professionally corked.

I have used the "nomacorc" in my last 5 wine kits and this synthetic cork was one of my best discoveries in my brief winemaking history.

I hope you will share this story with those frustrated corkers out there in wine land. Thanks for the opportunity to share.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - Frank Joseph is a retired 59-year-old nomad temporarily located in PA with his wife Mary and stepson. Before that, he and his wife lived full time on a boat for 5 years and then full time in a 5th wheel for two years. Last year, they moved into a house in PA.

Frank drinks two glasses of red wine each day for his heart. He says, "Winemaking was a natural hobby for me, but I never had the space to make the decision. I have been producing wine kits (Pinot Noir & Valpolicella) for six months, to drink and take on the road when we resume our nomadic lifestyle in the fall. Somehow, I will continue my new hobby. Winemaking is a great hobby and it's never too late to learn."

You can contact Frank and Mary Joseph at:
proudmary01@earthlink.net

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

bâtonnage
- A French term for stirring the lees (trub).

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
- Another Guest Article - Submit yours today!
- New Winemaking Products

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