
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of 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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^ Hot Tips are sprinkled throughout the newsletter

#&# There is ONE hidden special in this issue

^#^ This month's specials and new products are found towards the bottom of this document

FEATURE ARTICLE: IE Bug Affects Online Browsing & Shopping
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Greetings from the mountains of North Carolina. We thought we were finished with snow for the year, but Mother Nature has chosen to bless us again with a good helping of snow. Maybe we can dig out again in April!

Some of our customers have called to report that our web site is not working properly. Some of the things they are reporting are:

- images / photos that seem to disappear from web pages
- text that seem to disappear from web pages

The weird thing is... this problem is not consistent, and only seems to affect one or two pages on a site, if at all. Not just on our web site, but anyone else's you view!

The problem seems to be centered around a bug in Internet Explorer, the most popular browser in the world. From what I've experienced myself and read online, it appears to be happening in IE 5.5 and IE 6.0. Worse yet, downloading and installing Netscape or Opera (competing browsers) will not help. Once you have the problem, it affects all browsers installed on your computer.

Microsoft is aware of the problem (lots of people are complaining about this), but to my knowledge, there is no

free "hot fix" available to download and apply.

Microsoft acknowledges the problem on this page:

<http://tinyurl.com/2v7dd>

and claims to have a hotfix available to resolve this problem - but only if the images in question were created in Photoshop 7.0 on a Mac using OS 10. We use PC's to create our images and web site, not Macs, so the hotfix they speak about would not apply to our site. If you are still interested in getting the hotfix, you have to contact Microsoft Product Support Services and pay a service fee. No free hotfixes are available for downloading.

Aside from that, the only remedy seems to be:

- Format your hard drive and start from scratch
- Install IE 5.0, not 5.5 or 6.0

Formatting your hard drive and re-installing programs is not a viable solution for most people, so it seems that most folks are making the best of it by living with the cards they've been dealt, or finding a buddy or coworker's computer to surf their favorite web pages whose photos or text are missing.

If you are no longer able to browse our online catalog of winemaking supplies or place an order because of this bug, please call us at 800-233-1505 during our normal operating hours (seen above) and we will help you on a one-to-one basis.

You also may ask questions via e-mail, or fax in your order using our PDF order form found at:

http://www.grapestompers.com/images/order_form.pdf

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

BONNIE'S BIN: De-gassing Makes Wine Taste Better
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

We have been getting some questions that deal with wine tasting bitter. In a recent newsletter from a supplier, there was a winemaking note entitled:

De-Gassing With a Fizz-X Rod Before Bottling

The article said:

"The prime formula of fermentation always applies: Yeast eats sugar and produces CO2 and alcohol.

While most of the CO2 is released through the airlock, some of it remains suspended in the fermented product. Eliminating the residual suspended gas from the finished wine before bottling is an important step. CO2 remaining in the wine after bottling imparts a bitterness to the wine, and in greater concentrations can force the corks back out of the bottle. Gradual elimination of suspended CO2 in finished bottles of wine is an important part of the aging process.

It is for these reasons that kit instructions routinely call for repeated stirring of the wine in the days before

bottling. This agitation helps drive out suspended CO2, and the better it is accomplished, the better the resulting wine. The way wine kits call for stirring with a spoon or paddle however, is really only moderately effective, and is onerous to say the least. Much better in terms of both effectiveness & simplicity is the use of a de-gassing rod.

Essentially the de-gassing rod is nothing more than a food-grade paint stirrer. Our Fizz-X rod (Item #2607) is solid stainless steel with nylon wings that is attached to an electric drill.

In our opinion, proper de-gassing with a Fizz-X rod can speed wine aging by at least a month. The Fizz-X rod is therefore both a big labor-saver, as well as an equipment upgrade producing noticeably improved wine."

We have noticed when using the Fizz-X rod in the additive stage, the wines start clearing up almost instantly - a good 2 days faster than if you use a paddle or spoon. And we have noticed that the end result is clearer also. It is on my recommended must-have list of winemaking equipment.

Now, more on last month's discussion of TCA...

You can avoid cork taint by using screw top bottles. Theoretically, you should be able to store wines longer and not fear the Trichloroanisole will eventually transfer from the cork to your wine, ruining it, or at least giving it an unappealing powerful aroma. Several dozen fine wine producers, especially in Australia and New Zealand began using the screw caps in the 2001/2002 season.

We now have in stock, screw top bottles and caps (Item #'s 2110 - 750 clear bottle, and 2110A - white metal lined cap) and the bottles are on sale this month.

See you next time...
Bonnie

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

You can write to Bonnie at bonnie@grapestompers.com

TOM'S CELLAR: Weights of Wine Bottles vs. Marketing
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

What does a wine bottle weigh? A normal wine bottle weighs 15 to 20 ounces - but the most expensive bottles will tip the scales at as much as 44 ounces (that's close to 3 lbs!) and that is without the wine!

What are the manufacturers' reasons for making bottles with the heavier weight? Or a winery's reasons for selecting the bottles they use? Aside from the physical reasons (thicker glass protects the product more effectively), is it prestige value? Or is it just the mere fact that most consumers associate the impressive heavier bottle with higher quality of wine?

One thing's for sure: Whether you like the weightier bottles or not, using heavier bottles drives up the cost of wine to the consumer.

- More weight means higher freight bills
- Thicker bottles cost more to produce

- Sturdier boxes must be used to package cases
- Glamour/prestige of bottle affirms a higher price

Is it worth it?

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

When tasting different wines, be sure to rinse out your glass with water between tastings, and remove excess water before pouring in the next wine.

By doing so, you'll be able to taste each wine on its own merit.

Hidden special:

#2611 - Buon Vino Jet Filter for \$139.99
That's a 50 dollar savings for a product that will filter 20 liters of wine in 15 minutes.

BE SURE to mention this hidden special when ordering, or you will not get the right price.

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

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

We've all heard of astrology and signs of the zodiac. Some people swear they can predict a person's disposition based on the time of year someone was born.

But have you ever heard of predicting a woman's tendencies based on her favorite wine? I offer the following as a light-hearted look at "Women Wine Styles":

The Chardonnay Lady:

Likes clean closets, happy endings, credit cards and the white meat of chicken. They are opposed to violence on TV. Favorite clothing? White silk blouse; favorite food? Salad and their general disposition is trusting!

Sauvignon Blanc Lady:

Likes nail polish, driving fast, foreign accents, and cookies for breakfast. They are opposed to lawyers (unless they married one). Favorite clothes - silk stockings. Favorite food (besides cookies for breakfast) is sushi. And now, get this - general disposition - WILD

Ladies, are your favorite wines not covered? Just email me your wine and next month we will continue with the fun!

Tom

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,

I received the replacement Chablis yesterday and started one batch this morning. The [specific gravity] was 1.076 and I am confident that it will work out fine. Since the unopened box is the same lot number I feel that it will be fine too.

I have learned two things from this. One is that GRAPE

STOMPERS IS THE BEST. I have never dealt with a company that is as nice as yours in going the extra yard to correct a problem. The other is to record every bit of data on a package in the unlikely event of a problem.

Thanks for everything.

-- Everett F. Leggett

Tom and Bonnie,
Received my order today!! Thank you. Hope to have some pictures to send in soon. Again thank you.

-- Dusty & Diane Bridges
Ri nggol d, GA

Tom,
My family has a cabin just up the road from your place. My wife and I were at your place the day after New Years. We had a wonderful time. Thanks so much for everything.

Your wine is excellent. We will be back. Thanks again!

-- Tim Stamper

GUEST COLUMN - Mobile Winemaking: Part 2
by Frank Joseph

I have updated the mobile winemaking web page to show the whole process. It is located at:
<http://www.geocities.com/proudfrank/roadwine.htm>

The web page now shows the racking and bottling processes that you were asking about. The clarifying process is pretty much the same as in my previous basement winemaking area. The only drawback of winemaking in the RV is that the wine kit controls when we change locations.

A hint that may be useful: When I am filling the wine bottles, I place them in the primary fermenter to hold them in place while filling and also to catch any drips or spills that will happen during this process. You might find my wine storage area a novel use of space.

I am currently working on a Cellar Classic Gewürztraminer kit that I picked up at Grapestompers a couple of weeks ago. The visit to your facility was a highlight of our trip. Tom, Bonnie and Jimmy were great hosts. Thistle Meadow Winery is already producing great tasting wines.

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

I prefer the Bordeaux bottles because they stack better in case lots.

Those with sloped sides (like Burgundy-style bottles) are prone to slide out of the stack.

There is no more excitement as having a case of bottles on your chest and trying to get them back into the bin.

Our thanks to Dan Veilleux from Vilas, NC for providing this tip!

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

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

My next kit (a Cellar Classic Valpolicella) will be produced somewhere in South Carolina, as we work our way south for the winter. I will be using mineral spring water from Hot Springs, NC as the water added to this kit. This water really has no taste of anything; it should allow for the full flavor of the grape to shine.

Cannot end without saying that my wife Mary is the greatest. She supports me with my hobby and gives me the space I need on the five days that I take over the kitchen/living area to produce my heart healthy wines. To paraphrase Tina Turner, Mary is "simply the best".

Later,

Frank Joseph
On the road in TN
proudmary01@earthlink.net

Like To Be A Guest Columnist For The STOMPER 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??

CUSTOMER SERVICE - Keep Your Email Address Current

One of the pitfalls of conducting any online business is the lack of current email addresses for one's customers.

If you have recently changed email addresses, have you told us your new address? Unless you tell us your new address, we won't be able to send you follow-up information about your order, such as shipping and tracking information.

To let us know your new email address, please send an email to tom@grapestompers.com. Tell us your name, the new address, as well as the old one it replaced.

Thanks!

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Dumb

- Characteristic description typical of wines that are too young or possibly too cold that refuse to reveal much flavor or bouquet at all; closed.

Look for other wine-related definitions by clicking on the 'Glossary' button from our home page at <http://www.grapestompers.com>

NEW PRODUCTS

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

- Item #2101A Bottles, Clear 750 Burgundy, \$10.08
- Item #2101B Bottles, Green 750 Burgundy, \$10.08
- Item #2839 The Complete Joy of Home Brewing \$14.85
- Item #2429 Capsule, PVC - White w/gold foil top, \$0.14
- Item #4609 Wine Chill Bottle Cooler \$6.82

- Item #4610 Wine Bottle Candle \$4.00
- Item #4722 Clay Wine Chiller "Vino Della Casa" \$9.95
- Item #4732 Clay Coasters "Vino Della Casa" \$9.95
- Item #4712 Wine Glass Holder \$6.95

 THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

grapestompers' specials for the month of March 2004 are:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	SPECIAL
3226	CC Piesporter	67.76	57.59
3237	CC White Zinfandel	71.50	60.77
3128	CC Cabernet Merlot	88.00	74.80
3222	VDV Riesling	42.13	35.81
3122	VDV Valpolicella	49.50	41.99
3116	VDV Chianti	47.63	39.99
2110	Screw Top Bottle 750 ml Regular	10.89	8.89
2114	Flute Bottle 375 ml Regular	21.98	17.99
2646	Brew Belt	18.15	13.99
2239A	Straining bag, elastic top	2.53	1.99
2238	Straining bag, large, fine	5.78	4.99
2409	PVC capsules, green w/gold grapes	0.14	0.10
2421	Capsules, green, push-on	0.15	0.10
3200	Complete White Wine Starter Kit	246.68	175.00
3100	Complete Red Wine Starter Kit	259.79	185.00

See below for a description of the Complete Starter Kit

Did you see this month's hidden special? It's located elsewhere in this newsletter.

The VDV (Vino del Vida) wine kits are designed to make about thirty 750 ml bottles of great wine in as little as 28 days; CC (Cellar Classic) kits create wine in as few as 45 days. The Orchard Breezin' and Wine-Art Country Mist wine kits are refreshingly sweet with plenty of fruit flavor, with an alcohol content from 7% to 9%.

Wine and beer kit abbreviations explained:

- BH = Brew House beer kit
- CC = Cellar Classic wine kit
- GC = Grand Cru wine kit
- WA = Wine-Art wine kit
- MM = Mosti Mondiale wine kit
- OB = Orchard Breezin' 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 Airllock |
| 6-Gallon Glass Carboy | Carboy Brush |
| Bung (stopper) | Bottle Filler |
| Five feet of vinyl tubing | B-Brite Sanitizer |

Portuguese Hand Corker
2 Cases of 750-ml Bottles
Bottle Washer Adapter
Bottle Drainer, 45 station

FermTech AutoSiphon
Long Handled Spoon
Brass Bottle Washer
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 credit card... 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 - You can save some money on shipping if you can find your own wine bottles... if you don't need wine bottles, just be sure and let us know when you place your order, and we will adjust the price of the equipment kit accordingly. You can also upgrade your wine kit and get any other type of wine you desire, by paying the difference for the upgrade from the standard concentrate to the upgraded one. Likewise, you can upgrade from the hand corker to either of the floor corks we stock by paying the difference.

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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