
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
April, 2004 Issue #45
<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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FEATURE ARTICLE: Sources for Free Wine Bottles
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Greetings everyone! Since it hasn't snowed in the past two weeks, we are HOPING that Winter is finally over. So that means that Spring has sprung, and everyone's thoughts are now turned to bud breaks on the vine and some extra green on the trees and in your wallet...

Wallet, did you say?

You heard me right. Why not start off the new season by saving a little money on your winemaking supplies?

Until I started making wine myself about five years ago, I had no idea that wine bottles represented the biggest cost of all the things that go into a bottle of wine - including the wine itself!

If you buy a case of new 750 ml bottles, you can expect to pay around a dollar a bottle... and that doesn't count the shipping fee!

And, because most home winemaking hobbyists make wine in small quantities, it's difficult to qualify for volume pricing. At grapestompers, we pass along the best price possible, but we're only able to do that because we buy bottles a truckload at a time!

It's not practical for you to do that, so what is a person

to do if they need wine bottles? Here is a short list of possible sources to get free wine bottles:

- Friends and neighbors
- Restaurants
- Bars
- Wineries
- Recycling centers

You'll still have to clean the bottles - removing the labels can be big chore - but just think of all the money you'll be saving. I learned pretty quickly to avoid wine bottles from Australia. They have some special "down-under" glue that will not let the labels go unless you use a razor blade.

This may come as a surprise to you, but wineries have a lot of empties they must get rid of. All the bottles that have been used for sampling cannot be re-used. The government requires that brand new bottles be used at bottling time.

One of our readers, Debbie Coleman, who lives in a state where there is a mandatory bottle deposit, suggested going to the liquor or a grocery store and liberating the bottles for the 5 or 10 cent refund bounty. What a bargain!

Regardless of where you obtain your free (or nearly so) wine bottles, be sure to rinse them out as soon as possible to prevent gunk from forming in the bottom. You'll have a little more influence with your friends... ask them to rinse out the bottle with water a couple of times when they first finish the bottle. This simple act will increase your chances of being able to use the bottle with minimal cleaning effort.

Most of the fellow winemakers we see at grapestompers ask their friends to return their wine bottles, or else they don't get any more wine!

If you see any solids that have dried in the bottom of the bottle, my advice would be to steer clear of that one... why run the risk of contaminating your wine? There will be plenty other chances to get bottles.

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

BONNIE'S BIN: Lessons in Wine Tasting
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

Tasting wine is becoming a great pastime. I was reviewing hints, tips, and ideas for tasting, and that is when I came across Chapter 18 in "Wine for Dummies", 2nd edition which is entitled "You Never Graduate from Wine School".

Most of the guidelines for wine tasting etiquette apply to wine classes and when you visit wineries around the world.

A wine tasting is an event designed to give the enthusiasts the chance to sample a wide range of wines. How many would you sample at home alone? It would be very expensive and wasteful.

We always advocate attending at least one wine tasting per year, so you can taste several wines and compare vintages over the years. While I'm thinking about it, be sure to mark your calendar for our annual wine tasting that takes place in Laurel Springs, NC on the first Sunday in October.

You learn a lot about wines and wine tasting from others. There are several points to remember when attending a wine tasting.

- 1) Don't express your opinion until others have. You may interrupt others' concentration. Most tasters like to form their own opinion. This also helps you train your senses to pick up tastes, hints and aromas.
- 2) Do not wear aftershave, cologne, or scented sprays. Those aromas interfere with the ability to detect the wine's aroma.
- 3) Never, but NEVER allow smoking of any kind.

One of my favorite discoveries in this chapter is in a SNOB ALERT box on page 311, which reads:

Horizontal or Vertical?

Two of the goofiest expressions in the world of wine are applied to wine tastings. Depending on the nature of the wines featured, wine tasting events can be categorized as vertical tastings or as horizontal tastings. These categories have nothing to do with the position of the tasters themselves.

A VERTICAL tasting is a wine tasting featuring several vintages of the same wine, such as Chateau Latour in each vintage from 1985 to 1995.

A HORIZONTAL tasting examines wines of a single vintage from several different wineries. Usually the wines are of a similar type, such as 1995 Napa Valley Cabernets.

There is not a particular name for tastings with less disciplined themes, but we'd like to suggest PAISLEY!

That's it folks. My short time with you is up for this month. May April bring you more than you winned for!

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: Women and Wine: Part Two
by Tom Burgess, Owner

To continue our conversation from last month...

A woman who likes Pinot Grigio likes to try new things, new ideas, and is always pushing to learn. She dislikes folks who talk too much, brag or boast. She loves to wear the newest style; in fact these ladies go through their closets getting rid of all the outdated clothing.

Favorite food? First off it MUST be appealing, then you will try anything! Disposition? Adventure, adventure!

Riesling ladies like stuffed animals, picnics in the woods, bubble baths and wide brimmed hats. Turn offs? Premarital agreements. Favorite piece of clothing? Pearls

Favorite food? Loves muffins. Disposition is sweet!

Zinfandel (the RED) gals like milk chocolate, late movies, candy bars, daisies, and old "I Love Lucy" reruns. Favorite clothes to wear around the house are soft cotton t-shirts. Favorite food? French Fries (when no one is looking)! The Zinfandel girl does not like showy jewelry and her general disposition is: Ready for anything!

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

Looking for another method to de-gas your wine besides stirring?

Use a Vacu-Vin (Item #2909) hand pump to remove the excess CO2. The vacuum created by the pumping motion will pull the CO2 out of solution!

You can do this on a bottle-by-bottle basis before corking or drinking, or de-gas the whole carboy at once by attaching the Vacu-Vin to the longest finger on a carboy cap (#2610) and pumping like crazy.

<http://home.comcast.net/~jimalexander2/RemovingCO2.html>

Our thanks to George Gale for submitting this tip.

Hidden special:

#2224 FermTech AutoSiphon 1/2" OD \$9.99
That's a 21 percent savings for a product that will start and maintain your siphon in less than 10 seconds.

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-----

Sulfite gases in your wine is not a reason to discard your wine. You can help the situation by

- A) pouring a glass and allowing the wine to breathe,
- B) shaking it up in a hurry with a blender (don't get excited here now), or
- C) add a product called Bocksin (Item #2795) to the carboy before bottling.

Of course, the best thing to do is prevent this from happening in the first place. Most of the time it would indicate that during the addition of the sulfite (to kill the remaining yeast) the wine should have been stirred with more vigor and for a longer amount of time!

In other cases, your wine may not have enough nutrients to keep your yeast happy, or perhaps you are using the wrong kind of yeast. Montrachet yeast has a reputation for facilitating this problem, although I have never experienced this myself.

Here at grapestompers.com we use a Fizz-Z wine agitator (Item #2607) to knock the gases out in a hurry. You will be amazed just how much gas is often trapped in your wine! You can also try the Vacu-Vin trick explained in the tip above.

I receive many e-mails on this subject and ask also for

feedback. I know how you feel when you have this problem, because I have felt this same problem, but I have found this to work. So the next time you have this situation, try what I have suggested and let me know your results.

You're also invited to see Brant's article about the subject of the dreaded "rotten egg" smell and hydrogen sulfide at the following URL:

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

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:

Thanks, Tom.

My wife and I were looking for several items, including cobalt blue bottles. What caused me to immediately order from your online store was that you carried precisely what she and I were looking for and all in one store.

-- Edward L. Goldman
Jefferson, LA

Hello,

A few years back I downloaded a web page that had a conversion chart of all factors basically dealing in winemaking things... What it had that I am needing is conversion of how many cups of sugar = pounds etc.

I haven't found this in awhile and do not see this on the links page where it was at before... Thank you in advance for your help.

-- John D. Hawk

[our reply]

John, 2 1/4 cups of sugar equals 1 lb. You can easily extrapolate out from that. Hope that helps!

Brant

GUEST COLUMN - Life and a Can of Beer
retold by Robert Klaus, Houston TX

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the lowly mayonnaise jar... and the beer.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles

rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with an unanimous "yes."

The professor then produced two cans of beer from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

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

Need a way to remove stubborn labels from a recycled bottle of wine?

Here's a tip from a former auto refinisher: Use an automotive product called "Auto Prep", or "Krill Clean". When applied with a small moistened cloth, it immediately breaks down the sticky (or dried) glue thus rolling off the glass in most cases, eliminating the need for a razor blade. It is so user friendly that it does not even harm the recent paint sprayed on a vehicle the night before. It is effortless to use although it is a petroleum-based product, so washing of hands would be a good idea!

It's available at places like NAPA or other auto paint stores.

Our thanks to Joe Alatalo from Maui, Hawaii for providing this tip!

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

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

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life."

"The golf balls are the important things - your family, your children, your health, your friends, your favorite passions - things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full."

"The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else - the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house, and fix the disposal."

"Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the beer represented. The professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of beers."

You can reach Robert Klaus at raklaus@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??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Remuage

- The technique of gradually inverting champagne bottles at the end of the bottle ferment. At the same time as the inversion is increased, the bottle is twisted so that the yeast falls to the neck of the bottle; from there it can be removed by disgorgement.

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 #2743C 4 oz. Medium Toast French oak chips, \$2.31
- Item #3211 OB Green Apple Gewurz, on sale now for \$38.99
- Item #3239 CC Verdicchio, on sale now for \$58.99

THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

grapestompers' specials for the month of April 2004 are:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	SPECIAL
3211	OB Green Apple Gewurztraminer	45.00	38.99
3173	WA Black Currant Merlot	48.51	41.79
3174	WA Black Cherry Pinot Noir	48.51	41.79
3221	VDV Fume Blanc	45.87	39.99
3254	VDV Musette (Moselle)	41.25	35.99
3239	CC Verdicchio	68.76	58.99
3225	VDV Sauvignon Blanc	44.00	37.99
3245	CC Ruiseau Blanc	73.26	62.99
3249	VDV Chardonnay Semillon	44.00	37.99
2716A	Vinoferm acidometer kit	19.14	16.59
2609A	Wine bottle brush	2.42	1.99
2215	1.5 Fermenting bucket w/lid	4.13	3.49
2200	1 gallon glass jug, amber	5.06	4.29
3200	Complete White Wine Starter Kit	232.29	180.00
3100	Complete Red Wine Starter Kit	241.42	190.00

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 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	Adhesive Thermometer
Fast Flow Spigot	

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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