
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
August, 2004 Issue #49
<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 welcome 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: Learn How to Measure Acidity in Wine
By Brant Burgiss, Editor

Summer is winding down in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, and that means harvest time. Our pear tree is so loaded with fruit we have to brace each branch or else risk a limb being broken. The cherries and the blackberries will be ripe before you know it! Do you have a harvest plan yet? What will you do with all that fresh fruit?

We all know the answer to that one: make wine!

While it's important to pick the fruit at the height of ripeness to maximize your brix (sugar content), don't forget to test your must for acids and pH to ensure your wine will turn out to be well balanced.

If you've never tested your must for acidity before, there is no better time to learn than now... especially since harvest time is upon us and it is so easy. Once you know what your acidity is, you'll be able to make any necessary adjustments to bring your acidity within an accepted range.

If you make wine from scratch, you'll definitely need to know how to measure the amount of acid (T.A., or titratable acidity) in your must and make any necessary adjustments.

Our newest web page explains two different ways to measure

T. A. (titratable acidity) in wine:

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

We hope you enjoy this new winemaking article. If you have suggestions for more winemaking articles, please drop me a note - I'd really appreciate it.

That wraps up my part for this month. Here's to you... and Happy Winemaking!

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

BONNIE'S BIN: Recent Winery Tour Creates Headache
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

I recently took some folks - our French winemaking intern Hughes Baggio, and Mary Kay & George Taylor from Clinton, Minnesota, on a tour of other wineries. We tasted a lot of red wines... I got a red wine headache! I had not had that in so many years. It comes from sulfites in the wine.

I have become spoiled by our grape concentrates that have so little of this preservative. It's just another reason to stick with making your own wine at home.

This "sulfite warning" is a reminder for you if you go on a winery tour this summer. There are some interesting wines out there. We all had a great time eating, sipping and chatting our days away, woman driver and all! I am not sure how it worked out to be my lucky draw, but I am certainly happy for the time we had.

Be aware of the temperatures your bottled wines are at during this hot humid summer. You could end up with spoiled wine from the excess heat. We are adding another air conditioner in our tasting room, as the customers and wines are a bit warm.

Start freezing your fruits and veggies for winemaking. Then you can make the wine this winter when there is nothing else to do outside due to the weather.

My column is short and sweet this month; you are getting off easy. I will have to make up for it this fall.

'Til we sip again... We hope to see you soon.

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: Wine Smiles and Traffic Jams
by Tom Burgess, Owner

One of the most enjoyable things about being the owner of grapestompers.com is to see the smiles on the faces of folks who walk in the door to visit with us from their native states throughout the US. Some are young folks eager to enjoy the new found hobby of making their own wine, while others may be retired folks whose hair contains a little gray or perhaps even a little bald spot on top.

Regardless of their appearance, each person has a story to

tell - of their fun and delight of sharing the wine they've made with their friends. And then pretty soon, one or more of the friends are calling us to order a set-up of their own. If everyone who plans to come by our little spot in the mountains of the Blue Ridge actually comes to see us, we are going to have the biggest traffic jam we have ever had in Laurel Springs!

As many of you know, we operate another wine business called Thistle Meadow Winery. At the winery, visitors can taste over 40 different types of wines. They are really shocked to learn that they can make that SAME wine at home!

Following a tasting and a brief discussion, about 20% of the folks who come to the winery decide they are going to try it out for themselves. I try and warn them at the very beginning there will be two problems: First and foremost, they will be picking up more friends than they can imagine; and number two, don't tell anybody about their winemaking hobby, because if they do, the 30 bottles will disappear in a hurry. If you are one of those who have been with us through the years, you know what I am talking about.

So you see, there is an advantage of coming by our small part of heaven in the mountains... so you too can taste of a new wine and see for yourself if that would be a wine you would like to make.

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

Keep a small wine bottle rack in the kitchen near the sink. When you rinse out an empty bottle, place it upside down in the rack to dry before putting it away for the next round of bottling.

Hidden special:

#2611 Buon Vino Mini Jet

Reg. \$199.76, this month only \$144.00

That's a 28 percent savings for a product

capable of filtering up to 20 liters of

wine in 15 minutes with its self-priming

motorized pump. Three types of filters

are available (coarse, polishing, and super

sterile. Learn more about the Mini Jet:

http://www.buonvino.com/P_MiniJet.shtml

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-----

All this is to say, right now, mark your calendar for October 3rd (a Sunday afternoon) from 2:00 PM until - who know when? for our annual wine tasting at the Burgiss Barn here in Laurel Springs. As in the previous years, some of our customers would like to share some of their homemade wines with you - plus we'll again offer more handmade mountain crafts. We charge \$5.00 for this event, but if you bring your e-mailed copy of this STOMPER, you will be admitted FREE.

October is beautiful here in the mountains with all the colorful fall leaves with a good clean autumn aroma, and besides, we would all like to meet you in person! You will also get to meet our French wine intern, Hughes Baggio, who will be here too - just before he gets ready to head back to France for the new academic year.

One last item from Crazy Tom (that's me): if you have any

questions, any problems, or even any good jokes to share, then give us a call toll free at 1-800-233-1505. From the beginning, we intended to deliver a good product, good back-up, at better prices and faster service. In fact, we are adding another warehouse (contract is signed) so we can give you even better service. Now when you meet and see me for the first time, remember I am growing older, but my mind is always thinking about tomorrow, not yesterday...

So grow old along with me, the best is yet to be!
(my thanks to Robert Browning)

Our pledge to you: YOU are the most important. Thanks for listening.

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:

Good Morning Tom!

Being a total novice, I am the very last person that could possibly pass on a tip, but being somewhat mechanically tuned, have discovered a really good way of getting old labels off wine bottles... you know... those decal-type labels with some really tough glue. You could soak them forever and it wouldn't even begin to dissolve the glue.

Well, you can take a can of carburetor cleaner (similar to a WD-40 can) and spray it on the glue. Wait about a minute and the glue will wipe off with a paper towel.

Thanks for running such a 1st class operation. I have been pleased with every aspect of your business including Bonnie.

I think we'll be making lots of wine together.

-- Keith Browning

Bonnie, Tom:

I finished bottling a batch of Blackberry Merlot I purchased from you. I've bottled several other wines, but I'm told by my wife that, "This was the best wine she's ever tried."

It really is a great wine. I can tell by the number of empty bottles. It's definitely on my "going to order another batch soon" list. I'm also looking at purchasing two cases of 750ml bottles, an 8 oz. package of sanitizer and an Orchard Breezing Wine concentrate kit.

-- Jeff Rabold
Mansfield, OH

Hello,
Thanks for your prompt service. This is much appreciated.

-- Linda Underwood

UPCOMING EVENTS

By Tom Burgess, Owner

Take a look at the upcoming events for grapestompers.com, the Burgiss Barn, and Thistle Meadow Winery:

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Each Sunday through mid-October, the Burgiss Barn offers a lip-smacking lunch buffet from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

You'll love the food prepared by Chef Jimmy and the gang at JIFF Catering. We'll even throw a hot yeast roll to you when you sit down... so bring your catcher's mitt. Lunch costs \$8.00 for adults, which includes everything... meats, veggies, rolls, dessert, drink, and the tip.

See the Burgiss Barn's web site for information on live bluegrass and mountain music, with dances held on several Saturday nights this season:

<http://www.burgissbarn.com>

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Make your plans to attend grapestompers' 7th Annual Wine Festival on Sunday, October 3rd at our location in Laurel Springs, NC. Please call or e-mail to register for this event 800-233-1505. Admission is only \$5.00 per person, and includes wine tasting, heavy hors d'oeuvres, live music, and local artisans showing off their handmade crafts.

Customers of grapestompers.com are invited to come and show off the wines they've made during the previous year. If this interests you, please call Tom at the number above.

Other local wineries from the Yadkin Valley have been invited to participate, so be sure and mark your calendar.

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Folks who live in the area near Charlotte, NC should mark their calendars for the second annual Great Grapes! Wine and Music Festival, to be held Saturday and Sunday on October 9th-10th at Symphony Park beside SouthPark Mall.

Tickets are \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door. Check out <http://www.greatgrapesfest.com/ggchar.htm> for details.

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Regardless of your location, you can always find a local wine event at this great web site:

<http://www.localwineevents.com/>

GUEST COLUMN - Gone Fishin'
By Brant Burgiss

It's summertime, and for the moment, the well has run dry. That is to say... no one has submitted a guest column for this month!

It's actually pretty easy and you earn instant fame by writing two or three paragraphs about your favorite hobby: winemaking! You don't have to be a journalism major or an English teacher to contribute - witness our own high falutin' style of writing...

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

If printing wine labels with your color inkjet printer, spray them with a fine mist

of hair spray or acrylic spray (from an arts and crafts store) to help prevent the colors from running if the labels should get wet.

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

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

Just tell us a story...

- about a funny winemaking experiment gone haywire...
- about a new technique that saves you time or money...
- about how your new hobby has taken over your garage...
- about your Grandpa's wine exploding in the basement...
- about how you proposed after your third bottle of Moet...

or anything else that comes to mind. We'd love to share your story with our subscribers.

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??

COOKING WITH WINE: Stuffed Mushrooms

Editor's Note: In May, we asked for your input regarding your favorite recipes made with wine. We've had some great responses so far, and Chef Jimmy can't wait to see more!

The following is the third installment of our customers' favorite recipes made with wine. If you would like to submit your recipe, send it to jimmy@grapestompers.com.

This recipe was submitted by Robert and Pat Klaus from Houston, TX. Thanks folks! Here's what Robert has to say about this recipe:

This is one of our favorites. It uses white wine. The recipe calls for 1/4 cup, but I probably use about 1/2 cup. It does require preparation. The optional butter mixture is prepared a couple of days in advance. We like to serve it with Shrimp Scampi.

STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Recipe by Lidia Matticchio Bastianich, from "Lidia's Italian-American Table"

INGREDIENTS

24 White or Cremini mushrooms with caps (1 1/2" in diameter)
2 TBLs extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup scallions or green onions, finely chopped
1/2 cup red bell pepper, finely chopped
1/2 cup dry breadcrumbs, coarse
3/4 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
1/4 cup Italian or flat parsley, finely chopped
18 Medium shrimp, peeled, deveined and tails removed. (RAK)

½ cup chicken broth or stock
¼ cup dry white wine
Salt and pepper to taste
4 TBL unsalted butter** see note

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Remove stems from mushrooms. Snip off the tough end and use only the tenderest part. Chop stems in food processor.

Using a medium skillet, heat olive oil over a medium heat.

After the oil is hot:

Add scallions/green onions and sauté for about one minute until wilted.

Add red bell peppers and chopped mushroom stems. Cook, constantly stirring for about three minutes until tender. Remember, medium heat.

Remove and Cool. Transfer mixture to a SS mixing bowl and place in sink with ice water. The mixture needs to cool so the cheese won't melt later on.

Chop shrimp in small chunks. (RAK)

Add breadcrumbs, Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese, 2 TBL chopped parsley, and chopped shrimp to the mixture in the SS mixing bowl. Salt and pepper to taste (use sea salt and fresh ground pepper). Incorporate and mix until thoroughly blended.

Stuff the cavity of each mushroom. Have some extra mushrooms on hand in case there is some left over mixture.

Using a 12 x 18 inch low side baking pan, use 2 TBLs of butter** to grease the pan.

Evenly arrange mushrooms in pan.

Dot the top of each mushroom with a pinch of butter** (1/4 tsp)

Add wine and chicken stock and 2 TBL parsley to the pan. (Mix wine and chicken stock together. Sprinkle parsley evenly over the pan.)

Bake for about 23 to 27 minutes at 425 degrees F until the mushrooms are cooked through.

Transfer mushrooms to a warm platter.

Pour the juices into a small saucepan and boil for about one or two minutes until lightly thickened. Spoon juices over mushrooms and serve immediately.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve with shrimp scampi over angel hair pasta. Add about 2 TBL of the optional butter to the pan juices and pour over shrimp and pasta. Goes well with garlic bread and a medium bodied red wine, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz or Valpolicella.

Optional Butter**

Incorporate the following:
 8 TBL unsalted butter at room temperature.
 2 tsp of each: fresh and minced
 - Parsley
 - Tarragon
 - Thyme (RAK)

You can double the mixture; it keeps well in the fridge.

If you would like to get the shrimp scampi recipe that goes along with the mushrooms, please contact Jimmy Bengel at jimmy@grapestompers.com for a copy.

Thanks for your input!

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Acrid

- A term used to describe a harsh or bitter taste or pungent smell in wine that is due to excess sulfur.

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

NEW PRODUCTS

These are products that were recently added to our catalog:

- Item #3145 CC Harvest (CCH) Sangiovese Merlot, \$95.26
- Item #3250 CCH Italian Barolo Bianco, \$90.75
- Item #3147 CCH California Cabernet Syrah Zinfandel \$95.26

If you have a suggestion for a new product, please call us at 1-800-233-1505. Special orders welcomed for unique winemaking items or supplies.

THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

grapestompers' specials for the month of August 2004 are:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3280	OB Peach Chardonnay	43.56	34.84
3173	WA Black Currant Merlot	48.51	38.80
3273	GC Pinot Chardonnay	55.88	44.70
3241	VDV Niesteiner	42.13	33.70
3229	VDV White Zinfandel	48.51	38.80
2204	5 Gallon Glass Carboy	17.71	14.16
2605	Carboy Brush	4.68	3.69
2721	B-Brite Sanitizer, 8 oz.	1.93	1.49
2732	Potassium Metabisulfite, 4 oz.	1.98	1.58
2711	Super-Kleer Clarifier	1.65	1.29
2701	Red Star Montrachet Wine Yeast	0.44	0.29
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, WA, and OB wine kits are designed to make about thirty 750 ml bottles of great wine in as little as 28 days; CC (Cellar Classic) and CSG (Cru Select Gold) 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
CCH = Cellar Classic Harvest 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 Spi got	

And you get the following items free (\$16.79 value):

- 30 Customized Wine Labels (text of your choice)
- Triple scale hydrometer
- 1.5" 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 refund of \$19.95 on your credit card... that's like getting the video at no cost! 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 also save on shipping if you can locate 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 offer by paying the difference.

NEXT MONTH' S H I G H L I G H T S

- 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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<http://www.grapestompers.com/newsletter/archives>

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