
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
October, 2004 Issue #51
<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: See Photos from our Annual Wine Tasting
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Happy October, everyone... or should I say mid-October? With two big wine events back-to-back on successive weekends (our 7th Annual Wine Tasting in Laurel Springs, and the Great Grapes Wine & Music Festival in Charlotte, NC), the folks in Laurel Springs are tired but happy. Both events were very busy and successful. Thanks to all who came to these events!

We apologize for the lateness of the Stomper and hope to set things right next month.

Once again, our friend and winemaker Monty Combs served as our official photographer for our Annual Wine Tasting held at the Burgess Barn and Thistle Meadow Winery. Folks from as far away as Georgia came to enjoy the wines, food, and crafts.

See the photos from this year's tasting here:
http://www.grapestompers.com/news/wine_tasting_2004.asp

You can see photos from the Great Grapes Wine & Music Festival on the web site of Thistle Meadow Winery:

http://www.thistlemeadowwinery.com/2004_Charlotte.asp

And finally...

We're pleased to announce that grapestompers.com is growing again. We have just broken ground on another warehouse. The new warehouse will give us more room to store products, which will translate into lots of new and exciting wine-making goodies for everyone. We hope to show you some pictures of our construction progress soon.

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: "Fall" into Holiday Gift Ideas
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

Here we go into fall again. The greens are starting to change to golds, rusts, and reds... We are falling! I am not sure how beautiful it is going to be this year in the mountains of North Carolina, due to all the rains we have had along with hurricanes. It is a wonder we have any trees left.

On to more pleasant thoughts. I was in a store recently and would you believe they had Christmas items out already? Big chains and little stores alike. I guess we had better get into that mode here too. It is time to make our wines for gift giving over the holidays.

It is also time to order gifts before the most popular supplies run out. May we suggest special wine bottles that the winemaker might not buy for himself? That would be a wonderful gift. Another neat gift for the winemaker in your life would be a floor corker to replace the "tough on your back" hand corker.

And for the winemaker who has everything, you could surprise them with a bag of corks with the winemaker's name on them. This takes a bit of lead time so please order ASAP! There is a one-time set up fee of \$75.00 (for the personalization) plus the cost of corks. The corks must be ordered in bags of 1,000. That would be the ultimate gift!

If you are planning on giving the gift of homemade wine this holiday season, you may want to get some special bottles for yourself, to add that extra nice touch. Waxing your bottles (versus capsules) gives them a very special home crafted look.

For those you really care about, how about the gift of a red wine concentrate? It is great for cardiovascular and cholesterol reduction. I heard on the radio this morning that consuming 4 or more glasses a week of red wine was found to reduce the risk of prostate cancer by 60%. That is great news for wine lovers.

With that health note, GET BUSY MAKING AND CONSUMING RED WINE, because we care about all of you!

'Til November... be safe.

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: Know Your Brix
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

In some parts of the US, the weather has played havoc with the vineyards. I am amazed just how many folks are very interested in getting only the finest of materials to use in the making of their own wines. For instance, they are always looking for the best grapes, oldest vines, correct Brix, fertilizing, acid levels and the other things that have an impact on taste, aroma, and overall quality.

Having said all of that, you may ask which way I am heading. Well, with the concentrate kits you have the advantage over those who grow their own grapes, because you don't have to worry about the ups and downs they experience during the course of the year such as a late frost, an early frost, too much or too little rain, deer, beetles and a lot of time spent pruning and spraying or looking around for the promised help when suddenly the grapes are ready! So you see, by using the grape concentrates to make wine at home, you have the convenience to make a consistently good product any time of the year. We can take care of all the worries at grapestompers.com.

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

Old corks come in handy during the fun of Halloween season. Did you know corks can help with your scary costume makeup?

To turn your face black, apply the flame of a match lightly over the surface of one end of the cork. The cork will turn black. Just rub the black stuff on your face and Presto! Instant black makeup. Simply repeat the process if you need more. It even washes off easily with soap and water.

Hidden special:

#2597A Refractometer 0-32 Brix, with ATC
Reg. \$69.99, this month only \$39.95
plus get a free 5" food-grade funnel

That's a 60 percent savings for a product whose suggested retail price is actually \$99.00. This sturdily built refractometer measures Brix accurately ($\pm 0.2\%$ Brix) in the field so you can select the best time for harvesting. No batteries required. All you have to do is calibrate it before use with distilled water. It's easy to read results. Automatically compensates for temperature. Includes pipette, calibration screwdriver, carrying case, and complete instructions.

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-----

Many of you have backyard fruit and vines that have been in the family for years. You realize that older vines produce better grapes. With your expert touch in fermenting the harvest you are having a ball with your hobby.

We appreciate your orders to us during this time. We make every effort to be sure we have the supplies that are needed and send them to you immediately during this crucial time of harvesting and fermenting your own wine. More and

more of you rely on us to stock an sufficient quantity because we know the importance of having the product ready for you.

The last item that I would like to address this month is the Brix factor of the fruit you are using for your wine. Right now, we have a super buy in a refractometer that makes it affordable for all. The price would almost have you either doubting or whistling at the rate of only \$39.95. At this point, you should ask if this is an instrument of value! Well, I have personally tried it and used it and I hereby officially approve. By simply squeezing the juice from one grape you can read your Brix immediately. With a proper Brix reading, you'll know right away whether you need to pick those grapes! So this wonderful tool gets you out of the dark in a hurry. Everyone should have one - and at this price, everyone can actually afford to have one.

There is one reason for this special price. I buy these refractometers by the hundreds, directly from the source and pass along the savings to you, our loyal customers.

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:

Hey Tom,
Just a short note to tell you what a good time my wife and I had at the wine festival. It was a pleasure meeting you, Bonnie, and the rest of your staff!!

The food was great, the people were wonderful, and all of the wine was fantastic!! It was a long drive home but we really enjoyed the trip.

See you again soon.

-- Dusty & Diane Bridges
"Grandads" Peckerneck Wines
Riggold, GA

Dear Tom,
Our visit with you was the highlight of our trip to the highlands. We also went to a great party for [a friend] and his new wife whom I think you know.

Where can I get an aerator like the one you demonstrated?
I love it.

Thanks for everything -- we are enjoying your wine and recommending a trip to you for our friends in Charlotte!

-- Paul Poetzsch and Melody

[Tom replies]

Paul, take a look at Item #4326... it's the wine aerator you're referring to. You can find it on the gifts page of our online catalog.

Dear Tom and Bonnie,
We had SUCH a good time when we stopped in at Grapestompers on our way from Atlanta to DC this spring. It was so much fun meeting Bonnie and Tom (as well as educational) and we can hardly wait for October 3rd to join the fun and stock up on wine kits.

But I thought this quote fit right in with Bonnie's "Life is too short..."

"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to "skid in" broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, "Wow! What a Ride!"

-- Al & Twinkle Nelson
LittleStar Cellars
Atlanta, GA

Thanks. I appreciate your quick service. I started my kit this weekend and it is sizzling away in the basement. I look forward to racking it this coming weekend into the carboy. It would be helpful to include the wine thief in the complete kit.

-- Vincent Russo
Rockville, MD

[Bonnie replies]

Vincent, I think that is an EXCELLENT IDEA! We will see what we can do to add it!

Tom,
My wife and I visited your place Sunday afternoon, September 19th. We had a really good time. The young intern from France did a good job with the tour of your place. We bought 6 bottles (White Zin, Stone Mountain White and Stone Mountain Red). We have tried the Zin and the Stone Mountain Red. They were awesome.

We hope to be back a couple of times a year. Maybe we can arrange to stay at your B&B on our next trip.

Have a good one.

-- Larry & Cathy Harvey
South Carolina

Send us your comments about your experience with grapestompers... we may just make you famous next month!

GUEST COLUMN - Best-Laid Plans Foiled By A Cork (Part 2)
By Ed Williams, Greensboro News & Record (NC)

[Editor's note: The following is part 2 of an article begun last month]

I always, always make it a point to bring my heavy-duty, medieval-looking corkscrew to the mountains when we go on vacation because there's nothing else like it at the cabin and because it's a good idea to go in with too much than not enough when opening wine in the wilderness.

But this weekend, for some insane reason, I've forgotten my prized corkscrew, leaving it behind in the drawer with all my other impressive wine artifacts. So, here I am in the mountains, a bottle on the counter top, an empty glass at hand and blood in my eye.

My wife reminds me that I have a small, plastic, spiral opener in my shaving kit. It's one of those two-piece wonders the hotels occasionally leave lying about. And like the tiny cakes of soap that hotels also leave lying about, I pocket these cheap, plastic, spiral openers whenever I can.

On this night, I might have had more luck opening the bottle with a tiny cake of hotel soap.

If you've ever tried to yank out one of those new rock-hard, synthetic corks using a 29-cent, plastic, spiral screw opener, you know what happened next: nothing.

Well, next to nothing.

There was every bit of panting and cussing and twisting and flailing about - the kind of flailing about that startles a 7-year-old daughter who finds her parents in Kamasutra writhings on the kitchen floor trying to coax a PVC bullet from a wine bottle with a 29-cent, plastic corkscrew.

The Transportation Security Administration has adjudged the 29-cent plastic corkscrew a threat to national security. And when it has discovered such a device in my shaving kit, I have found myself the accidental guest of airport security. Now, it may be possible to breach the cockpit of a 747 airline with a 29-cent plastic spiral corkscrew, but it sure won't get faux cork out of an Australian Shiraz.

But I learned something else on the mountain that night: Drive far enough, and you can get wine in a box.

And I'm not talking about that 5-liter electric Kool-aid on the bottom grocery-store shelf either. Top wineries are now marketing premium wine in air-tight, collapsible bags encased in a box, hoping consumers will distinguish their fare from that jug juice in the huge cartons.

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

Need a quick way to estimate the potential alcohol pct. based upon the percentage Brix?

Simply multiply the percentage Brix by 0.60.

Margalit provides a more accurate formula to determine potential alcohol percentage:

$\% \text{ alc (by vol)} = [(\text{Brix} - 2.1) \times \text{density}] / 1.7$

where density is the specific gravity reading of the must

for example:

$15.92\% \text{ abv} = [(26.5 - 2.1) \times 1.109] / 1.7$

Our thanks to Keith Pritchard from Slate Run Vineyard for providing this great tip.

Have a tip you'd like to submit?

Send it to tips@grapestompers.com

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

Expect to see more premium wineries from the West Coast

promoting this concept. It prevents oxidation, they'll say. It extends the shelf life of wine, they'll say. Just push the box spigot, and out pours fresh wine from the fridge.

I found in the mountains Delicato Chardonnay - a house pour in many Triad restaurants - particularly useful in the 3-liter box. Like the Double Magnum, three liters is the same as four bottles of wine. Blessedly, that's where the similarities end.

Maybe what the wine industry ought to say is this: Buy our box and say goodbye to corks, corkscrews and all that other paraphernalia we've been selling you all these years.

Which is precisely the thinking behind bottling wine with twist-off caps. There are a few examples circulating now in the Triad, most notably Pepi from California. Next year, The Hogue Cellars from Washington state, another widely available brand, will bottle most of its line with twist-off caps.

Those wineries experimenting with the concept may seem bold risk-takers. For many consumers, the twist-off cap conjures images of cheap, fortified flask wines that have wrought so much misery in the past 40 years.

But the industry is slowly coming to understand the downside of cork. First, it's an expensive enclosure - an expense passed on to consumers. Second, oxygen moves through cork at highly variable rates, which means the wines are aging at highly variable rates.

Finally, and probably most importantly, about five percent of wines sold are "corked" - that is, a chemical called 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole has leached from the cork into the wine, giving it a musty smell and taste.

The wine industry faces a huge public-relations problem; imagine marketing a product in which 1 out of every 20 samples is defective.

The industry has counter-attacked with a variety of synthetic materials to stopper wine. However, research is now showing oxidation problems associated with synthetic stoppers.

As a result, more wineries are bravely stepping forward with boxed and screw-top wines. The consumer revolution from cork to cap (or box) might be hastened if the industry more aggressively acknowledged what it has only whispered: About 95 percent of all wines produced worldwide should be consumed within a year of bottling, so the cork is usually a pretentious, if not irrelevant, affectation.

Unless, of course, you find yourself one dark night in the mountain wilderness with no place to plug in a Black & Decker drill.

Ed Williams is the High Point City Editor for the Greensboro News and Record, one of the largest daily newspapers in North Carolina. He frequently writes articles about the wine industry in the Tar Heel state and enjoys sharing good wine with friends.

You may write to Ed at EdWilliams@news-record.com.

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](http://www.grapestompers.com) order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

GOLD MEDALS FROM WINE KITS

Results of Mid-Atlantic Southeastern Wine Competition

Two wines made from kits sold by [grapestompers.com](http://www.grapestompers.com) took gold medals at the Dixie Classic Fair in Winston-Salem, NC which hosts the annual Mid-Atlantic Southeastern Wine Competition. The Mid-Atlantic region covers the five-state area of NC, VA, SC, WV, and TN.

Thistle Meadow Winery won gold medals for the following wines made from kits produced by RJ Spagnols:

Pinot Grigio (Cru Select Gold Pinot Grigio kit, Item #3255)

Bergamais (Cellar Classic Bergamais kit, Item #3140)

Congratulations to all winners in this year's competition!

The full list of the results can be seen here:
<http://www.dcfair.com/winners/wine.pdf>

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Raisiny

- Having the taste of raisins from ultra-ripe or overripe grapes. Can be pleasant in small doses in some wines.

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 #2750 Sulfur Strip, \$0.88
- Item #3752 Soda Ash, 5 lbs, \$5.17
- Item #4213 M T-shirt - Wine a bit... you'll feel better
- Item #4214 XL T-shirt - Wine a bit... you'll feel better
- Item #4215 Lg T-shirt - Wine a bit... you'll feel better

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 October 2004:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3269	GC Pinot Blanc	49.30	39.00
3125	CC Barolo	88.00	69.99
3131	CC Chianti	81.51	64.99
3221	VDV Fume Blanc	45.87	35.99
3146	CCH Spanish Tempranillo	95.26	63.99
3250	CCH Italian Barolo Bianco	90.75	68.97
5264	B-Brite, 5 lbs.	12.76	9.99
2605	Carboy Brush	4.68	3.69

2256	3 Piece Air Lock	0.88	0.59
2601	Plastic Wine Thief	5.50	4.39
2909	Vacuum Wine Saver (w/1 stopper)	9.87	7.89
2910	Extra Vacuum Stoppers (set of 2)	5.49	4.39
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, CCH, GC, CSP and CSG (Cru Select Gold) kits create wine in as few as 45 days. The Orchard Breezi'n' 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 Breezi'n' wine kit
 VDV = Vino del Vida wine kit
 VDVWT = Vino del Vida - World Tour Series 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 Siphon	

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 corkers we offer 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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