
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
December, 2004 Issue #53
<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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^ Hot Tips are sprinkled throughout the newsletter

#&# There is at least ONE hidden special in this issue

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FEATURE ARTICLE: Hollywood and Santa, Here We Come!
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Whether you're ready for it or not, the holiday season is here! We had a really cold Thanksgiving weekend in the North Carolina mountains, with high winds and even a little wind snow, so I guess Jack Frost can't be too far behind.

If you plan on placing orders for delivery in time for gift giving, be sure to see the article below that describes our holiday delivery schedule.

Have you seen this season's lineup of Cru Select RQ (Restricted Quantities) wine kits offered by RJ Spagnols? They would make a great Christmas gift for the winemaker in your life. These 16-liter wine kits are available in four varieties:

- California Sangiovese Barbera Syrah (January release)
- French Merlot (February release)
- Australian Semillon Sauvignon Blanc (March release)
- Italian Brunello (April release)

Read all about these wines in this special flyer:
http://www.rjspagnols.com/pdf/crusellect2005_eng.pdf

Learn how you can qualify to win a free set of expert tasting glasses by Spiegelau. The specifics are listed below (under new products), as well as the pricing info.

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During the busy Thanksgiving holiday, we shot some new scenes for grapestompers' winemaking video. Tom, Scott, and I were crazy enough to step in front of the camera - but it was all for a good cause. The reason? We needed to film the latest methods for making wine at home from a grape concentrate. As you may recall from an earlier article this year, RJ Spagnols has changed their methodology a bit... for instance, bentonite is now added on Day One instead of Day 20, so we wanted our winemaking video to reflect that.

We also filmed some new gadgets that will make your wine making hobby more enjoyable and efficient. While the gang at grapestompers.com won't get any nominations for an Academy Award, we had a lot of fun filming the new video and hope you'll enjoy watching it.

Travis Sturgill of New Age Productions is currently editing the shots, and we are eager to get our first glimpse of Tom's Winemaking Video, version 2. Keep a close eye on our web site in the coming weeks to see when the video is released.

Lastly, I have a favor to ask of all our customers. If you employ some e-mail filters to lessen the amount of spam delivered to your in box, please set up your software or filtering service to allow mail from Tom's e-mail address:

tom@grapestompers.com

We use this as our sending address when we send order and shipping confirmations. Thank you!

That wraps up my part for this month. All of us hope you and your family and friends have a wonderful and joyous holiday season. Here's to you... and Happy Winemaking!

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

BONNIE'S BIN: Hosting Holiday Wine Tastings
By Bonnie Brown, Manager

Hello HOLIDAYS!

For those of you who have been making wine for a while and really appreciate great red wines, this is the time to (as Emeril Lagasse would say) "Kick it up a notch, BAM."

You can do that by making one of the En Primeur Signature series wines offered by RJ Spagnols. It is the ultimate wine concentrate, using 18 liters of juice and concentrate. That is 4.75 gallons, so you only add 1.25 gallons of water. This means better body and richer flavors. Like I said, it's the ultimate! These select premium wines are still under \$5.00 per bottle, as the kits are in the \$140.00 range. It's a great gift idea for that special person or family. Plan ahead to allow time for ordering if need be. With the cost of other wine concentrates being much lower people are not jumping on the wine cart for these and I feel you are missing out on a great product! Also do check out the 2005 Restricted Quantities kits already mentioned in this newsletter. A good wine, a notch up, and a free gift too! Simply order 3 of the 4 before mid-December so you can qualify for the gift and we can get your order to the supplier before the end of December.

If you have not tried blending your wines yet, and you have

always wanted to try (but couldn't find) a White Merlot, this is a great "recipe" submitted by Tom Korevec, a local winemaker, that mimics the taste of White Merlot:

Mix 3 parts of White Zinfandel and 1 part Merlot.

He recently did a tasting and that was the proportion voted as best by his daughter Amanda, who has an appreciation for good wines. We are fortunate to have people like them share their findings with the rest of us. I did not have a Merlot in my cellar so I purchased one from Tom's winery, Thistle Meadow, as did another customer, Cindy Johnson, who was in the shop at that time. It came at such a good time for Cindy. She is having a "friendly" wine tasting soon and was excited to be able to add yet another wine to her long list.

I think our friends will also enjoy this one come New Years Eve and the party they are planning at our home! Oh, so nice to have friends like that! If we furnish the wine and home they will do everything else. We will see...

I would like to wish you all a very safe and peaceful Holiday Season.

Happy wines to you... until we meet again.
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: How to Sanitize Your Wine Bottles
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

Here it is - the perfect time to give a gift that keeps on giving! You guessed it, a Complete Home Winemaking Kit (Item #3100 for red wine or #3200 for white wine). Now that special person can have a great hobby, and hopefully will share with you each time a new "batch" comes off. The kit comes with a complete set of instructions and we've even included a VHS video or CD-ROM (your choice, just let us know) to guide you through every step, along with the equipment needed and the wine concentrate of your choice! So go ahead, go for it! Warning: there is a downside to this gift - the recipient will immediately grab all of the attention and enthusiasm, take up most of the conversation, and you will from this day forward be REQUIRED to actually have to consume some of their fine wine! So now, make someone very happy during this holiday season.

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

Here's another way to shrink PVC capsules on top of a wine bottle...

If you don't have (or can't find) a hot air gun, you can use one of those butane-powered creme brulee torches.

They are sold by Bed Bath & Beyond and other specialty kitchen or home stores for a nominal fee.

Our thanks to Jack Cain from Sunset Beach, North Carolina for providing this tip.

Hidden special #1:
#5119 Rapid Beverage Chiller
Reg. \$99.04, this month only \$78.99

That's a 20 percent savings for a product that will chill a bottle of wine from room temperature to freezing cold in 3 minutes. Plugs into standard 110 V outlet or your car's cigarette lighter. Great for tailgating.

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-----

Sanitizing, cleaning, and sterilization... just what is the difference? I had a request from one of our customers to help clarify these terms, so I pulled our handy dictionary for the definitions.

Sanitize - to make sanitary, which means free from bacteria or filth which endangers health

Clean - to make free from impurities, dirt, or contamination

Sterilize - free from microorganisms; sanitary

So where does that leave us home winemakers? Here is what works for us here at grapestompers.com and Thistle Meadow Winery:

Each time a bottle is consumed, we immediately rinse it out with water and hang the bottle on our bottle draining tree so that the water drains out and the air can get to it. I call this our "preliminary" wash.

We do not wash bottles in a household dishwasher and we would NEVER, under any circumstances, use soap or Clorox in an attempt to clean or sanitize them.

When bottling time comes, we use B-Brite (Item # 2721) for cleaning (dirt, impurities & contamination) and light sanitizing (removal filth) and then we rinse with water which has no chlorine.

The last step - done just prior to bottling - is to rinse the bottles with a fresh, strong solution of Potassium Metabisulfite (Item # 2732) to kill any remaining bacteria that could harm your wine. How strong should you mix it? Just follow the directions on the package. You should NOT rinse after this step. If possible, allow the bottles to dry on the bottle drainer, then finally bottle your wine.

Unless you have access to the sterilization machines at your local hospital, it is virtually impossible to create a truly sterile bottling environment. Luckily for us, the procedure described above is quite ample for our purposes, especially since the alcoholic content of wine also serves to keep the nasties at bay.

PS: We do NOT recommend C Brite as a sanitizer for making wine (due to possible chlorine contamination), but it is considered OK to use in your beer making process.

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Here at grapestompers.com, we go through every possible step to insure your security. In order for our credit card machine (POS) to "zap" the credit cards it requires that we also have the 3 extra numbers on the back of the card located just beyond your signature. In the credit card world, it is called the C V V number. Working in concert with your billing street address and zip code, the C V V

helps verify the authenticity of your credit card.
We do this to protect your credit card from fraudulent use
and to help maintain your security. We want you to be safe
and confident while shopping at grapestompers.com.

Hope you have a great Christmas and New Years!

Tom

You can write to Tom at tom@grapestompers.com

Ordering Deadlines for Christmas Delivery
by Tom Burgess

In order to ensure delivery of winemaking supplies in time
for Christmas, here's our recommendation for ordering:

For deliveries to NC, VA, or SC, please ensure your order
is placed (received by us) by December 16th.

For deliveries to OH, PA, CT, RI, NJ, MD, DE, WV, KY, TN,
GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, AR, IL, or IN please ensure your order
is placed (received by us) by December 15th.

For deliveries to ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, WI, MN, IA, MO, MI
Eastern NE, OK, KS, or TX please ensure your order is
placed (received by us) by December 14th.

For deliveries to ND, SD, Western NE, Eastern CO, NM, and
AZ please ensure your order is placed (received by
us) by December 13th.

For deliveries to all other states on the west coast,
(CA, OR, WA, UT, NV, MT, WY, Western CO, ID) please ensure
your order is placed (received by us) by December 12th.

This schedule is based on deliveries made NLT 20 December,
and allows one extra day to compensate for possible bad
weather.

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:

Hi again Bonnie, and thanks VERY much for getting back to
me immediately. With all the "scams" lately via [the]
Internet I just wanted reassurance. You do a great job
always, so not to worry. I rely on you guys and have NEVER
been disappointed. For a "newbie" to home winemaking I
realized early on that it could have ended up being a great
disappointment for me... [but] not with you guys there to
pick me up and dust me off.

Bonnie, thank you again.

-- Patti Imler
Bartlesville, OK

Thank you, Miss Bonnie! You and Tommy are class acts, and
SO entertaining on the video!

I'll be placing another order soon.

-- Bill Tobin
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Bumpass, VA

Tom,
The wine smoothers arrived in today's mail -- 11/04/04.
That is jack rabbit service. I am happy to hear about the
Cellar Craft business.

We finally have some 40-degree weather. I have to go blow
the train whistle tonight.

-- Robert Klaus
Houston, TX

Hi Bonnie,
Just read your [November] newsletter, and was wondering if
you have any more of the Grand Cru Chianti wine kits left?
If you have any left, can I purchase one kit?

My Grand Cru Petite Syrah is coming along very well!

Thank you,

-- Gina Lariccia
Youngstown, OH

Bonnie,
Thanks for the [shipping] info. [It's] always a pleasure
doing business with you folks.

Cheers,

-- Glenn & Dani Exline
Rockledge, FL

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

GUEST COLUMN - Two Wintertime Wine Recipes
By Margie Jacky (Greensboro, NC) and Marcelia Hazan

This hot wine is served throughout Germany at the outdoor
Christmas markets to warm up the shoppers (in more ways
than one). Goes great with bratwurst.

Glühwein

2-3 Tbsps. sugar
1 lemon, cut in wedges
2 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
2 cups dry red wine (burgundy is a good choice)
2 Tbsps. lemon juice

In a large sauce pan combine sugar (start with 2 Tbsps),
lemon juice and 1/2 cup wine. Stir over low heat to melt
sugar. Add lemon wedges, squeezing slightly to release
juice, cloves, cinnamon and remaining wine. Heat thoroughly,
but do not boil. Add additional sugar to taste. Strain
into mugs and serve hot. This recipe makes approximately
two servings. You can add more wine to the spices (lemon
wedges, cloves and cinnamon) and heat up a second round -
just be sure to add more lemon juice and sugar.

-----HOT TIP-----
Here's yet another tip for removing wine
labels from bottles to facilitate recycling:

Chill the empty bottle in the freezer, then use a razor blade to scrape off the label. The cold temperature hardens the glue and it comes off clean as a whistle!

Bonnie has tried it and reports that this method is fast, thorough, and no hassle. She was amazed.

Hidden special #2:
#4326 Stainless Steel Wine Breather
Reg. \$19.50, this month only \$14.44

That's a 26 percent savings for a wine aerator that softens your wine. It comes with an aerating funnel, stand, and a plate that converts it for use with a decanter. An item like this would make a wonderful gift.

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-----

Famous Italian cookbook author Marcella Hazan came up with this simple way to enjoy chestnuts and red wine and shared it with readers in MORE CLASSIC ITALIAN COOKING.

Take a pound of fresh chestnuts and make a slice in each one so the hard coats will be easier to remove. Put the chestnuts with a cup of fruity red wine like Zinfandel or Beaujolais along with a pinch of salt and a bay leaf in a pot. Add enough water to cover the chestnuts. Cook over a medium flame, covered, for one hour. Uncover the pot and cook a little while longer to reduce the liquid some. Remove and serve immediately in bowls.

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??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Acetaldehyde

- A colorless liquid produced by yeast in the fourth stage of enzymatic action culminating in the production of ethyl alcohol. The enzyme carboxylase forms acetaldehyde and carbon dioxide from pyruvic acid. At the next (final) stage, most of the acetaldehyde is reduced to ethyl alcohol, but a trace remains and adds to the flavor and complexity of the wine. If too much remains, it taints the wine with a strong off-taste.

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 #2906 Private Preserve Gas Blanket, \$9.10
This is a blend of N2, CO2, & AR-Inert to spray in bottle to preserve wine. One can is enough to do 120 bottles.
- Item #2820 Book: "Cordials from Your Kitchen" \$16.45
- Item #3193, Cru Select RQ French Merlot, \$91.19
- Item #3192, RQ CA Sangiovese Barbera Syrah, \$91.19
- Item #3292, RQ Australian Semillon Sauvignon Blanc, \$84.26
- Item #3194, RQ Italian Brunello, \$91.19

Pre-order 3 out of 4 RQ wines by mid-December and get a free gift of six Spiegelau expert tasting glasses. One wine will be released each month, starting in January 2005. See the release schedule in the first article of this newsletter.

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 December 2004:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3125	CC Barolo	88.00	69.99
3203	EP German Riesling	135.63	108.88
3175	CSP Old Vine Zinfandel	88.00	69.99
5264	B-Brite Cleanser/Sanitizer, 5 lb.	12.76	9.99
2732B	Potassium Metabisulfite, 3 lb.	10.89	8.79
2688	BV Super Automatic Bottle Filler	28.82	22.22
2263	Italian Floor Corker (brass iris)	95.81	76.66
5100	Pewter Cork Opener by Rogar	119.95	95.59
5105	Nickel Plated Cork Opener	115.50	92.49
5104	Bronze Estate Opener by Rogar	99.95	79.99

All T-Shirts IN STOCK - 2 FOR \$22.00 - Reg Price \$15.00 each

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, En Primeur, and CSG 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
- EP = En Primeur 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
- VDVWT = Vino del Vida - World Tour Series wine kit
- CSP = Cru Select Platinum wine kit
- CSG = Cru Select Gold wine kit

RQ = Cru Select Restricted Quantities

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	Potassium Metabisulfite

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 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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