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THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com  
February, 2005 Issue #55  
http://www.grapestompers.com 1-800-233-1505

Winter Hours (weather permitting)

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Eastern Mon, Wed, Th, Fri, Sat  
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM Eastern Tuesdays  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Eastern Sundays (call ahead)

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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 welcome to pass along this newsletter to your wine-making 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

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

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FEATURE ARTICLE: How to Use a Refractometer  
By Brant Burgess, Editor

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Look out Cupid, here we come! All of us at grapestompers hope you and your family have a great Valentine's Day.

If you grow your own grapes (or any other type of fruit, for that matter) for making wine and you've ever wondered how to detect the optimum time to harvest your labor of love, the answer may lie in a small object that will fit in your pocket... a refractometer.

This precision optical device provides an instant reading of the Brix percentage from the fresh grape or fruit juice squeezed onto the main prism.

Unfortunately, there is a common misconception that these instruments are expensive to own and difficult to use. Nothing could be further from the truth!

We've just completed an article that explains, step by step, just how to use and read the refractometer we stock at grapestompers.com.

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words, so when it came time to write this article, it seemed lots of photos and images were in order. So not only will you see photos of the outside of the refractometer, but you will see what it looks like when you look through the eyepiece.

The article about using the refractometer is found at [http://www.grapestompers.com/articles/refractometer\\_use.asp](http://www.grapestompers.com/articles/refractometer_use.asp)

We hope you enjoy this month's article. If you have a suggestion for a future article, please let us know.

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

You can write to Brant at [webmaster@grapestompers.com](mailto:webmaster@grapestompers.com)

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BONNIE'S BIN: So Long For Now  
By Brant Burgess

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We are very sad to report that Bonnie Brown has resigned from grapestompers.com due to health reasons.

I'm sure all of you will join us in wishing her all the best - and most of all - better health each and every single day.

For those of you who have met or spoken with Bonnie on the phone, it's readily apparent she has a great love for wine and has enjoyed providing winemaking advice to our many customers throughout the years.

She will be missed by both friends and customers. Her advice and help were appreciated by everyone.

Bonnie will certainly be missed.

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TOM'S CELLAR: There's No Business Like Snow Business  
by Tom Burgess, Owner

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Looking out the Bodega window I can see snow on the rafters of our new warehouse. That means soon we can move into our new space so we can add more exciting new winemaking products to our catalog. It is our goal to bring to you the largest selection of concentrates offered in the USA on one web site. The companies we will represent will be RJ Spagnols, Heron Bay, Cellar Craft, Wine Art, and Mosti Mondiale.

grapestompers.com has had the privilege of serving you for over eight years. During this time, we hope we have treated you like a helpful next door neighbor, providing you with all the necessary winemaking supply items... and all of it just a click or two away on our web site.

We currently stock over 1,073 items on grapestompers.com for your home winemaking needs. We often receive requests for a printed catalog, and our answer is this: Since we add new items every week, by the time we get a catalog printed it would be out of date!

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

If you filter wine prior to bottling, you might like this tip:

To help prevent leakage at the filter, try mounting a wet filter instead of a dry one. You'll get a better seal when you tighten

the filter in place.

You can soak the filter in a solution of citric acid and potassium metabisulfite to prepare the filter.

Hidden special:

30 free wine capsules with each purchase of a grape juice concentrate kit.

Save up to \$4.50 on a product that will dress up and protect the tops of your bottles.

PLEASE let us know your preference for the type/color of capsule you want by telling us the item number. If you fail to do this, we get to pick! Offer limited to quantities in stock.

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](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

To make things easier for you to order online, a pickup truck (not a shopping cart) will be coming your way soon. Why call our shopping gizmo a pickup truck? Well, I've had a pickup for years and don't think I could actually survive without one... so it's only natural that I have instructed my webmaster to develop that pickup for [grapestompers.com](http://grapestompers.com).

Now is the time for our Florida customers to start their wine for the coming months while the weather is not too hot. And remember now for your Valentine's gift, give the gift that keeps on giving week after week - a starter kit for your loved one!

By the way, the US Postal Service has set a postage fee of only \$7.70 for a package shipped anywhere in the USA, so long as all the goodies fit in their box. This is great news for all our far-flung friends. Just the other day we sent a box to Alaska, and boy what a bargain! All of you folks out on the west coast can enjoy these savings too.

Tom

You can write to Tom at [tom@grapestompers.com](mailto:tom@grapestompers.com)

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FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

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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,  
In December, I received my shipment of German Riesling. Needless to say December is a bad month to ship UPS, FedEx, or any other carrier. The inside of the delivery truck was sticky on the shelf and across the floor, all the way to my door.

The friendly driver looked at me and said, "I guess something's leaking." I asked him to wait while I opened and unpacked it, and he was more than happy to wait. We found the bladder leaking must and about 1/3 was gone, so you can

imagine how sticky things were. He gave me the number to call and he verified the damage.

That day I called the carrier and Grapestompers. Both were very receptive and understanding. The carrier said they didn't need to see it, since the driver had already made a report, and they would deal with Grapestompers. You folks (all of you) at Grapestompers are a pleasure to deal with!

It was Christmas time and all were very busy. I made arrangements with Jimmy to hold the replacement shipment until Monday the next week, which he did and that one arrived without damage. Jimmy and I came to the conclusion that the first shipment, having shipped on Thursday, must have sat outside and froze over the weekend since its destination was (at the time ) COLD Minnesota.

The moral in this story is - know how long it takes to get to your destination and ask Jimmy to ship accordingly.

Our thanks to all of you at Grapestompers and have a prosperous New Year!

-- George & Mary Kay Taylor  
Clinton, MN

Tom:  
Just got the order. Thanks for the fast/accurate service. Looks like I'll be bottling this weekend.

-- David Librizzi  
Bordentown, NJ

Hey there, Happy New Year!  
I was just preparing a new order when the newsletter came out. I tried the hot Christmas wine that was in the newsletter last month. Believe it or not it's the same hot wine I had when I was in Germany in December.

The family really enjoyed it and I was able to serve it in the actual German Christmas mugs (which was the only thing I brought back).

Do more. Thanks,

-- Jim Pirt  
Asheboro, NC

Tom,  
I made 5 gallons of wine from Concord grapes. After fermentation stopped and I had all equipment ready for bottling, the wine needed some sweetening. Not wanting to use sugar and restart fermentation or use chemicals, I called [name deleted] winemakers to ask about using Splenda.

I was told after fermentation had stopped you could use "bulk" Splenda, not what comes in the small packets. I purchased what was supposed to be bulk Splenda, and used two cups to sweeten 5 gallons of wine. It did a terrific job of sweetening; however, all my bottles have a white sediment on the bottom and [the wine] has started to referment and are blowing corks.

BE CAREFUL.

-- Alexander Allan

Tom,  
Your suggestion of the Viognier was good as always...  
It is EXCELLENT.

-- Burt & Barb Vilagi  
Amherst, OH

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

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Football Delivery: What To Do If You Have a Damage Claim  
by Brant Burgiss

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At one time or another, I suppose we've all received some damaged goods from a delivery company. It's no fun because the item you've been waiting on can't be used... and in the case of dripping boxes of must or broken wine bottles, we must tip our hats to the folks who drive the delivery vans, for THEY are ones who failed to make the place kicker position for their local NFL team and take out their frustration on unsuspecting parcels from grapestompers.com.

What to do if you are the recipient of damaged goods:

1. If you are present when the driver delivers the shipment, start the claim process for damage right there, on the spot. You'll get a damage resolution at least 3-4 business days faster if you can do this. Go to Step 3.
2. If you discover the damage after the delivery person has departed, CALL THE DELIVERY COMPANY FIRST (UPS, FedEx) and start the claim process on their end. The reason? The delivery companies ignore us if we try to file the claim on our own. In some cases, the carrier will send an adjuster to witness the damage. Protect yourself and take photos of the damage to document the event.

DO NOT destroy the package or the product. Place the damaged goods in a trash bag (if it's leaking) and hold onto the merchandise, container and all packing materials for 5 working days after notification to the carrier. Often they will send a claims adjuster to inspect the damage.

How to report damage:

FedEx Claims - 1. 800.GoFedEx (1-800-463-3339)  
<https://www.fedex.com/us/claimsonline>  
You will need to register for a fedex.com User ID and password or login before filing your claim.

Or, download, print out and fax a claims form:  
<http://www.fedex.com/us/customer/claims/Claims.pdf?link=4>

UPS Claims - 1-800-PICK-UPS (742-5877)  
[https://www.ups.com/forms/e-mail/damage?loc=en\\_US](https://www.ups.com/forms/e-mail/damage?loc=en_US)

3. Call our toll-free number (800) 233-1505 and report the damages that occurred with your shipment. Be prepared to tell us:
  - a. your invoice or order number
  - b. your tracking number
  - c. the carrier's claim number
  - d. which article(s) were damaged, and how so
4. Once we've verified the claims process has started, we'll get a replacement out to you as soon as we can!

Thanks for helping us streamline the claims process.

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GUEST COLUMN - Other Uses for B-Brite  
By Chris Proctor, Thomasville NC

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I am sure we all have some B-Brite that is not freshly prepared, but we don't want to throw it away either. I have found some kitchen uses for not-so-new B-Brite:

- 1) Do you have a glass-lined thermos with brown coffee stains? Pour some in some B-Brite, let it sit awhile, and it will return to its shiny silver again.
- 2) Is your glass coffee carafe stained with water deposits? Follow instructions in #1 and it cleans without scratching the glass.
- 3) Does your plastic serving pitcher smell like apple juice or Kool-Aid? Again, soak it in B-Brite to remove BOTH the stains and the odor.
- 4) Do you have unsightly warts or wrinkles? Sorry, B-Brite is not a miracle product.

But 3 out of 4 ain't bad.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Be careful! If you add potassium sorbate to stabilize the wine while the malolactic fermentation is still active, it may result in a strong geranium odor that renders the wine undrinkable.

This tip applies to makers of homemade wine from scratch, not those who make wine from grape concentrate kits.

Have a tip you'd like to submit?  
Send it to [tips@grapestompers.com](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Tom adds his two cents' worth:

- a) Use a B-Brite paste and a toothbrush to whiten tennis shoes.
- b) Use B-Brite to spot clean clothing prior to washing.
- c) Use B-Brite to keep your kitchen or bathroom sink sparkling and clean-smelling.

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Like To Be A Guest Columnist For The Stomper Newsletter?

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If you'd like to be our next guest columnist, simply send your three- or four-paragraph article to [articles@grapestompers.com](mailto: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://grapestompers.com) order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

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CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

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Acetobacter

- A group of bacteria that uses oxygen to convert wine to vinegar (turning ethanol into acetic acid) through an aerobic fermentation.

Look for other wine-related definitions by clicking on

the 'Glossary' button from our home page at  
<http://www.grapestompers.com>

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## NEW PRODUCTS

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These are products that were recently added to our catalog:

- Item #6105 Winemaking Video, DVD format, \$24.95
- Item #2792A Blueberry Flavoring for Beer, \$4.18
- Item #2224D Adjustable Siphon Tube, \$2.66  
Height adjusts from 16.5" to 28"

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.

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## THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

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grapestompers' specials for the month of February 2005:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3111	AB Blueberry Shiraz	64.13	52.91
3112	AB Raspberry/Pinot Nero	62.37	51.77
3126	AB Strawberry/Sangiovese	60.00	49.49
3119	VDV Red Bordeaux (Bordeaux)	49.41	41.84
3122	VDV Valpolicella	53.13	43.83
3127	CC Bourgeron (Burgundy)	77.91	65.56
3134	CC Pinot Noir	83.41	68.79
3140	CC Bergamais (Beaujolais)	77.91	66.52
3145	CCH Italian Sangiovese/Merlot	95.26	78.59
3244	CC Bella Bianco	82.50	68.06
3253	AB Pear Chardonnay	56.87	46.92
3269	GC Pinot Blanc	49.39	40.75
3274	GC Soave	51.32	39.53
4400A	Wine-Themed Doormat that says 'GO AWAY / (come back with wine)'	15.00	11.98
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, AB, & 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:

- AB = Advintige Bellissima wine kit
- 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
- VDWWT = 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, Pinot Noir, 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	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 VHS 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. If you'd rather upgrade to the DVD version of the video, just let us know when you place your order, and we'll add \$5.00 to the overall package price.

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.

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#### NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

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- More Winemaking Stories from Tom's Cellar
  - Another Surprise from Brant
  - More Specials
  - More Customer Testimonials
  - Another Guest Article - Submit yours today!
  - New Winemaking Products
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#### LIST MAINTENANCE

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with a subject line of: subscribe stomper  
OR go to our home page and enter your address in the box.

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

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