

Learning the finer points of our business. Belva hails from Laurel Springs, and she has lots of experience with customer service and quality control. If we ever catch her standing still, we'll try and get a photo of her and post it and her story on our news page so you can learn more about her.

+-----+

Construction on our new warehouse is coming along nicely. You can see some recent photos at the following URL:

<http://www.grapestompers.com/news/warehouse3.asp>

There's even a photo of Crazy Tom driving the oversized forklift... I just hope our insurance carrier doesn't see that picture!

If you have a suggestion for a future winemaking article, please let us know. We want to publish things YOU want to read.

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

TOM'S CELLAR: Latest Wine Kit Questions and Innovations
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

A nice thing about our winemaking supply company is the fact that we have the "Stomper" to communicate with our customers. It gives us a chance to discuss both the customers and our experiences that may help others.

As you know by now, RJ Spagnols recently changed the printed instructions that come packed with their wine kits. The directions mention the addition of bentonite the first day of making the must. Because so many of you are used to the "old way" of adding bentonite on the 20th day, we have had many folks to call saying, "I overlooked that step, so what can I do now?"

Luckily, the process of making wine from a Spagnols kit is somewhat forgiving and allows some leeway to proceed on without too much damage to the product. Not following the instructions to the letter may slow down the process, but the addition of bentonite later in the game simply adds more days until the wine clears out.

I must stress at this point that it pays to check out the directions before you start making wine, because who knows when the directions will take another turn!

We have had phone calls from some of our customers regarding white "specks" (or scales) floating on the surface of their wine. One of the fining agents that is currently being used by RJ Spagnols is powdered isinglass. In case you didn't know, isinglass comes from fish scales! Sometimes the powder will contain some of the scales that the grinder missed! So just rake or spoon them off with a sanitized utensil... no worries.

This problem can be eliminated altogether by adding liquid isinglass (Item #2715A), which is a fish collagen used as a clearing agent or clarifier (Item #2711) instead of the powdered isinglass.

To those of you who called about this issue, we are glad you called or wrote us with your observation so we can pass

it along to the manufacturer. Your feedback is very important to us. After all, we are here to help you make a better wine.

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

For the Easter season here are some food pairings recommended by RJ Spagnol's:

Ham - Viognier, Pinot Noir, Bergamais, and Gewurztraminer

Poultry - Pinot Grigio, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc

Lamb - Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon

Hidden special:

Item #2611 Buon Vino Mini Jet Wine Filter
Regular price: \$199.76 Special: \$139.00

Save 30% off on a product that can filter 20 liters of wine in only 15 minutes.

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-----

One of the neatest innovations we've seen taking place in the wine kit industry lately is the addition of a "crushed grape pack" (which is skins and seeds) to select red wine kits made by Cellar Craft. The grape pack is sent in addition to the concentrate in the wine kit box.

You simply place the contents of the crushed grape pack into a knitted bag (despite its appearance, the smallish bag will hold it) that is thoughtfully provided for you as part of the wine kit. You then place the bag of skins and seeds in the must for more body, flavor, aroma, and color.

We've tested the crushed grape pack technology, and it really works well! We think you will be surprised at the results.

WineMaker Magazine had an interesting article in their next to last issue regarding the crushed grape pack. The author of that particular article suggested that you FREEZE that bag after its initial use and keep the bag until you have collected 3 of them. Then add those to less expensive red wine kit and make a second run! We are now in the process of scouting this out and will report back to you, the reader, the results. So you see, we are here to help!

Hint: If you try one of these Cellar Craft kits, we have found that the best way to empty the skin and seed container (and it is messy) is to warm the container in hot water; this way you can pour it out more easily (you will need 4 hands for this trick). Be sure you TIE the sack like you would a balloon (do not use a twister) so it will not spill out into the must!

What else to report?? Our new warehouse is about finished so hopefully by this time next month, we can share pictures with you about our new set-up.

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:

Tom,
I started my Cellar Craft kit yesterday, I can't wait to taste the results. The Cabernet/Shiraz with the grape skins is quite a kit. I set the tub of skins in a pan of warm water to warm it up a bit and was able to get the entire clump to slide right into the mesh bag. Thanks for all your help and hospitality on Wednesday - we always have a good time when we come see you.

Thanks,

-- Steve Stark
Clayton, NC

Tom,
It [the accidental overcharge] definitely is not a problem. We are business owners ourselves and have made some "good ones" ourselves. I appreciate you looking into the matter.

By the way, I received my shipment today and am excited to get started on my new adventure. Thanks for your kindness and prompt responses.

I will be a returning customer for sure!

-- Debra Lamme
Coatesville, PA

Jimmy,
I will be looking for my order and thanks for the price break. I would buy it anyway.

Love doing business with ya'll.

-- Aubrey Light
Eden, NC

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

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

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/claims/online>
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

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.

GUEST COLUMN - Bottling Wand Adjustment Saves Frustration
By Tony Petruso, St. Louis MO

The bottle filling tube I use to bottle wine is a clear plastic tube with a black plastic valve at the bottom. The valve has two "legs" on the sides and a valve rod in the center. Some wine bottles have a wide base on the punt, or kick, that extends to the outside edge of the bottle. This causes a deep "V" that stops the legs of the filler before the valve rod is fully pushed in. The result is very slow wine flow or none at all.

Trying to balance the filler rod on the top of the punt was usually an exercise in futility. I solved this problem with a Dremel Tool (for those who may not know, a Dremel Tool is a small electric combination drill, sander, grinder used by hobbyists).

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

If you dress up the tops of your bottles with colorful bottling wax, you can save money by recycling your wax.

As you open a new bottle of wine, store the used wax in a container for remelting the next time you bottle wine.

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

I simply ground about one-eighth of an inch off of each "leg." Now the valve rod sticks out further. The filler now works perfectly on all bottles. The modification took about ten seconds and makes bottle filling a faster, smoother process.

If you don't own a Dremel Tool, careful use of a hand file would accomplish the same thing.

Hope this helps!

Tony Petruso
Overlord Military Collectables
3008 Woodson Road
St. Louis, MO 63114
(314) 423-6644

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

Charri ng

- The effect of continually heating the inside of a wine barrel over an open fire. It usually causes browning, or even blackening of the inside surface of the staves. A certain degree of toasting occurs as a normal result of the manufacturing process.

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 #3246 CCH Pinot Grigio, \$85.45
- Item #3203 EP German Riesling, \$143.63
- Item #5112 Twist wine bottle stopper, \$1.25
- Item #5111 SS Colander, grape motif, 5" diam. \$11.43
- Item #5110 SS Colander, grape motif, 7" diam. \$17.38
- Item #5109 SS Colander, grape motif, 9" diam. \$23.33
- Item #5107 Ceramic bottle holder, grape bunch, \$12.82
- Item #5108 Towel, cotton/linen jacq weave 20x27" \$7.73
- Item #5113 Magnet, Teddy Bear & grape design, \$2.00
- Item #5114 Candle, white taper with grape motif, \$4.99

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 March 2005:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3117	VDV Merlot	53.16	43.50
3113	VDV Barolo	53.16	43.50
3139	VDV Cabernet/Shiraz	53.16	43.50
3222	VDV Johannisberg Riesling	46.75	43.50
3126	AB Strawberry/Sangiovese	60.00	43.50
3162	GC Coteau Sur Mer	53.63	43.50
3151	CSP Grenache Syrah Mourvedre	93.00	79.05
3186	CSP L'Collage	94.41	80.24
2105	Bottles, Cobalt Blue Hock 750's	17.60	14.99
2804	Book "From Vines to Wines"	19.25	14.99
2909	Wine Saver Vacuum Pump w/stopper	9.87	8.38
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
 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 Siphon	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.

NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

- 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

LIST MAINTENANCE

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