
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
May, 2005 Issue #58
<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: Cellar Craft Wine Kits Available
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Happy May from the gang at grapestompers.com... We hope you and your family have a wonderful Mother's Day and Memorial Day. It's a wonderful start of another summer, filled with many happy days of wine making and wine festivals.

Last month, we talked about the addition of Heron Bay Wines to our wine kit selection. This month, it gets even better!

grapestompers is now stocking wine kits made by Cellar Craft International. You can see these new kits in our online catalog at grapestompers.com.

Besides offering juice concentrates, Cellar Craft is most famous for their selection of "crushed grape pack" kits.

Boasted as "the ultimate quality difference" by the manufacturer, each crushed grape pack is made from over 10 pounds of virgin, varietal grapes to promote true, on the skins fermentation. All of the natural skins and solids from variety-specific grapes are captured for extra extraction of aromatics, flavor, color and body during the fermentation stage. The finished wine shows a character never before possible from a typical juice-only kit.

The 16-liter crushed grape pack kits come in 6 varieties:

Rosso Fortissimo (Item #CF8957)

A super Tuscan-styled wine vinted from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and native Italian varieties. This is a big, full-bodied wine with solid structure and bold fruit notes. French and American oaks contribute toasty vanilla and perfect balance to this intense wine. Extended aging for a year or more will allow this wine to mature to a harmonious delight.

Washington State Merlot (Item #CF9022)

Bold (yet elegant), this Yakima Valley Merlot is big and full with up-front waves of raspberry, blackberry, and plum. Subtle notes of cedar and mocha follow the fruit. American oak balances the tannins and creates harmony. This wine will continue to develop for at least a year in the bottle.

Chateau Du Pays (Item #CF0714)

Made in the style of fine wines of the southern Rhone Valley, this wine derives its complex character from Syrah, Carignan and Grenache grapes. Rich flavors suggestive of cherry, raspberry, blackberry, and plum combine with notes of pepper and chocolate. The finish shows a subtle herbaceous note and a suggestion of cedar and violets. American toasted oak adds the final harmonizing nuances. Shows well young, but will continue to develop for over a year.

Yakima Valley Syrah (Item #CF0882)

Wine & Spirits magazine recently described Yakima Syrah as "...easily in a league with those from the northern Rhone and southern Australia... bold, rich & lively, seductively perfumed & heroically structured with a kiss of elegance." Expect an aromatic rush of red and black fruit; hints of chocolate, coffee and licorice followed by the spiciness of black pepper. Toasted Hungarian oak completes the sensory profile and adds luscious texture and creamy tannins. Enjoy after a few months or cellar for years.

Yakima Valley Cabernet-Shiraz (Item #CF1247)

A blockbuster wine with a rush of blackberry, plum, cherry, and candied orange fragrances. Followed by flavors of currant, fig, cedar and spice intertwined with a beautiful balance of toasted oaks. Rich, elegant finish. The powerful fruit flavors dominate after 2-3 months aging. The full complexity starts to be revealed after 6 to 12 months.

Lodi, California Old Vines Zinfandel (Item #CF1245)

This wine exhibits silken layers of multidimensional delight. It starts with an up-front core of blackberry and dark cherry aromas, followed by suggestions of blueberry, raspberry, cranberry, and dried plum. Undertones are of chocolate, almond and exotic spice. The Zin ends with an unmistakable black pepper sensation. This popular wine seems to age indefinitely.

PLUS a "super pack" variety (with even MORE grapes - 14 lbs) is available in an 18-liter Amarone kit (Item #CF1515).

All in all, we have added 21 new wine kits to our catalog, so you're sure to find a variety you'll want to try. The complete list of kits is too long to mention here, so be sure to check out the varieties on the winemaking kit page of our online catalog.

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

by Tom Burgiss, Owner

Let's talk about ASSUME - Here is one word that will get us all in trouble and it looks like the word caught up with us here at grapestompers.com. So please bear with us! Allow me to explain...

1) When we started this dot com service, I ASSUMED that computers and the Internet would be a very reliable way to communicate information. Well, was I ever fooled! Some of you kind folks have been ordering from us over the years and then all of a sudden, you got no replies back stating we had received your order! Well, I am here to tell you, some orders never got through to us in the first place. Luckily, some of you remembered our request: if we do not verify reception of your order within 24 hours, please call us toll free at 800-233-1505 to straighten out the situation.

Many of you called saying, "What happened to my order?" and made us aware that a problem existed. We have been able to work with these customers to re-construct their orders, but the other orders never made it into our system.

My webmaster tells me that the new web server environment only partially supported the mailing script he was using... and we have now switched over to the new mailing object. Unfortunately, we only discovered it when things failed to work, so I want to thank those of you who called or wrote to let us know about missing orders.

If you sent an order recently and wondered why we never replied... well, this is what happened! Please call us so we can get started on your order.

2) When we send an order out to you, we ASSUME that you received a shipping confirmation message back from us. Well, were we ever fooled! Because of all the spam floating around in cyberspace, email filters are being put into place by ISP's and/or customers and sometimes our shipping confirmation messages get filtered out going back to you! Jimmy, our warehouse manager, does a great job of sending out these confirmations, but sometimes the spam filters "catch" our emails to you so you miss out on all the info we include in these messages, such as the invoice amount, the tracking number, etc.

To prevent this from happening, please "whitelist" any address from grapestompers.com, and especially these two email addresses:

tom@grapestompers.com
jimmy@grapestompers.com

If you subscribe to this newsletter, also whitelist newsletter@grapestompers.com

3) Every once in a while, a customer will call or write because they noticed the boxed wine kits have been opened re-taped prior to shipment, and (rightfully) they wonder if the kit has been tampered with.

Actually, it was US who opened the wine kit box! We do this for a couple of reasons:

- to make sure there are no leaks in the concentrate bag
- to make sure nothing is missing (yeast, potassium sorbate, potassium metabisulfite, bentonite, oak, elderberries...)

that is supposed to be in your kit.

Obviously, we want to ensure that your wine kit arrives in terrific shape. Believe it or not, from time to time we actually discover small leaks or missing items that need to be addressed before we ship the wine kit to you. The last thing you want to happen is to discover you're missing an item when you're in the midst of starting your wine kit!

Through experience, we learned that it is always better to check for missing or damaged items BEFORE we ship the concentrate - rather than after. We've been providing this caring service for so long - and made mention of our practice in previous issues of The Stomper - that we ASSUMED all our customers knew why the boxes had been opened.

It goes without saying that some of our newer customers weren't used to this level of service, so we thought we would address our policy about checking wine kits once again.

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

See our guest article below for a tip on how to adjust the depth of cork insertion using a standard floor corker.

Hidden special:

Item #2597A Refractometer (0-32 Brix w/ATC)
Regular price: \$69.99 Special: \$35.99
Limit two, please.

Save \$34.00 off on a product that can measure the sugar content of juice while you're still in the field. Small size, fits in pocket. Rugged construction; no batteries required.

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-----

4) We also ASSUMED that if a package was damaged in shipment, the carriers (UPS & FedEx) would notify us of the damaged material. Once again we were fooled!

So if a shipment arrives at your door in a damaged state, or if it does not show up at all following our shipping notification, please give us a call. If a box is damaged, please call the carrier to begin the claims process.

Only you are allowed to report damage to the carrier, so you must contact them to get the ball rolling. Then we can follow up on the replacement. If the wine kit leaks, store it in a garbage bag and hold onto it so the carrier can have the privilege of inspecting it out during the claims process of five working days.

NOTE: Be sure to see Brant's helpful article below about how to report a damaged shipment of winemaking supplies.

5) Lastly, please don't ASSUME that when you call us you will be prompted to punch a bunch of buttons in order to reach customer service. grapestompers.com is a very personal organization... when you call us (assuming a line is available) you will be greeted by a real live person.

Imagine that! Personal service in this day and time, with no voice prompts or voice mail dungeons. We are intent on providing the best customer service possible, so in the unlikely event that anything is wrong, we will do our best to fix the problem while we are talking with you.

I encourage you to pick up the phone and call us at 800-233-1505 whenever you have a problem or a question. This phone is answered directly by a real human being (no voice prompts or menus with buttons to push). Our intent is to give good personalized customer service!

We appreciate your business... and 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:

Hi Tom,
Just wanted you to know I received my order yesterday. I was real happy with the service I got. The box was in great shape from FedEx. The supplies and juice will be fine. I was very glad to do business with you and staff, and will recommend your service to [my] friends. I will order more supplies in the coming months, also juice.

Heron Bay is a great product. I just bottled Pinot Grigio [as well as] Black Currant Merlot - they came out fabulous.

Thanks again - you made a new customer.

-- Pat Capozzi
Lakeland, FL

Tom,
The [wine] labels look great. The sunset, boat, [and] mountains [were] just what I wanted. Thanks.

-- Edward Kita
Skokie, IL

Hey grapestompers gang,
I haven't ordered in a while so it's time for a refill. But I have a question. You have a new brand (Heron Bay). I don't know anything about this concentrate (compared to the Vi no del Vi da). Could you let me know the differences?

(Tom replies): Heron Bay will have more body and about ½% more alcohol than a VDV kit, since it starts out with a higher specific gravity and one additional liter of juice concentrate. I flew up to Canada last fall along with my son, Brant, and we both liked the Heron Bay products. The Heron Bay line also gave us the opportunity to fill some voids across our entire inventory of wine kits that we were unable to otherwise obtain. (End Tom's comment)

Tom, I also wanted to tell you that I was (at first) disappointed with my Merlot and Shiraz. I gave all the Shiraz out early after my daughter was born. I sat on

the Merlot for months. It's now about 6 months old and it's turning into a good! Merlot. I was really surprised and happy that it turned. I wasn't sure how long to let it sit, so I would drink some every so often. I plan to let my future batches go much longer.

(Tom replies): Wine is a funny animal... I know exactly how you feel. I have felt the same way about the first couple of kits I made, but I soon learned that time heals all in the winemaking process! Patience is definitely a virtue. (End Tom's comment)

Here's a recent picture of our little Ella. Can ya'll print wine labels from pictures we send in? I would be interested if you do.

(Tom replies): Yes, we can add any photo to your wine label as long as they are sent in JPG format. (End Tom's comment)

Thanks,

-- Tre' Dupui e
Youngsville, LA

Hi Belva,
Thank you for taking such good care of me as a customer. I do not expect any, but I will let you know of any unexpected issues.

Thank you,

-- Chad Huron
Greenacres, WA

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

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

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 "striker" position for their local soccer 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

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 - Setting The Cork Depth on a Floor Corker
By Tony Petruso, St. Louis MO

Here's an easier way to set the cork depth when using a floor model corker. My floor corker came with a nut on the threaded shaft that pushes the cork into the wine bottle.

There was no set screw or any way to keep the nut from traveling up or down the rod as you used the corker. To solve this, I placed a magnet at the front of the corker to stop the arm at the proper location.

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

Making wine from fresh fruit this summer?

You can avoid bitter wine by taking care not to crush the seeds.

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

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

You can purchase a style of round, red magnet at a hardware store that has a hole through it. Simply put a bolt and nut through the hole in the magnet and use thin washers to adjust the magnet to stop the corker arm at the proper depth. No permanent changes are made to the corker and the magnet can be removed instantly.

Now all my corks are inserted to a uniform depth.

Hope this tip helps someone. Happy wine making.

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

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Cane

- The stem of a shoot on a grapevine that has developed bark.

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 #2740C Hungarian Oak shavings, medium, 1 lb., \$7.60
- Item #4721 License plate holder, "Grape Lovers" \$3.50

PLUS 21 new wine kits from Cellar Craft! See Brant's article at the top of the 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 May 2005:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
CF0857	CF Viognier	112.99	96.00
CF0882	CF Yakima Valley Syrah	109.99	93.50
CF0714	CF Chateau Du Pays	109.99	92.50
3254	VDV Musette (Moselle)	41.25	33.00
3166	GC Merlot	55.00	49.85
3275	GC Gewurztraminer	47.63	40.48
2322	30 Free 1½" grapestompers corks with the purchase of any grape juice concentrate kit		
2102	Wine bottles, green, 750 ml	11.99	9.99
2105	Wine bottles, cblt blue hock 750 (offer good while supplies last)	17.60	13.99
5264	B Brite, 5 lbs	12.76	10.84
2732	Potassium Metabisulfite, 4 oz	1.98	1.68
2612	BV Mini Jet Filters, Coarse #1	2.56	2.17
2613	BV Mini Jet Filters, Polishing #2	2.56	2.17
2614	BV Mini Jet Filters, Super Sterile	3.08	2.61
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, HB, and CSG kits create wine in as few as 45 days. The Orchard Breezin', Summer Mist and 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 = Advintage Bellissima wine kit
BH = Brew House beer kit
CC = Cellar Classic wine kit
CCH = Cellar Classic Harvest wine kit
CF = Cellar Craft wine kit
EP = En Primeur wine kit
GC = Grand Cru wine kit
HB = Heron Bay 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, 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 corkers 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

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

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