
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
July, 2005 Issue #60
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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 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: Five Years of Winemaking Newsletters
By Brant Burgess, Editor

This month marks the fifth anniversary of our monthly wine making newsletter - it's hard to believe that the time has gone by so quickly. Regardless of whether this is your first issue or not... we would like to welcome you to the 60th issue of The Stomper!

We've got lots of news to share... so let's get to it!

Belva, Jimmy, and Tom have been working hard to convert our old warehouse into a wonderful showroom of home winemaking supplies. What used to be the loading dock corner is now the new office space, with plenty of counter space for the computers and customers, and the garage door has been replaced by a nice set of windows. And, instead of a cement loading dock, we now have a nice 16' x 20' deck with an arbor where you can relax and put your feet up while you enjoy the view along with a glass of wine.

A brand new state-of-the-art color laser printer has been acquired, and it has already been installed in the new office space. The new printer came with a high-resolution full color scanner, so now we can now scan your photos for personalized wine labels on site and serve you quicker than ever before.

Goosedown Graphics, our webmasters, has been working hard on our new web site, which will include a "shopping truck"

for easier shopping. We decided we couldn't use a shopping cart for grapestompers, since those little buggies simply couldn't hold enough merchandise for our customers. Besides, we're from the country, and out here everyone shops with their pickup truck!

Local testing of our shopping truck is underway now; we hope to unveil it soon, along with the rest of the new web site. We think you're going to like the new design!

We've added a lot more winemaking books to our inventory recently, and we've also lowered prices on many existing titles. So if you've been waiting for the right time to purchase that winemaking book, perhaps now is a great time save some green.

Heron Bay Wines has just announced their Blue Label Holiday Wines for 2005... a Lodi Merlot and a North Coast Traminer-Riesling. These 8 liter / 4 week wine kits will provide you with wines of perfect balance, superb flavor, and character - just in time for the holiday season! Each kit makes 23 liters or 30 - 750 ml bottles' worth and includes 30 designer self-adhesive wine labels for that commercial wine look.

Only limited quantities of these holiday wines are produced. They are only available on a pre-order basis, with release dates in mid to late September 2005. The suggested prices are \$59.99 each, so if you are interested, please let us know by calling or emailing.

Thistle Meadow Winery enjoyed a terrific day at the 5th Annual NC Wine Festival held on June 11, 2005. We sold all the wine we brought to the festival - about 38 cases worth - in about 3 hours. We had to close down our tent two hours early because everything was gone!

Why do we mention this? Maybe it's because all the wines made and sold by Thistle Meadow Winery are made from the very same wine kits you can buy from grapestompers.com!

The wine is literally flying off the shelves, thanks to all the good folks who have dropped by for a wine tasting at our mountaintop location in Laurel Springs, NC. Scott, Tom, and the rest of the Thistle Meadow gang are busy starting new batches to get caught up.

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

TOM'S CELLAR: Any Port In A Storm? Not On Your Life!
by Tom Burgiss, Owner

Here in the mountains of North Carolina, we completely missed the spring season. Somehow, a hot summer directly followed old man winter!

The connection I am trying to make is that fall and winter will be here sooner than you think. So now is the time to check out the 'New Products' portion of The Stomper for the news about the newly-released Riesling Ice Wine, Ruby Port, and the Cream Sherry from Heron Bay Wines.

If you're an experienced reader of The Stomper, by now you know that we always test before we make recommendations... Do you like Port? Do you like Sherry? How about Ice Wine? We recently tasted a port of ours (only 1 month old!), and

I was overwhelmed by the quality and richness. I can safely and truthfully say that it was the best port I have ever had... period!

Like I was saying before - time passes quickly - so now is the time to plan for the winter holiday season by starting a batch of wine. Your friends and relatives will enjoy the wonderful gift of wine for the holidays.

And if the truth be known... order two - one for you and one to give as a gift to friends. Once you have had the experience that I have had - by tasting the quality of wine made from a premium wine kit... then you will see why I am so excited!

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

Need an easy way to scour light stains from the inside of a wine bottle, without having to buy a bottle brush?

I use about a half cup of hard rice mixed with some sanitizer. Just pour it in the bottles and shake them hard. This will scour the inside off the bottles and remove any debris.

Our thanks to Bud Hartman for this great tip.

Hidden special:
FREE dripless wine spout with the purchase of any Heron Bay grape concentrate kit.
Limit one, please.

BE SURE to mention this hidden special when ordering, or you will not get the wine spout.

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

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

One of many advantages of living in the mountains of NC - besides missing the sirens, the traffic jams, and the high taxes - are the many friends and helpers that have come to visit or lend a hand. Recently, however, some of the folks who have helped us have had some health problems.

Bonnie, whom many of you know, is slowly making her way back. She is still consulting with her doctors, and we wish her all the best. More recently, Bill (our smiling UPS driver) had a serious heart problem. All of us miss him, and we ask about his progress each day. Without a doubt, Lucky misses Bill too... for it is Bill who throws Lucky a dog biscuit every time he makes a delivery or a pick up.

Picture this if you will - here is Lucky, aged 12 years, 11 months, and 29 days (that's people years, not dog years, mind you!), awakening from a deep sleep when the approach of the UPS truck is heard, racing at breakneck speed (which for Lucky is a slow walk) towards the brown truck for the expected gift of a dog biscuit from Bill.

Lucky was disappointed... but he did send Bill a "Get Well" card with a dog biscuit inside. I guess we should have sent it UPS, because the post office crushed the biscuit in the mail!

Speaking of our truck drivers, I must tell you about Johnny, our 18-wheeler driver from Old Dominion Freight Lines. He's not one of the big guys - he's just a small fellow - but he can really maneuver that big truck. He backs the truck up to our dock perfectly the first time. In fact, Johnny

delivers most of our supplies, and everything arrives on time and in good shape.

In the past, we've seen other drivers attempt to back up to our dock. Sometimes it takes them 5 or more attempts to get it right, only to open the door and see supplies thrown all over the back of the truck.

Well, enough of my rambling thoughts... We hope you will make plans to visit us sometime soon, and we will share our new front porch and the scene it offers with you.

Come see us! 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:

[Editor's note: We got lots of short "Thanks a bunch!" type of emails this past month, so rather than post them here ad nauseum, we decided that we would feature one of our customer emails as its own winemaking article!

Please scroll down to see the comments from Michael Shultz, a home winemaker from Ohio, in our guest article below.]

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/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 - Glycerin Woes

By Michael E. Shultz, Columbus OH

I was given one of Tom's Complete Wine Kits from my wife as a gift this past Christmas. It was the greatest thing that I had ever received! Within days of figuring out what all the pieces were, watching the video, and several calls to Tom for help, I was ready to start my first homemade batch of Shiraz.

The process started off slow, and I started to get a little frustrated; obviously, I wanted to try my new creation after the first week. Fortunately, patience won out and I took my time! In the end, I let the wine do its thing for a whole 2 months as opposed to the 4 weeks called for in the instructions. I decided that I would rather wait it out and have the best product possible.

I also decided to read a few things on-line and in various books during this time and learned that the shelf life of the wine may not be exactly what I wanted with the provided sulfites. Therefore, I went to a local winemaker's shop to purchase more sulfite. This was one good decision that I did make. I do not recall how much I added, but from talking to the local wine shop and reading various publications, it was not much - just like a tablespoon or so for my 6 gallon kit.

Bottling day came, and I was like a kid in a candy store. I could not be happier. However, as the first few bottles came out and I both tasted and compared a glass to that of a store bought Shiraz, I noticed that the body looked a little light and the taste was also a little on the light side. Here is where things started to go bad.

I went back to the local shop to enquire about this and asked what can be done. The big mistake was not calling Tom - a mistake I will never make again. The owner sold me glycerin, a chemical that she said was to get added as I bottle and as long as I put in a little more sulfites and stirred like crazy, I should be good to go with a little more added body to my wine.

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

Here's a neat wine storage tip:

If bottles are stored with the labels up, it will be easier to see the deposit of sediment that forms on the opposite side of the bottle when it comes time to open it.

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

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

Well, I did as she suggested and bottled all the wine. For about 2 months, the Shiraz was wonderful. On several occasions, I had both the store-purchased and the homemade wine for people to test - and in a majority of the times, mine came out on top. Well then at about the third month, I uncorked a bottle and it smelled very yeasty and had a rather unpleasant taste. I could still tell it was red wine, but more like red wine and homemade bread. Sadly, I had only been through about 10-12 bottles of the wine, leaving a lot left over.

I thought all was lost and was a very unhappy camper. I decided to do what should always be done in these situations - I called Tom. He told me that the body building agent that I used - or any like it - should never be used. In essence what I did was start the fermentation process all over again and this is what caused the smell and the taste.

At Tom's suggestion, I took several bottles and put them in the fridge for about a day or so. This enabled the wine temperature to dip well below 60 - more like 40-45 - to kill off the yeast. After this, I uncorked the bottle and the smell was gone. Then I poured the bottle into a blender and really mixed the wine up. I had the blender on high for at least 90 seconds, possibly more. This caused many bubbles to form, allowing all the air to get out of the wine.

After doing all of this, I let the wine sit and settle. I tasted the wine again, and I must say that it was much improved. Finally, I re-bottled the lot and put it back on my shelf. Not being able to let this go for long, I opened one of the bottles after a week and poured a much anticipated glass. While not the best - I must say - taking all of the above actions helped to save my wine. I do not plan on letting this sit for long, and I will be sure to drink the remaining bottles sooner rather than later, so as not to let it get bad again.

The long and short of this article: NEVER EVER add body building agents to your wine. If you do get adventurous, just know that it is not a total waste and you can save it if it starts to go bad.

Happy wine making.

Cheers!

You can write your comments to Michael Shultz at:
mshultz@deloitte.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 order, as well as our

heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Sweet Reserve

- A sample of the original juice from which a wine is made. It is generally used to sweeten the finished wine after fermenting to dryness and the wine is stabilized. The sweet reserve is usually refrigerated or frozen until needed. Some advantages of using a sweet reserve is that it adds sweetness, fresh flavor, and natural aroma to the wine. It may also improve the color of the finished wine.

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 #HB967 HB Riesling Ice Wine Style, \$49.99 (on sale)
- Item #HB968 HB Ruby Port Style, \$48.99 (on sale)
- Item #HB969 HB Cream Sherry Style, \$44.99 (on sale)
- Item #3277W VDWVT Zinfandel Blush, \$57.75
- Item #2737C Oak Chips, American Medium Toast 4 oz. \$1.75
- Item #2111G Beer Bottles, Green, case of 24, \$7.45
- Item #2813 Book - First Steps in Winemaking, \$11.92
- Item #2814 Book - The Home Winemaker's Companion, \$18.95
- Item #2815 Book - Jim & George's Home Winemaking, \$6.95
- Item #2816 Book - Wine For Dummies, 3rd edition, \$20.99
- Item #2817 Book - Cider, 3rd edition, \$14.95
- Item #2819 Book - Progressive Winemaking, \$14.95
- Item #4715 Vacuvin 'Rapid Ice' Wine Cooler, \$10.50
- Item #4617B Wine Bottle Bag (grapes), Jute, single, \$4.00
- Item #4617S Wine Bottle Bag (bottle), Jute, single, \$4.00
- Item #4617W Wine Bottle Bag (bottles), Jute, double, \$5.50

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 July 2005:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
HB967	HB Riesling Ice Wine Style	56.66	49.99
HB968	HB Ruby Port Style	54.66	48.99
HB969	HB Cream Sherry Style	51.66	44.99
HB919	HB Liebfraumilch	48.16	38.52
HB929	HB White Grenache Blush	48.16	38.52
3160	GC Bergamais	56.82	45.54
3244	CC Bella Bianco	82.50	66.00
3186	CSP L'Collage	94.41	75.53
3203	EP German Riesling	143.63	102.70
2217	Fast Flow Spigot	3.58	2.49
2603	Triple Scale Hydrometer	5.50	4.39
2254A	Bottle Drainer, holds 45 bottles	20.90	16.67
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, HB, 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', 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 = Advantage 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

LIST MAINTENANCE

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