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THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com  
September, 2005 Issue #62  
http://www.grapestompers.com 1-800-233-1505  
Hours: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM Eastern Monday - Friday

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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

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

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FEATURE ARTICLE: Malolactic Fermentation in Kits?  
By Brant Burgess, Editor

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Happy September, everyone! We hope your harvest will be a terrific one. Don't forget that next month we will host our 8th Annual Wine Festival in Laurel Springs, NC. See Tom's article below for all the details.

We've had an addition to the grapestompers gang, with the hiring of Paul Kovacich. Paul's a hometown fellow from nearby Sparta, NC and has just graduated from college. He's eager to learn more about winemaking, so it won't be long before he gets bitten by the hobby of making great tasting wine at home. While he's learning the ropes, he's helping Pam and Jimmy in the showroom and in the warehouse. Welcome to our crazy gang, Paul!

Paul's hiring coincided with the departure of Belva Miller, who has moved out of town. We'll miss Belva, and know you will join us in wishing her well in her new location.

Last week we received a visit from Frank Raposo, the Sales Director from Heron Bay Wines. We were honored that he traveled all the way from Canada to visit our little piece of heaven on the Blue Ridge mountaintop.

While he was here, we learned something new about Heron Bay Wine kits - specifically, the Ultra Premium (16-liter size) kits. We discovered that you can safely do a malolactic fermentation if you desire! You are able to do an MLF

because it turns out that (unlike many competing brands) Heron Bay adds tartaric acid to their kits instead of the cheaper citric acid.

As you probably know, a malolactic fermentation done in the presence of citric acid will not work. Add this to the fact that the Ultra Premium line contains 100% juice and concentrate (with no added sugar), and you've got a great combination for an outstanding homemade wine.

Two wines that Frank specifically mentioned that could benefit from an MLF were the Chardonnay (Item #HB943) and the San Luis Obispo Syrah (Item #HB990).

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

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

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TOM'S CELLAR: When Storms Start to Brew  
by Tom Burgess, Owner

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Here at grapestompers we pride ourselves in passing along important information to winemakers, with helpful hints to solve problems that you may encounter while you are making wine at home with our grape concentrate kits.

So let's start off by writing about the low barometric pressure (i.e. hurricane or tornado) that could come your way, and how it can affect your wine. Depending on how much the barometric pressure drops, there is a possibility that the some or all of the contents of the airlock could be sucked back into the carboy - especially if you are using the "triple ripple" airlock.

The solution? Simply loosen the airlock slightly to equalize the pressure, then retighten again.

Looking back, it is ironic that I had already planned to discuss this topic of low pressure before Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. The grapestompers gang offers our best wishes and prayers for a quick recovery for our wine making friends and everyone who was affected by the storm.

While we're on the topic of airlocks, what do you fill your airlocks with? I suspect most folks fill their airlocks with plain old water, and theoretically this is just fine. But consider this: over time, various bacteria and mold spores will find their way into the airlock, and if your water is not protected against these airborne nasties, you might inadvertently infect your wine if the contents of the airlock are sucked into the carboy due to the changing of air pressure described above.

Protect your wine! Get in the habit of using sulfited water as your airlock liquid of choice.

In COLD (and I mean cold) climates, we've even heard tales of people using glycerin or vodka in their airlocks to keep the airlocks from freezing! I have never tried this, but I would rather have vodka sucked into my wine than glycerin.

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#### WINE BLOWING ITS TOP

Although this topic may be a repeat for some of you, we've had many people ask about wine that "blows its top". The problem usually occurs during the secondary stage of fermentation in regard to overzealous fermentation "boiling"

up and out the airlock. First off, you cannot predict this because it can happen to both red and white wines. The overzealous fermentation can make a mess running down your carboy onto the shelving, floor, carpet, etc. and you are looking for the solution. This condition seldom occurs but if it does happen, here is how to solve the situation:

Place the carboy in a waiter's type tray (with sides) and then loosen or if REALLY violent, remove the airlock completely for a day and allow the fermentation to run wild and have a chance to calm down! Usually in 24 hours, you can replace the airlock. At this point you may be wondering if this remedy may harm your wine by allowing oxygen to enter into the carboy? Well, when the wine is "blowing" that strong, do not worry about oxygen - it doesn't stand a chance of entering in with that much force blowing out!

Hopefully you will not have this problem... but if you do, at least you know the solution!

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

Why take a chance with your wine? Use some sulfited water to fill your airlock instead of plain water.

Should the water in the airlock be sucked into the carboy due to a pressure change (as in the case of a storm passing through) the water shouldn't contain any bacteria or mold spores that can possibly hurt your wine.

Hidden special:  
FREE SHIPPING on all T-shirts purchased during September 2005.

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-----\*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR now for grapestompers' 8th Annual Wine Festival to be held at the Burgiss Barn in Laurel Springs, NC on Sunday, October 2, 2005 from 2:30 - 5:00 PM.

Admission is only \$5.00 per person, and includes your choice of either an etched souvenir wine glass from Thistle Meadow Winery or 2 wine tasting plates\* (see description below), wine tasting, heavy hors d'oeuvres, live music, and local artisans showing off their handmade crafts.

If you would like a souvenir wine glass AND a plate, the cost is only \$7.50.

Please call 800-233-1505 or email me (my address is below) to register for this event, to help ensure we have enough food to go around.

The festivities will start with an optional lunch buffet beginning at 11 AM. The buffet costs \$8.00 for adults, \$7.00 for seniors and \$3.00 for children under 8. Price includes tax and tip. The buffet will be served until 2 PM (or until gone) and features grilled country ham, grilled chicken breast, and chopped pork BBQ along with 7 vegetables cooked the old fashioned way (slow and low) to seal in all the flavor. Add to that your dessert, drink and bread... for a wonderful rib-sticking meal.

After that nice buffet, you can walk around and taste wines from several North Carolina wineries.

\*These rugged plates have a hole in one corner of the plate, which are designed to hold your wine glass. That way, you can hold your plate AND your glass with one hand - which is perfect for mingling with and greeting other wine tasters! These plates are made of heavy clear plastic and are safe for dishwasher.

We predict that Fall will be in the air, so bring a sweater along just in case there is a chill in the air! The fall leaves will be turning at this point, so bring a camera to shoot some colorful pictures of the festival.

Also invited to the festival are some home winemakers from our region because they always bring in a surprise or two! One of our customers may let you in on how to make your own champagne. Bring your friends and neighbors so they can see and learn how to cork a bottle, and how to uncork a bottle and avoid getting cork into your wine. We'll also be discussing wine and food pairings, how to make a sweet wine sour, and a sour wine sweet! You'll also learn how to make a bitter wine taste better, and how to make a sweet wine taste dry!

Explore the tasting of wine with different wine glasses and see for yourself how wine glasses themselves play a big part in the tasting and aroma of wine!

Prizes will be awarded for the person who has traveled the farthest to attend the festival, and the oldest home winemaker in the crowd. We'll even award prizes for the oldest person attending our festival and the youngest bride-to-be. So plan to be here in Laurel Springs, NC and join in all the food and fun!

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:

Hi Tom,  
My granddaughter recently had her 4th birthday party. My daughter took out several bottles of wine I had given her and offered them to the adult guests. She opened some White Grenache Blush as well as some Bordailles Rouge.

I watched as one after another guest took a tiny amount in a glass and cautiously tasted. At the end of the day, she had gone through 6 bottles and 3 people asked me if I would be willing to sell them a bottle! All 3 said that the wine compared most favorably with several of our local Long Island wineries. I had to explain that I wasn't allowed to sell but I'd gladly bring them a bottle.

My wife almost lost it when I told them that this is how Al Capone was finally caught and jailed. Anyway, just wanted to tell you what a hit some of your wine kits made and to tell you that it looks like you have a lifelong customer.

By the way, I told those 3 people to go to [grapestompers.com](http://grapestompers.com) and to get started in a truly rewarding and enjoyable hobby.

-- Mike Carvel as  
West Islip, NY

Hi,  
Just a note to say how pleased I am to have found your site.  
Thanks.

-- Pat Kane  
Cabool, MO

Hi Brant:  
Sorry it's taken me so long to respond to your June newsletter but I was away for 3 months and I finally got home and printed off the newsletters and finally got to read them. The first time I ever made Merlot, I had headaches from the wine. I emailed Tom at grapestompers and asked if there was something that I had forgot to add, like a whole bottle of aspirin.

He responded by telling me that it didn't get enough stirring. NOW on day 20, I do step #6 an extra time. I always do one extra with white and usually 2 extra stirrings with reds. That has solved the problem of headaches. In the meantime, any of that original Merlot that I have, I open the bottle and let it breathe for 20 minutes before we drink it. I also stir more vigorously than I did before.

Bentonite: It was in a newsletter awhile ago that the new wine kits are using this on day one. We started using it on day one right away, whether our kits told us to do it then or not. We see no difference in the wine and actually we find it easier to put it in on day one. A good tip.

Thanks for the good information in our newsletters. We thoroughly enjoy reading them.

-- Gil & Anne Payne  
Mesa, AZ

Thanks Tom,  
Always good doing business with you.

-- Austin Griffith  
Laramie, WY

Hey,  
I am really enjoying your web site and trying to absorb as much as I can about making homemade wine. I am making my first stab at winemaking (Blackberry) and am just about ready to bottle up my first brewing. I had none of the necessary ingredients I have learned about from your web site.

My wine consists of berries, sugar, spring water and yeast so I am keeping my fingers crossed. Anyway, I have my label ready and wanted to share it with you.

Again, thanks for all the great info on your web page and I will be trying again soon.

-- Walter "Waldo" James  
Benton, AR

Hello Tom,  
Your suggestion to freeze and reuse the grape skins (to

perk up a less expensive kit) is a great idea!! In the past, I've always discarded the skins at the end of primary fermentation. With your suggestion in mind, I've ordered the Rosso Fortissimo and L'Collage kits since they both start with a Cabernet/Merlot blend. My plan is to reuse the Cellar Craft skins when I start primary fermentation on the Cru Select Platinum kit.

As you know, grapestompers reduced the price on the L'Collage kit in their July special, so the way I see it, I have the opportunity to add more depth and character to a kit already considered to be a premium wine... I will keep you posted on progress.

Thanks again Tom!

-- Jerry Gura  
Cary, NC

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

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Latest News from the Wine Kit Industry  
by Brant Burgiss

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Heron Bay's new web site was launched during the final week of August. They've got a really nice web site. You can view complete descriptions of all the wine kits they make, as well as view the beautiful peel 'n stick wine labels that are available.

There's even a free online service called "WineGuide", where you can register the starting of your Heron Bay wine kit and receive automatic notifications via email when it's time to rack or otherwise work with your wine. Check it out at:

<http://www.heronbaywines.com>

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This is your last chance to pre-order the "Blue Label" Holiday Wines from Heron Bay 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 has a starting specific gravity of 1.095, which is unheard for a 4-week kit, and makes 23 liters or 30 - 750 ml bottles' worth of wine 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 in reserving one or more of these wine kits, please let us know by calling or emailing NO LATER THAN September 5th.

Learn more about these kits on the Heron Bay web site:  
(warning: this long URL may wrap in your email program)

[http://www.heronbaywines.com/cgi-bin/EN/front/di spl ay. app?di spl ay\\_news=yes&news\\_id=24](http://www.heronbaywines.com/cgi-bin/EN/front/di spl ay. app?di spl ay_news=yes&news_id=24)

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GUEST COLUMN - Wine Cellar in the Sky  
By Tony Petruso, St. Louis MO

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All kinds of situations can make for a memorable wine experience. Here is a short story about enjoying wine at the wrong time.

In 1980 my sister, Rosemary, was living in New Orleans. She needed surgery so my mother flew down from St. Louis to be with her. About ten days after the surgery, without warning, my sister died right in front of my mother. I was notified of my sister's death by one of her friends in New Orleans. My mother was too upset to talk on the telephone.

My younger brother, Frank, and I flew down to New Orleans to be with our mother. We left St. Louis on an Ozark Air Lines flight. When we were airborne the flight attendant informed everybody that this was one of Ozark's "Wine Cellar In The Sky" flights. We were served apple slices and crackers. We were to be served three different wines from a wine list provided to us. The flight attendant described the first wine and everyone was served a glass of it. A short time later we were served a second glass of wine #1 (it proved to be the best of the three).

Wine #2 was described and everyone was poured a glass of it. Later we were asked if we would like another glass of wine #2. We requested another glass of wine #1. The procedure was repeated for wine #3. We did not like it, so again, when offered a second glass of wine #3 we opted for another glass of wine #1.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*  
The best way to dry the insides of your auto siphon and tubing after usage and cleaning is to take it apart and drain and LEAVE it apart. This will make the washer last longer.  
  
In case you forget this tip, we do have replacement washers for your FermTech Auto Siphon. Just ask for Item #2224A.  
  
Have a tip you'd like to submit?  
Send it to [tips@grapestompers.com](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)  
\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Several more times the flight attendants came around offering us a glass of any of the three wines. We always picked wine #1. Finally, one attendant inquired "Aren't you the gentlemen who like wine #1?" We told her that we were and she handed us a two-thirds full bottle of wine #1 and said "Enjoy!" We did enjoy it and finished it before the descent was started into New Orleans.

By this time we were in a very relaxed mood. At least until we stepped off the airplane and our mother saw the condition we were in! To say she was not pleased with her sons was an understatement. I tried my best to look composed when we were introduced to my sister's friends. They had never met us prior to this memorable meeting. We gave mom a shortened version of the "Wine Cellar In The Sky" flight. As we walked through the airline terminal mom gave me that disapproving mother glare and said, "Your sister enjoyed good wine. I guess she would understand."

Mom never said any more about the incident. My brother and I certainly didn't bring it up again!

Tony Petruso  
Overlord Military Collectables  
3008 Woodson Road  
St. Louis, MO 63114

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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://www.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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Pomace

- The residue of pressed pulp, skins and pips of grapes, or any other fruit after pressing.

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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We've recently received some new wine-themed T-shirts and some new capsules to dress up your bottles of wine.

As soon as these are entered in our system, we will post the item numbers on the web site.

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 September 2005:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3160	GC Bergamais	56.82	45.46
3162	GC Coteau Sur Mer	53.63	42.19
3143	CC Rosso Grande	89.92	71.85
3281	OB Citrus Ice Sauvignon Blanc	46.99	37.59
3282	OB Calypso Bianco	47.66	38.13
HB929	HB White Grenache Blush	48.15	38.52
HB991	HB Monterey Pinot Blanc 16L	99.98	79.98
2729	Acid Blend, 1 lb.	4.55	3.65
2732A	Potassium Metabisulfite, 1 lb.	4.21	3.36
5264	B-Brite cleanser, 5 lbs.	12.76	10.20
2662	5" Funnel	1.21	0.97
2607	Fizz-X Mixer	25.18	19.99
2599	Adhesive Thermometer	2.08	1.66
2701	Red Star Montrachet Yeast - 3 packs for \$1.00		
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, 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 corkers 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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To subscribe to the Stomper winemaking hints newsletter, send a blank e-mail to [newsletter@grapestompers.com](mailto:newsletter@grapestompers.com) with a subject line of: subscribe stomper  
OR go to our home page and enter your address in the box.

To quit receiving the Stomper winemaking hints newsletter, send a blank e-mail to [newsletter@grapestompers.com](mailto:newsletter@grapestompers.com) with a subject line of: unsubscribe stomper  
OR you can visit this page:  
[http://www.grapestompers.com/quit\\_stomper.asp](http://www.grapestompers.com/quit_stomper.asp)

Past issues of the Stomper can be found at  
<http://www.grapestompers.com/newsletter/archives>

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