
THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com
October, 2005 Issue #63
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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: Report on 8th Annual Wine Tasting
By Brant Burgess, Editor

Happy October, everyone! By now, this year's harvest is no doubt bubbling merrily away in everyone's carboy or tank. Hope this year's wine will be great! Be sure to send us your harvest stories (helpful, funny, or sad) so we can share with everyone.

We had a wonderful time at our 8th Annual Wine Tasting - the weather was perfect, and it appeared that everyone had a blast tasting new and different wines.

A big thank you to all who came, imbibed, and enjoyed... not only the wine, but the terrific food prepared by Chef Jimmy. We'd like to send a special thanks to the wineries and home winemakers who came and poured their best wines:

- Round Peak Vineyards
- Lake James Cellars
- Weathervane Winery
- Ginger Creek Vineyards
- Old Orchard Wines
- Tom Korevec
- Thistle Meadow Winery

Over thirty wines were poured in all, ranging from Pumpkin, Elderberry, Rhubarb, and Blackberry to Muscadine, Shiraz, Riesling, Cab Franc, and Chardonnay - just to name a few.

Tom Korevec impressed everyone with his mead - by popular request, we are happy to post Tom's mead recipe in this month's guest column. See below!

We hope you'll make plans to join us next year for our 9th Annual Wine Festival. Remember, it's held the first Sunday in October each year.

For those of you in our immediate area, a reminder of the two remaining wine festivals in NC:

- Saturday, October 8th
Great Grapes Wine & Music Festival (19 wineries)
Charlotte, NC - from 12:00-8:00 PM
Admission: \$20 at the gate
<http://www.greatgrapesfest.com/ggchar.htm>
- Saturday, October 22nd
Yadkin Valley Grape Festival (14 wineries)
Yadkinville, NC - from 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Admission: \$15 at the gate
<http://www.yvhf.com>

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

You can write to Brant at webmaster@grapestompers.com

TOM'S CELLAR: Home Winemaking Hobby Gone Berserk
by Tom Burgess, Owner

This issue of The Stomper is late arriving because of me!

In our last newsletter we invited all to come to our 8th Annual Wine Festival on October 2nd. This year we invited other wineries to come to our Festival and share an even greater variety of wines. Probably due to the unbelievable rapid rise of gasoline prices throughout the US, our crowd was smaller than in years past, but the folks who were in attendance were some of the most enthusiastic wine crowds we have ever experienced!

All the wineries were given a chance to talk about their experience in making wine at our new information tent. MOST OF THE WINERIES PRESENT WERE JUST LIKE YOU in that they started making wine at home as a hobby and ended up with a winery license.

To everyone who journeyed to our piece of heaven in the Blue Ridge Mountains, thanks for coming and we enjoyed seeing you again in person! If you weren't able to come, you missed a lot of fun and a great crowd to talk about wines, so for NEXT year, mark your calendar for the first SUNDAY in October 2006!

Grommets, grommets or should I say lost grommets! Lost into the fermenter bucket with all the must... What can you do? Fish it out? Buy extra grommets? Well, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Solution: Place the airlock into the grommet BEFORE placing the lid tightly on the fermenter bucket. To make insertion easier, moisten the airlock with water (or Potassium Metabisulfite solution) and place the airlock in at a slight angle slowly and it will NOT pop the grommet into your must. No more fishing for dropped rubber grommets!

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

Instead of crushing fresh grapes by hand and making a minor mess in my wife's laundry room, I have learned over the past 10 years how to do it more efficiently - and cleaner - by using a vacuum seal storage system.

First, I clean the grapes and fill up a bunch of 5-gallon vacuum seal bags before sealing them with my Food Saver. Then I squeeze the grapes while they are in the vacuum-sealed bag.

I either dump the whole contents of the bag in my primary or freeze them for future use. If I save some for a future batch, I simply thaw a measured bag and dump it in the primary. This saves any mess and I know just how much to use for a 5 gallon batch.

Maybe this simple trick will help someone else enjoy the winemaking process even more!

Our thanks to Don Wagner for sharing this tip!

Hidden special:
All T-shirts in stock are on sale - save 23%.
Normally \$15.00 each, on sale during October
for only \$11.50 each.

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-----

CONGRATULATIONS to Kenny Hamilton of Winston-Salem, NC for winning "Best of Show" with his Zinfandel at the Southeastern Mid-Atlantic Wine Competition hosted by the Dixie Classic Fair. This is quite an honor because it is the official wine competition for our 5-state area. Way to go Kenny!

Now I know Kenny isn't the only grapestompers customer who has won a prize in a recent wine competition... So if you are one of our customers and have had good luck as well, please send an email about your prize and we will recognize you in a future issue of The Stomper.

I have had a sneak preview of our new web site developed by Goosedown Graphics featuring a "shopping truck" (I told my webmaster no "shopping cart" for me, I wanted it to be a pickup truck!).

Because our new site is being developed by folks who know wines and enjoy wines, they have outdone themselves. As an example, if you want to find a particular wine, you just go to a wine search page and narrow the search based on any combination of manufacturer, brand, type (red vs. white, etc.) and varietal. So if you search for Valpolicella, then up will pop all the different types of Valpolicella we carry, with prices, sizes in liters, kit time (in weeks), if on special, and a full description of the wine. Then when you check out, it shows you the discounted price (if buying more than one kit)!

This type of wine shopping will allow you to find the wine you want quickly, and provide you a button to add the item to the "shopping truck". Never have winemakers been able to shop online with such ease and confidence.

The "shopping truck" and wine search capability is copyrighted by Goosedown Graphics and cannot be duplicated without permission of www.goosedown.com!

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,
My friends and I have made about 15+ wine kits over the last year. They have all been Wine Expert kits and they all suffered from a sweet carmely aftertaste. We found many other people complaining about this "kit wine" taste. It is sometimes described as a kool-aid taste. I stuck with it hoping that flavor would age out of the wine. It hasn't and I'm now stuck with a lot of bad wine.

I'm just curious if you are familiar with the taste I'm speaking of and whether or not you believe it is limited to the Wine Expert Kits. I almost gave up on wine making, but someone just told me they made a Cellar Craft kit from you and in his words, "it was the first kit I've ever made that didn't have the dreaded kit wine taste".

So I am now considering giving the Cellar Craft kit a try, but I'm very reluctant to throw away another \$100.

Thanks in advance!

-- Todd Doolittle

Tom replies:
Todd, thanks for the inquiry. For the record, we have been in this business now for 9 years and what separates us from all the rest is based on the fact that we actually test kits ourselves before putting in a line of wines i.e. Cellar Craft.

We have run many manufacturers' kits and on top of that, after narrowing it down, we often personally visit the plant of that company. From true experience, then we pick that same company to make our wines here for our winery - Thistle Meadow Winery.

Our goal with our winery is to produce the very best wine in our winery and because of that our winery has been most successful. 'nuff said!

We highly recommend two lines completely:
Cellar Craft and Heron Bay

We also like some kits out of Spagnols i.e. their Cru Select and some of their Grand Cru kits.

Thanks for asking!
Tom

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

Heron Bay is close to announcing their Appellation Series wine kits for 2006. They need a few more days to analyze the harvest before the official announcement is made.

This series of wine kits introduces winemakers to appellation specific varietals and varietal blends that are currently found in some of the world's finest wine regions. Rumor has it that Heron Bay is looking closely at Washington State and Oregon...

And... we hear that some new products are undergoing testing at this very moment. Look for them soon at:

<http://www.heronbaywines.com>

The "Blue Label" Holiday Wines from Heron Bay (Lodi Merlot and a North Coast Traminer-Riesling) are shipping this week and should arrive in our warehouse on either Monday the 10th or Tuesday the 11th of October.

If you pre-ordered one or more of these kits, we will be sending them out to you so you can get them started in time for the holidays. These kits include 30 designer self-adhesive wine labels for that commercial wine look.

Cellar Craft has announced their Limited Release Series for 2006. See their latest press release, which describes the wines and approximate release dates:

<http://www.grapestompers.com/download/pdf/CellarCraft2006LimitedRelease.pdf>

(this long URL may wrap in some email programs)

As with any limited release series, we ask that you place a pre-order so we can be sure to reserve a kit or two in your name.

GUEST COLUMN - Mixed Berry Mead
By Tom Korevec

Mixed Berry Mead (makes 5 gallons)

Ingredients:

- 6 - 44 oz bottles of locust honey
- 7 lb. frozen mixed berries
- 5 Tbs. of citric acid (Item #2714)
- 5 tsp. of yeast nutrient (Item #2733)
- 20-25 drops of pectic enzyme (Item #2734)
- 2 pkgs. Red Star Montrachet Yeast (Item #2701)
- 1 ¼ tsp. potassium sorbate (Item #2742)
- 5/8 tsp. potassium metabisulfite (Item #2732)
- 2 ½ tsp. Bentonite (Item #2735)
- 1 pkg Super Kleer KC (Item #2711)

Equipment:

- 6.5 gallon glass carboy
- 5 gallon glass carboy
- airlock
- cheesecloth

Directions:

1. Bring 2.5 gallons of water to boil in large pan.
2. Add 5 - 44 oz. bottles of locust honey, stirring right away to keep it from the bottom. Stir until boiling; simmer on low heat for 20-30 minutes.
3. Add the frozen berries and simmer an additional ½ hour.
4. Let sit overnight to cool and extract flavor.
5. Pour the mixture through cheesecloth into the 6.5-gallon glass carboy. Add water, if necessary, to get to the 5-gallon level.
6. Add the citric acid, yeast nutrient, pectic enzyme.
7. Rehydrate the yeast in 95-100 degree F water for 15-20 minutes, and add to the mixture in the carboy.
8. Stir well to dissolve the ingredients added.
9. Fit some cheesecloth with a rubber band over the opening, or use an airlock with a cotton ball to cover the opening.

-----HOT TIP-----
Recycle your "retired" oak beans, staves,
and chips - use them to add flavor to your
grilled meats by adding them to your smoker
(slow cooking outdoor grill).

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

The must will take 1-2 days to start fermenting; wait until the vigorous fermentation has taken place (the froth will disappear after about a week), then rack to the 5-gallon carboy and fit with an airlock so that the anaerobic fermentation will occur. Rack each time you notice a firm sediment building up on the bottom of the jug. Take this opportunity to add the additional bottle of honey; this will feed the fermentation at a slower pace, but will allow for a higher alcoholic content of the finished wine.

After about 3-4 months, fermentation will be negligible to nonexistent; at this time kill the yeast to stop fermentation with potassium sorbate and potassium metabisulfite. Double the potassium sorbate if the wine is on the sweet side. This is also a good time to add the Bentonite to clear the wine and allow all sediment suspended to form sludge at the bottom of the jar. Stir for 2 minutes, wait 15 minutes and stir again. Stir a total of 4 times over a one-hour period. After about a week, rack and add the Super Klear KC. Rack again in another week.

After all this, let the carboy sit for a good 3 weeks to a month, and very carefully siphon the wine off the sediment into 750 ml bottles and cork. Expect to get 20 bottles out of a 5-gallon carboy after racking the good stuff off of the sediment. Age for at least 8 months, the longer the better, although sampling at bottling can be excellent.

Enjoy and let me know if you have any questions.

You can contact Tom Korevec at tkorevec@pobox.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](http://www.grapestompers.com) order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

Bloom

- A dusty or waxy coating on grapes and most other fruit, composed of dust, wild yeast, bacteria, and fungal spores. Bloom gives grapes a matte appearance when fresh and a bluish, powdery appearance when dried. It reduces the rate of water loss from the skins.

Look for other wine-related definitions by clicking on the 'Glossary' button from our home page at <http://www.grapestompers.com>

NEW PRODUCTS

- Item #2402 Capsule, bronze with gold top, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2424M Capsule, red with pink speckles, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2405M Capsule, burgundy w/gold speckles, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2427M Capsule, green with gold speckles, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2411M Capsule, black w/gold grapes & glass, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2404M Capsule, burg. w/gold grapes & glass, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2409M Capsule, green w/gold grapes & glass, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2430M Capsule, burgundy w/gold glass design, \$0.14 ea
- Item #2431M Capsule, gold w/black glass design, \$0.14 ea

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 September 2005:

| Item # | Description | Reg. Price | Special |
|--------|---|------------|---------|
| HB903 | HB Cab/Sauvignon, 8L | 53.44 | 42.69 |
| HB904 | HB Cab/Shiraz, 8L | 53.44 | 42.69 |
| HB951 | HB Colombard/Chardonnay, 16L | 72.71 | 58.16 |
| 3236 | CC Sauvignon Blanc, 15L | 80.63 | 64.50 |
| 3227 | VDV Bordailles Blanc (White Bord) | 45.76 | 36.60 |
| 3158 | Spagnols Sherry (makes 3 gallons) | 47.66 | 38.12 |
| 2208 | Blue Bottling Spigot | 2.75 | 2.19 |
| 2224 | FermTech AutoSiphon, 1/2" | 12.65 | 9.99 |
| 2607 | Fizz-X Mixer | 25.18 | 19.99 |
| 2610 | Carboy Cap, Universal | 2.08 | 1.66 |
| 2909 | Vacuum Wine Saver | 9.87 | 7.89 |
| 2120 | Wine Bottle w/screw cap, 5 oz (cs) | 6.77 | 5.42 |
| | *Generally used for wedding wines or party favors | | |
| 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 = 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 (DVD) | 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 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 have a VHS version of the video (instead of the DVD), just let us know when you place your order.

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

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grapestompers.com
102 Thistle Meadow
Laurel Springs, NC 28644

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