



The Stomper

The Free Monthly Winemaking Newsletter
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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. HOT TIPS are sprinkled throughout the newsletter, and if you look carefully, you may even find a HIDDEN SPECIAL!

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Feature Article

Save Money by Cleaning and Recycling Bottles

by Brant Burgiss

Happy New Year from the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. We hope everyone in your family had a wonderful and safe holiday season, toasting the year 2006 with a glass of your own homemade wine! It is the season of New Year's resolutions... what are yours?

I'd like to make even more wine this year than last, and one of the ways I plan on being able to afford it is to save money where I can. Did you realize that new wine bottles cost almost as much as the wine itself? You can expect to spend about a dollar per bottle for plain 750 ml bottles; some of the fancier wine bottles we stock cost up to \$2.50 per bottle... and the cost will probably be going up soon due to the rising cost of freight, raw materials, and the petroleum-based fuels needed to create glass.

Why not combat the high prices of glass by recycling used wine bottles? Here are some simple steps that I do to remove old labels:

1. Rinse out wine bottles with water and drain them as soon as they are empty. This helps prevent the growth of "yuckies" in the bottom of your bottles.
2. Save time by removing wine labels from several bottles at a time. I put all my empty rinsed bottles in an old washtub, where I keep them until the tub is filled.
3. Start the cleaning process by soaking the wine bottles in water overnight. I usually sprinkle in some OxyClean, TSP, or B-Brite into the water to help loosen labels.
4. Most of the labels will fall off or can be removed easily after the overnight soak.*
5. Clean and rinse the bottles. Drain, dry and store upside down until ready to sanitize prior to bottling.

*For the removal of stubborn wine labels (like Australian wines, where they must use some kind of super he-man glue), I generally use Scotch Brite pads, steel wool, sharp cuss words, or razor blades in addition to the overnight soak. I have also been known to squirt a little Goo-Gone on the outside of the bottle!

Important Announcement

Upcoming Web Site Updates

We recently added a [shipping map](#) to our web site (which shows approximate delivery times to the contiguous 48 states, once an order is shipped) to help you estimate shipping time. Several folks have suggested that we also provide at least some way of estimating approximate shipping charges so customers will have a better idea of an order's total cost before committing to a purchase.

As you might imagine, shipping charges are mostly based on weight and the distance traveled from our location to yours. To get started on our shipping charge estimator, our first step was to weigh each product. We did this during our December inventory. During the month of January, we will be entering these weights into our online system. Once that is done, our webmasters will write some more code that will start keeping track of the weight of the items in your shopping truck. Once the order's weight total is calculated, you will be able to see an estimate of the shipping charges based upon your general location. It won't be a perfect system, but it will give you a good estimate. We are working to have the Shipping Estimator active as soon as we can.



Tom says, "Happy New Year!"

Hot Tip

Save On Shipping Costs

Save money on shipping charges via UPS or FedEx by having your order shipped to a certified business address instead of a home address.

When you do this, you can save at least a dollar and possibly more!

Note: In the eyes of UPS and FedEx, a home-based business does not qualify.

Wine Kit Research Benefits Our Customers

by Tom Burgiss

All of us here at grapestompers.com had a little time off with our families and we certainly hope that you too, had a nice Christmas and New Year. Each year we look back briefly only to fly into the next new year. Personally, I like to look forward so let's take a peek into the future for you - our home wine maker! So here goes:

This coming year you will see more and more of the manufacturers of concentrates sending crushed grape packs along with the normal juice of a red wine kit. This technology is a big step forward and will give you unbelievable results. It will clearly rival the very finest wines found in anyone's cellar or on the shelves of stores in your hometown. You are in for a very pleasant surprise if you haven't yet tried one of these.

Credit for this idea goes to *Cellar Craft* who first launched this product. *Spagnols* has joined in the race and *Heron Bay's* line of crushed grape products is on the horizon. As in the past, the gang at grapestompers.com will do our own research on different kits and report back to you regarding our recommendations. Experienced readers of this newsletter and customers who have been with us during these past 9 years already know and realize we are here for you. So look for these observations and reports in future issues of "The Stomper".

During our research we certainly do a lot reading, but a very important part is learning from you, our customers. So in that light, please drop us an email on any findings you have come across and then we can share it with our other subscribers.

Our big hint of the month is simple - recycle your bottles... Wine bottles are taking a ride UP in price! Why? In order to make a bottle (or even food grade plastic), propane or natural gas is used to create the glass or plastic.

How to lower your shipping cost is another subject. It is becoming a pet peeve of mine, when I order something for \$19.95 and by the time it reaches me, handling costs and shipping add an additional \$12-15 bucks...WOW! I know how you feel, I have felt the same myself, but I have FOUND a way to beat it... So here goes the answer:

grapestompers has always offered a 10% discount on any additional grape concentrate kit you order after the first one. Since *the percentage comes off the higher priced concentrate*, why not purchase a higher price kit - say in the \$80-100 range - and let

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Latest Wine Kit News

Limited Release Order Deadlines

Last month, we talked about all the new kits scheduled for release by Heron Bay, RJ Spagnols, and Cellar Craft in the first part of 2006. Most wine kits of these types are available only by pre-order. **Here is the list of limited release wines that must be ordered this month or else you will miss out:**

Heron Bay Appellation Series - 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. The kit described below comes in both 8L (Blue Label) and 16L (Platinum Label) sizes, and is available by pre-order only.

- Mendocino County Chardonnay Symphony - order by February 6, 2006
grapestompers price: 8L: \$56.99 (Item HB988); 16L: \$80.99 (Item HB994)

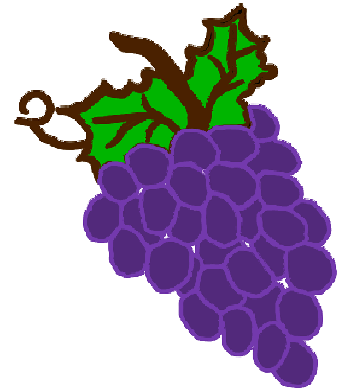
For a complete description of the 2006 Appellation Series, visit the Heron Bay Wines web site at www.heronbaywines.com

RJ Spagnols RQ (Restricted Quantities) - Pre-order only

- South African Petit Chenin Blanc - Item RQ306 - order by January 31, 2006
grapestompers.com price: 16L: \$73.05

Cellar Craft Limited Release Collection - The kit shown below comes in an 18L format and includes a 2L crushed grape pack to enhance flavor & tannins.

- Italian Pinot Nero - Item CF0095 - order by January 15, 2006
grapestompers.com price: 18L: \$121.99



Customer Feedback

Dear Tom,
I have to tell you Tom, your response to me about my mead and now your response to my sister about the suddenness of your shopping cart [not showing shipping fees] -- well, I see why she's so pleased with and loyal to you. Because of that, I'll be the same, and gratefully so.

I really appreciate your expertise and am glad you're sorting out the shopping cart too. Thanks again, I appreciate you, and Grapestompers, very much!

Ruth Putney

Dear Tom,
Please explain the use of 8L, 16L, and 18L nomenclature on your wine kits.

Is this the contents of the kit or the resulting amount of wine? I have a 6 gallon carboy. Thanks.

John LeRoy
via the web site

Tom replies:

John, this is a common question that gets asked a lot around here, but a good one. The numbers indicate the contents of the kit in liters (L). It's just that some kits contain more juice than others!

With the exception of some specialty wines (like Port, Sherry, Ice Wine, etc.) all kits will make 23L (6 US gallons) of wine, which equals about 30 standard 750 ml wine bottles.

*Hope that helps,
Tom*

New Products

Here is a list of new products we've added since last month:

CF0007 Argentinean Malbec 18L \$109.99
 CF0050 S. African Pinotage, 18L \$121.99
 4625A Wine bottle bag, double, \$5.50
 4625B Wine bottle bag w/window, \$5.50
 2203B Cap for 1 gal. jugs, black, \$0.47

Now accepting pre-orders for LE kits:

HB988 Chard/Symphony 8L, \$56.99
 HB994 Chard/Symphony 16L, \$80.99
 CF0095 Italian Pinot Nero 18L, \$121.99
 CF0096 Naked Chardonnay, 16L \$99.99
 CF0097 Italian Barbera, 18L \$121.99

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.

Corky's Corner

Winemaking Definition

Esters

Aromatic, organic compounds that are produced by the chemical reaction of alcohol with acids and other components during fermentation and aging of wine.

Esters contribute complex flavors to a well aged wine; their presence can cause fruity flavors and aromas, such as banana, blueberry, and pear, that intentionally or unintentionally occur in some wines.

Look for other wine-related definitions by viewing our online Glossary at www.grapestompers.com/glossary.asp

Hot Tip

Make A Sanitary Spray

If soaking large pieces of winemaking equipment in a solution of potassium metabisulfite (or whatever you use for sanitizing) is cumbersome, why not put a bit of the solution in a spray bottle?

Just lay your equipment on a clean surface and spray the solution wherever you need it.

Have a tip to submit? Let us know your favorite winemaking tip by going to:

www.grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.asp

Monthly Specials

Specials for January 2006

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
HB991	HB Monterey Pinot Blanc, 16L	\$99.98	\$64.98
HB983	HB Monterey Pinot Blanc, 8L	\$70.53	\$45.84
HB992	HB Napa Valley Gamay, 16L	\$105.07	\$69.29
HB984	HB Napa Valley Gamay, 8L	\$72.53	\$47.14
HB990	HB San Luis Obispo Syrah, 16L	\$94.53	\$61.44
HB982	HB San Luis Obispo Syrah, 8L	\$68.16	\$44.30
HB917	HB Dry White, 8L (past exp. date)	\$48.16	\$19.99
HB975	HB Strawberry White Zinfandel, 6L	\$47.80	\$37.99
3218	VDV Chamblaise (Chablis), 7L	\$44.88	\$29.95
3220	VDV Chenin Blanc, 7L	\$45.66	\$29.95
3225	VDV Sauvignon Blanc, 7L	\$47.66	\$29.95
3155	CSP La Rioja Nueva, 16L	\$94.41	\$61.36
3256	CSP Riesling Traminer, 16L	\$86.13	\$55.98
3132	CC Valpolicella, 15L	\$78.82	\$51.23
3146	CC Spanish Tempranillo, 15L	\$95.26	\$59.99
2250	Carboy Drier	\$8.72	\$6.97
2598	Wine Thief / Test Jar Combo	\$7.39	\$5.91
2312	Corks, Twin Top #9 (each)	\$0.13	\$0.09
2903	Corkscrew, Double Lever Wing	\$6.33	\$4.99
3100	Complete Wine Kit - Red	\$241.42	\$190.00
3200	Complete Wine Kit - White	\$232.29	\$180.00

Guest Column

Customers Compete for Free Wine Kit

No one has volunteered to write this month's guest column, so Crazy Tom has come up with a friendly little competition...

Ever watch the TV game show *Wheel of Fortune*? Well, we're about to play Wine of Fortune, so put on your thinking caps!

The winemaking mystery word is: _ L E _ D _ N _

HIDDEN SPECIAL

All PVC Capsules - all colors, all designs. Mix 'n match OK.

Regularly \$0.14 each, they're on sale through January 31, 2006 for only \$0.10 each

Hints: a) It has been one of the hottest trends for home winemakers this past year.

b) It gives you much pleasure and satisfaction when serving wines to your guests.

c) Two makes three..... give up? The answer is blending! We have had several nice reports from fellow vintners who have blended a couple of their own wines to create an entirely different wine. Try a 60%-40% Malbec and Cabernet Franc blend - go back and taste each wine separately, then try the blend again....see what I mean? Share the results of your blending experiments (the types and percentages of wines) with us and we will enter them in *The Stomper's* Best Blend Contest. We will judge the blends, and the best blend will win a free 8L Heron Bay wine kit from grapestompers.com.

Like To Be A Guest Columnist For The Stomper Newsletter?

Just email us a 3 or 4-paragraph article to articles@grapestompers.com. If your article is published, you'll receive a discount on your next grapestompers.com order.

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the savings help pay for a portion of the shipping. Let me reiterate: if you do order two kits with different prices, *the percentage comes off the higher priced one* (our new web site figures this automatically) and at the *end of the order, as you check out*, you will see this amount reflected in your total.

Because we do ship heavy packages (and in order to collect for damaged goods in the case of dropped or squished boxes), we have to use a box that meets the crush requirements of both FedEx and UPS. We do pass along the charge of the crush-proof box if it is used, but only at our cost. We do not make a profit on the box, nor do we charge a handling fee.

Another way to save on shipping is to have your package(s) delivered to a certified business address on main streets of a city or at a friend's business. Unfortunately, a home based business is not recognized by UPS and FedEx, so it will not qualify for the business delivery discount.

Did you realize that both UPS and FedEx charge an additional fee on delivery of packages to remote areas? To my mind, the way these areas are defined is often questionable; there seems to be little consistency in deciding which cities are "remote" and which are not. For instance, one of these shipping companies designates a city where they operate a distribution center as "remote", even though it sits astride a major 4-lane highway that crosses our state. How about that?! There is obviously no guideline set by an objective third party. UPS & FedEx decide on the "remote" designation themselves. Another shipping add-on is that each package is automatically insured by them for up to \$99.00 (you cannot "opt out" of this insurance) and they have increased the amount they charge for this insurance too. The bad part about all these surcharges? When you call or go to their web site to get a quote direct from either, it deals with weight and zip codes only, and does not take into account things such as fuel surcharge, remote areas, or insurance!

So what are we doing about it? We are gearing up as fast as possible to provide a way for you to get an estimate of your shipping costs before you check out. In the meantime, on your next order at the very end as you check out, there is a comments space for you where you can request the shipping cost before we charge your credit card. We then pull your order, pack it, weigh it, and put through the system that gives an accurate shipping amount. No smoke and mirrors here at grapestompers.com!

For large weights - orders weighing 300 pounds or more - we ship via truck from our dock to the nearest trucking dock for you. Many wine clubs are doing this and the freight savings is certainly a factor to consider. We have less damage, and the price quoted by the trucking firm we use is an accurate amount. We pay in advance so you may receive our discount freight rate for your delivery. On the packaging will be your phone number for them to contact you, and we will provide the tracking or pro number so you can do your own tracking if desired. Hopefully you can see that we are working for you in every aspect and we appreciate you as our customer! Thanks again, Tom.

The Stomper

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Wine Drops

Wine Drops is a catch-all for various tidbits that we find interesting. It may be anything - a wine recipe, a wine joke, links to neat web sites, etc. This month, we offer some more wine jokes.

A highway patrolman signals to the driver of a car to pull over to the side of the road, because he appears to be driving erratically. He says to the driver, "Pardon me, but it looks like you have been drinking!"

The driver answers, "No sir, officer. I am just tired after a long day."

The patrolman looks into the car and notices that the driver is a priest. He then sees that there is an empty bottle on the floor. He says to the driver, "What is - or should I say was - in this bottle?"

The driver answers, "Water!"

The patrolman says, "It's not water, it's wine!"

The driver looks up to the heavens and says, "Oh Lord, you have done it again!"

Overheard in the ladies room:

Men are like fine wine. They all start out like grapes, and it's our job to stomp on them and keep them in the dark until they mature into something you'd want to have dinner with.

Here are some bumper stickers we'd like to see:

Defend the 21st Amendment!

I have an honor student at the U-Brew Wine Academy

Warning: Driver only carries \$20 worth of Cabernet

This car stops for all wine sales!

I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy

Crime control -- not wine control

Wine tasters do it with their tongues