



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!

In This Issue

Feature Article	1
Tom's Cellar	2
Customer Feedback	2
Latest Wine Kit News	2
Guest Column	3
Corky's Winemaking Term	3
New Products	3
This Month's Specials	3
Wine Drops	4

Feature Article

'Tis The Season of Wine Festivals

by Brant Burgiss

Merry May, everyone, and especially to all the Moms out there! We hope you will have a special day on May 14th and are able to enjoy it with your family.

I don't know about your state, but in North Carolina the wine festival season has started out on a furious pace! Our winery, which makes all its wines from the same kits sold at grapestompers.com, is set to participate in 10 festivals this year.

If you've never been to a wine festival, you simply MUST GO and experience it. Most of them take the form of an outdoor fair, with tents set up by the various wineries. Each winery pours samples of wines, and wines are for sale by the glass, bottle, or case. For a small fee (generally \$20—\$30) the organizers give you a wine glass, a wrist band, and the privilege of sampling wines from all the participating wineries. A lot of festivals offer live music, food, and other wine-themed programs and craft vendors. It's a great way to taste a lot of wines - to explore wines you might not otherwise try - in one afternoon for a small amount of money.

Check out Local Wine Events on the web at www.localwineevents.com and learn about the wine festivals and other events in your neck of the woods. You'll be glad you did!

On another note, we want to apologize if you experienced difficulty in placing orders online during April. Our web host experienced hard drive problems (which corrupted our shopping cart pages and made everything look like gibberish) and had to move our web site to another server. When they moved our site, they forgot to bring across the SSL certificate, which then caused all our secure pages to fail... It was a week-long battle for us to get everything going again. We appreciate your patience and business!

Another Winning Idea

Curing The "Rolling Hydrometer Syndrome"

Last month, you'll remember that we asked for your suggestions about how to prevent hydrometers from rolling off the table or counter and crashing on the floor. We were specifically looking for something that a hydrometer could be placed on or in that would prevent it from rolling, thereby preventing breakage.

Many people wrote in with their solution to the "rolling hydrometer syndrome". Thank you to everyone for sending in your ideas! The winning solution was provided by Jim DeWulf from Live Oak, FL. Here's his idea:

A gadget to keep hydrometers from rolling is a bean bag or small bag of sand. You can use it to stop the hydrometer from rolling by putting a crease in the bag and laying the hydrometer in the crease.

Jim gets a \$10 gift certificate for his winning idea. Way to go Jim!

Some other ideas suggested were to use a drawer insert (Tony Petruso), use an olive boat (Kathy Keeler), and to cut a cork down on the bottom and put a V in the top, which works well and is very inexpensive (Jimmy Bengé).



Pam says, "Happy Mother's Day!"

Hot Tip

Sugar Is Sweet, And So Are You

If you are making a wine from scratch and the fruit you're using doesn't have the desired Brix (sugar) in the must, then check out our [article on chaptalization](#).

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

www.grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.asp

My Kingdom For A Computer That Works!

by Tom Burgiss

Each month I look forward to sitting down during a quiet time to write a paragraph or two for our monthly "Stomper". This month I am running behind time, I guess you may say, due to a lack of inspiration! Why am I not inspired? I guess the best way to explain all of the above is due to recent problems we experienced with our online ordering system. The most frustrating part of it all was that we did not cause the problem and could do little but wait while our webmasters worked with the web hosting company to help them discover how their own system broke down. Between a broken hard drive and a misplaced SSL certificate on the web server, it tied our business up and took a lot of time in adjusting the problem back and forth.

Luckily, everyone worked together for a solution. Pam took orders on the phone, Brant helped us check email, Margie hammered the web host to fix their problems, and Jimmy and Paul packed the boxes and got them ready for shipment despite a broken Internet connection.

If you were one of those who experienced a problem when trying to shop or check out last month, I want to apologize for the inconvenience. It must have been exasperating to take the time to fill out an order, only to receive a bunch of "gibberish" at the very end! It caused both you and our staff here at grapestompers.com a problem which has now being cleared up. So to those of you who called and notified us about the problem, we thank you! It is really one of those deals where the recipient would never know until called about the problem.

We appreciate your patience and hope that this will never occur again. However, should you ever run into a problem, please give us a call 1-800-233-1505.

This summer we will have on board some interns from Appalachian State University – We will be introducing them to you one at a time. First, from Marietta, Ohio, is Sam Wilder. Sam's interest in wine arrives from several different angles: first as a server in a fine dining restaurant in Marietta. It was there that his love of pairing of foods with

(Continued on page 4)

Latest Wine Kit News

Shhh! New Products Under Consideration

Through recent conversations with our contacts in the wine kit industry, we have learned about some exciting new products that may be coming your way soon. Development and testing on these products is ongoing and we will let you know the official news as soon as we possibly can.

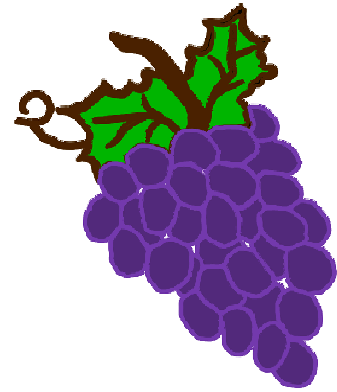
Heron Bay - Heron Bay has recently discontinued three wine kits - the Ultra Premium 16L Chianti, the 16L Colombard Chardonnay, and the Summer Mist 6L Tropical Fruit Pinot Grigio kit. The 4-week Premium 8L Chianti is still being made (whew!), and the Colombard Chardonnay was replaced with a 16L Chardonnay Viognier blend (announced last month).

Even though the [Tropical Fruit Pinot Grigio](#) is no longer being made, we still have a limited quantity on hand. First come, first served, until gone!

The **NEW** Summer Mist kit will be a **Tangerine flavored Viognier**. It should be available starting in June. Look for a description of it soon at the Heron Bay Wines web site: www.heronbaywines.com

The Heron Bay **Holiday Wine Series** for 2006 hails from Australia's famous Riverland Region. Outback Reserve Red is a blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Petit Verdot. Outback Reserve White is a Semillon / Muscat Gordo Blanco blend. Like last year, these 8L kits will only be available on a pre-order basis. Pricing and dates of availability will be coming soon, so stay tuned.

And now (drum roll, please)... we are helping conduct tests on a new product by Heron Bay... a no-boil beer kit that is made in much the same way as a wine kit. The wort comes in a balanced, concentrated form. Just add a bit of water to reconstitute it, sprinkle the yeast, and off you go! We are eager to test this product and will keep you updated on its development and deployment.



Customer Feedback

Hello Grapestompers!

First of all, I just love the website, grapestompers, the video (I watched it 5 times before I started) and this great hobby of making wine at home.

I recently finished and bottled my first 4 week Shiraz kit and I think it turned out just great. Friends and family really like the wine and in fact it measures at 13.8% alcohol... I really enjoyed doing this and plan on doing many more batches.

Nick Corvino
Haddonfield, NJ

Hello,

I have looked at a lot of web sites as there are many choices for the amateur winemaker trying to get started.

Yours immediately seemed the most inviting and user-friendly. So far, it seems like the best jumping off point for me to get started.

Jeffery Craig
West Monroe, LA

Tom,

Thanks for all the help. I just bottled. Not a bad tasting wine for my first time around. Having all the right equipment and your instructions really, really helped! I think the guy that made the bottle washer is a genius!

I am going on a 90 day RV trip starting in two weeks, and certainly now plan to fashion a wine rack in one of my cupboards. This is going along for the ride!

Dayle Fish
Elizabeth City, NC

New Products

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

The following products are whimsical stainless steel sculptures made to hold your favorite bottle of wine. 8" x 3" x 12"

5156	Barbecue Chef, \$63.50
5154	Bride and Groom, set, \$99.00
5162	Chef (male), \$65.50
5155	Doctor (female), \$63.50
5152	Elvis Impersonator, \$65.50
5160	Fisherman Hooked, \$63.50
5153	Golfer (male), \$65.50
5165	Nurse, \$65.50
5159	Photographer, \$63.50
5158	Shop-a-holic (female), \$65.50
5164	Tennis serve, \$65.50
5157	Waiter, \$63.50
5161	Frustrated Golfer, \$65.50
5150	Dentist (holds biz cards), \$65.50

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.

Corky's Corner

Winemaking Definition

Racy

One of the most evocative of common wine terms, racy refers to a wine that is vivacious, snappy, and super refreshing. Racy wines get their zip from the natural acidity in the wine. They're just the ticket with rich foods like cheese or meat.

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

Hot Tip

Sanitizing Your Hydrometer

I've found an easy way to sanitize my hydrometer. I bought a long, narrow plastic drawer insert from the kitchen ware department of my favorite store. The one I bought is about 15" long, 1.5" wide, and 3" deep. It is the kind made to store bread or butcher knives.

I simply filled it up with my favorite sanitizing solution and PRESTO!

It also works great when sanitizing my floating thermometer

grapestompers.com would like to thank Tony Petruso for providing this tip.

Monthly Specials

Specials for May 2006

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
HB971	HB Black Curren Merlot, 6L	\$47.99	\$38.88
HB973	HB Peach Chardonnay, 6L	\$47.99	\$38.88
HB948	HB Gewurztraminer, 16L	\$79.99	\$62.99
HB967	HB Riesling Ice Wine, makes 3 gal.	\$56.66	\$45.29
HB945	HB Amarone, 16L	\$90.89	\$72.99
CF0050	CF South African Pinotage, 18L CGP	\$121.99	\$96.99
<i>Next Item - Only While Supplies Last - Limited Quantities on Hand</i>			
CF1523	CF North Coast Sauvignon Blanc, 16L	\$109.99	\$86.99
2101	Wine Bottles, clear, 750 ml case of 12	\$12.27	\$9.99
2203	Gallon Jug, glass (for small batches)	\$3.29	\$2.69
2215	Fermenting Bucket, 2 gallons	\$8.80	\$6.99
2733A	Fermax Yeast Nutrient, 1 lb.	\$5.36	\$4.29
5264	B-Brite Cleanser / Sanitizer, 5 lb.	\$12.89	\$9.99
2902	Twin Blade Cork Puller	\$4.82	\$3.89
2256	Airlock, 3 piece	\$0.85	\$0.69
2732B	Potassium Metabisulfite, 3 lbs.	\$10.89	\$8.79
2903	Vacuum Wine Saver	\$9.87	\$7.89
2910	Extra Vacuum Stoppers (to fit above)	\$5.69	\$4.55
3100	Complete Wine Kit - Red	\$241.42	\$199.00
3200	Complete Wine Kit - White	\$232.29	\$189.00

Guest Column

Tips For Kits With Crushed Grape Packs

The printed instructions provided with the newer Cellar Craft crushed grape kits can be daunting as they describe how to prepare the primary fermentation. I have used most of Tom's video advice with the following changes:

HIDDEN SPECIAL

Item #2597A Refractometer, 0-32 Brix with ATC, on sale during May 2006 (while supplies last) for only \$29.99. Save \$20.00 when compared to the regular price. Be sure to ask for the hidden special in the "Comments" box when ordering online, or you will not get the special price.

I use 2 liters of hot water to mix the bentonite pack directly into the primary bucket as Tom suggests. Tilting the buckets with spigots during mixing the very hot water and bentonite will prevent the rubber gaskets from leaking while warming the bucket. I get great results from using the mixer Tom sells here (the Fizz-X). Then after pouring the concentrate in, I use one liter only of warm water to clean the bag. Now I add my oaks and mix just for 1 minute.

By cutting the crushed grape bag all the way across the top, I can put them in without warming the bag and making a mess over the bucket. Now using 2 salad tossing forks I can lower a large ceramic sanitized soup bowl (right side up) directly over the bag placed in the center of the bucket, taking care to cover the mesh bag completely. This great aids in the mixing.... I'll explain a bit later. I now use another liter of warm water to clean this bag.

Now we know we need 24.5 liters in total to allow for the drop after removing the bag

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 2)

wines began. He has a deep interest in the culinary arts and hopefully wants to attend the culinary school at Johnson and Wales. An aspiring journalism major at ASU, his ambition is to write feature articles for sophisticated magazines such as Esquire or Food and Wine.

He is interested in learning the winemaking process from the ground up, to hopefully include owning and operating his own winery some day.

So welcome aboard, Sam... we wish you all the best!

Thanks again for your support.

Sincerely,
Tom

Happy Mother's Day!

(Continued from page 3)

and bowl so.... I add room temperature water to the 23 liter mark that is found on most buckets. Then I MEASURE 1.5 LITERS to add to that. Now I can lower the mixer directly down even to the bottom of the soup bowl to properly mix all the ingredients, take my readings and close it up.

The use of the big bowl serves several purposes. First, the bowl keeps the mesh bag completely submerged. I tie the bag several times to keep any dangling mesh from getting caught on the Fizz-X mixer. Second, the right side up shape of the bowl provides super vortex mixing at any speed desired. I like to use the fastest setting on lowest gear of my drill. It provides great mixing without too much oxidation of the must. And perhaps most importantly, the shape of the soup bowl (flanged) right side up allows for the naturally occurring upward release of the contents of the bag. It is the "flying saucer" shaped bowl that minimizes any trapping of the juices.

This process eliminates the need for disturbing the primary fermentation process with additional mixing.

Bob Reynolds
Miami, Florida

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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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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 wine trivia and some neat winemaking links.

Wine Knowledge

From Playboy magazine:

Thomas Jefferson spent \$3,000 of his \$25,000 salary on wine as President of the United States in 1801... No wonder the country ran so smoothly during his tenure!

Did you know the Catholic Church spent \$1,000 advertising for new priests on beer coasters in United Kingdom last summer?

Some Neat Web Links

Here are some links to web sites we thought you might enjoy:

[Rate The Label](#)

We ran across this web site and thought it was pretty interesting. Done by a student at Syracuse University who is going after his Masters degree, the site features a survey which allows you to provide feedback about various wine label designs.

[Lallemand Yeasts](#)

Discover the right yeasts to use in winemaking, based on the fruit you use and the style of wine you want to make.

[Corkscrew Museum](#)

If you appreciate or like to collect unique corkscrews, you should check out this web site. Over 12,000 different corkscrews available for viewing online.

And a bonus link for anyone:

[Free Phone Directory Assistance](#)

Did you realize that most phone companies now charge a fee to dial 411 for directory assistance? Fight back with this free service.