



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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Testing Early Drinking Kits by Legacy

By Brant Burgiss

Much like a Swiss army knife provides a full set of tools to get the job done, a home winemaker needs a similar set of tools to make the job easier and less time-consuming. While most folks might think of new or more efficient equipment as a way to save winemaking time, have you ever considered that the raw material used in making wine can save you time too?

This was one reason I was eager to test the Legacy brand of wine kits, which are now stocked by grapestompers. Legacy, a Vineco brand, offers 22 different wine styles and is touted as being an "early drinker" by the manufacturer. For the purposes of this conversation, let's consider an early drinking kit as one that can be enjoyed within the first month of bottling. This type of kit piques my interest, especially if it performs as the manufacturer claims ("this wine is very acceptable to drink at bottling time..."). I've spoken to several home winemakers who have been caught "between kits" – that dreadful state of not having any wine that's ready to drink. As you are probably aware, most premium kits require at least 8-12 months of aging before they mature enough to enjoy. That's why I've been on the lookout for a brand of kits that can serve as a quick fix to a shortcoming in anyone's bottled wine inventory.

To do the test, I decided to push the limits of the brand and not only try to make some red wines, but wines that contained Cabernet Sauvignon, a varietal that typically takes longer to mature. I recruited an eager volunteer, Robert Hernandez of Jamestown, NC, to help me with this experiment. Robert was asked to make a Cabernet/Shiraz, and I decided to make a Cabernet/Merlot. Both of us pitched the yeast the first week of January and attempted to follow the manufacturer's instructions verbatim. The following are my first impressions of the kit.

Robert's starting specific gravity was 1.090; the initial specific gravity of my kit was a bit lower than I am accustomed (1.084), but both readings were in line with the manufacturer's suggested starting SG (a range of 1.080 to 1.095). That made me wonder if I made an error in taking the reading (was I wearing my reading glasses?) or simply didn't stir the must enough after hydration. Fermentation kicked off well in both cases. Robert told me his batch of wine fermented really fast – down below 1.00 in only 4 days! As we progressed through the steps of racking, degassing, and clearing, I noticed a couple of subtle differences in the process methodology of the Legacy wine kits compared to other brands. For one thing, potassium metabisulfite and potassium sorbate are NOT added on the same day as is typical for most wine kits. The Legacy kit instructions have you add the sulfite first at day 24, begin degassing, then adding the Sorbate two days later. Moreover, the kit contained chitosan only – and did NOT contain kieselsol.

Continued on page 2



Check out our new Spring items arriving in the grapestompers.com gift shop

Hot Tip

Happy Ordering

When you are placing your order by phone (800-233-1505) it will really help you and us if you have the stock code available. You will not have to wait while we look it up.

Submit your hot winemaking tip here: www.grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.asp

Are you Paying Attention?

In the February issue of the Stomper I did an article about fermentation mentioning the bottling specific gravity. A day or so later, we received the email below .

James Evans of Apex, NC wrote, "Hey guys. I was just reading through the latest issue of the Stomper and found a little detail you might want to mention. In the section on fermentation, Tom mentions the "bottling SG." While a measurement at bottling time is appropriate for many wines, some kits have additives that will change this number. A prime example are those Orange Chocolate Port kits that have been so popular. That sweetening/flavoring pack will certainly throw off your numbers. I measure SG after the Potassium Sorbate addition. At that point you shouldn't have further fermentation and your alcohol level is set. If you have further additions (sweeteners, etc) you can still calculate your final alcohol level by the dilution of the additions."

James is exactly right and will receive a 10% discount on his next regular retail price order from grapestompers.

Gale Glascock of Blue Ridge, GA also found this little tidbit of information: "I believe the calculation for alcohol % in the February issue of the Stomper is incorrect. This was the example: 'Later you can tell the alcohol percentage by subtracting the bottling SG from the starting SG divided by .074. This will give you the alcohol percentage EXAMPLE $1.095 - .0998 = .9952 / .074 = \text{answer: } 13.4\%$ ' I think the ending SG cannot be correct. I think that would normally be 0.998 rather than 0.0998. In that case the alcohol content would be calculated by .0074.

Gale is correct also. I missed my decimal so he receives the same 10% offer. Good work both of you! Actually, I was just seeing if everyone was paying attention!

Later, Tom

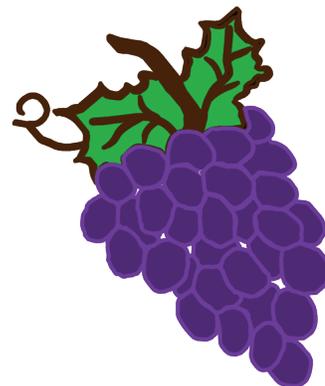
Legacy Kits — continued from page 1

Lastly, I was happy to note that this brand of kit comes with 30 lovely peel 'n stick labels. Not many 6 week kits in this price range come with their own labels!

Fast forward a bit: it is now mid-February and Robert and I have bottled our respective batches of wine. We decide to meet and have a tasting the evening of February 19th. Robert's wine – the Cabernet Shiraz blend – is first. We uncork the wine, immediately pour it through an aerator into a decanter, and try a sip or two after a quick sniff. First impressions: a soft, pleasant aroma; not too bold. We are very pleased to find no traces of a smell one normally attributes to a kit wine that is opened much too early. The wine is a little lighter in body and tannins when compared to other six week kits of the same blend, but the overall experience is still very pleasant. Not bad at all when you consider the wine has only been in the bottle one week!

Next up is the Cabernet Merlot. We prepare it in a similar fashion: uncork, aerate/decant, pour, sniff and taste. This wine has a little more personality to it! We can smell the varietals in the blend, and we sense that we are about to taste a somewhat bolder wine. It's true! This wine possesses more tannins, structure, and flavor than the Cab Shiraz. Robert and I share a smile, along with other friends who are gathered for the tasting. The other wine was just fine, but this one was a little better – at least for our taste and preferences.

Overall, we were very pleased with the results of our test. Robert and I decide that if we ever get caught "between kits" again, we'll look first to the Legacy brand of wine kits for a quick solution. It's nice to know there are some wines made from kits (and not just Mist-type kits!) that you can actually drink and enjoy as early as bottling day.



Customer Feedback

Thanks for the great products and service!

Barrett Justice
Beaver, WV

Good job to you all.....see ya!

Robert Klaus
Jefferson, NC

"I have lived temperately....I double the doctor's recommendation of a glass and a half of wine each day and even treble it with a friend."

Thomas Jefferson

Thanks! We received honorable mention last year at the State Fair with the [CC Cabernet #3129](#). We are hoping this red ([Cellar Craft Meritage Rouge #CF8928](#)) will get us a first place in 2011.

Alan Jones
Pittsboro, NC

Thank you for everything over the years :)

Austin Griffith
Iowa City, IA

Tom,

Thanks for calling me concerning bottling mist wine in a beer bottle. I sure do appreciate your advice. There are a lot of people who sell supplies, but not many with the experience and knowledge that you make available at Grapestompers.

Rich Ewald
Russellville, KY

Thank you for your continued superior service.

Thomas Myles
McCormick, SC

New Products

Here is a list of new products we've recently added to our online catalog:

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION
2843	Distilling Whisky Book, \$24.99
5388	Zanzibar Wine Rack, \$95.00
5391	Wine Bottle Tealights, \$5.50
5396	Push Button Wine Stopper, \$5.00

Check out our new **Vineco Legacy Series, 16L** as well as the new **KenRidge Founder's Series, 18L kits**



Cellar Craft March Limited Release
CFLR411 Carmenere-Cabernet, 18L
\$122.00

Orders must be received by **March 14**
Kits will ship in late April

[See all these new products online now.](#)

If you have a suggestion for a new product, please call us at 1-800-233-1505.

Corky's Corner

Winemaking Definition

Mourvédre:

Pronounced **Moor Vay Druh**, this grape produces tannic wines that can be high in alcohol, and is most successful in Rhone-style blends. It has a particular affinity for Grenache, softening it and giving it structure. Its taste varies greatly according to area, but often has a wild, gamey or earthy flavor, with soft red fruit.

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



How Sweet It Is

If you want to make your wine sweeter, do not add sugar during primary fermentation; all you will accomplish by doing that is to raise the alcohol level.

Wait until the sulfite and sorbate has been added and the yeast has been "killed", then add the sugar. This will sweeten your finished wine.

Have a hot winemaking tip to submit? Just go to:

www.grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.asp

Monthly Specials

Specials for March, 2011

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
46006	Light Beer, 7.5L (Only 1 Available)	\$41.99	\$29.00
3265	Mango Mint Ch. Bl., 7.2L (Exp. 4/11 3 Avail.)	\$69.13	\$49.00
3173	White Chocolate Port, 11.5L (Only 1 Avail.)	\$120.85	\$89.00
33273	GC Chardonnay, 10L	\$80.67	\$64.54
3248	CCH Riesling Auslese, 15L	\$119.23	\$95.38
3222	VDV Johannisberg Riesling, 9L	\$68.27	\$54.62
3160	GC Bergamais, 10L	\$78.75	\$63.00
3128	CC Cabernet Merlot, 15L	\$116.35	\$93.08
3251	OB Kiwi Melon Pinot Grigio, 7.2L	\$71.06	\$56.85
CF0857	Yakima Valley Viognier, 18L	\$146.77	\$117.42
CF9022	Yakima Valley Merlot, 18L w/ crushed grapes	\$134.85	\$107.88
HB105	Cabernet Sauvignon, 16L	\$107.69	\$86.15
HB300	Sauvignon Blanc, 16L	\$103.85	\$83.08
HB135	Chardonnay, 8L	\$70.00	\$56.00
HB185	Merlot, 8L	\$73.85	\$59.08
VC001	Strawberry White Zinfandel, 7.5L	\$67.08	\$53.66
3702	Honey Blonde Ale Beer	\$44.13	\$35.30
2729	Acid Blend, 1 lb.	\$5.96	\$4.77
2731	Campden Tablets, 2 oz.	\$3.37	\$2.70
2742	Potassium Sorbate, 1.5 oz.	\$2.16	\$1.73
5264	B-Brite Cleanser, 5 lb.	\$18.17	\$14.54
2716	Complete Acid Test Kit	\$8.65	\$6.92
2607	Fizz-X Wine Agitator	\$30.29	\$24.23
2240	Plastic Paddle, 18"	\$3.17	\$2.54
2662	5" Funnel (without strainer)	\$1.73	\$1.38
2605	Carboy Brush	\$5.58	\$4.46
2120	5 oz. Clear Bottles with Screw Caps	\$8.99	\$7.19
5467	Metal Infinity Scroll Wine Rack	\$5.29	\$3.00
5320	Grape Design Garden Hook	\$14.99	\$10.00
4147	Group Therapy Beach Towel	\$16.36	\$10.00
4538A	Men Are Like Fine Wine...T-Shirt, Small	\$15.00	\$12.00
4538	Men Are Like Fine Wine...T-Shirt, Medium	\$15.00	\$12.00
4539	Men Are Like Fine Wine...T-Shirt, Large	\$15.00	\$12.00
4540	Men Are Like Fine Wine...T-Shirt, X Large	\$15.00	\$12.00
3100	Complete Wine Kit - Red	\$303.33	\$245.99
3200	Complete Wine Kit - White	\$297.16	\$236.99

On The Matter of Topping Up.....Continued

A Grapestompers Guest Column

By Nathan Sharp, Marlinton, WV

In last month's Stomper we printed a guest column on Topping Up. We received a very nice article this month from Nathan Sharp sharing some ideas on how he keeps up with his multiple batch records. Thanks, Nathan for sharing this great information and photos! Keep 'em coming readers!



In the latest issue of "The Stomper" in the article "On The Matter of Topping Up" the comment in the article was "Then there's the problem of keeping up with the wine if you have several batches going at the same time." I solved this problem by using a 5"x3" wire bound memo book with a string through the wire and hang it around the neck of the carboy. In this I write everything about that batch...date started, recipe used, etc...Cheers!



The Stomper

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Boring stuff for lawyers: Content is gathered from sources considered to be reliable, but the accuracy of this info cannot be guaranteed. Opinions expressed by guest columnists and customer letters are those of the authors and not necessarily those of grapestompers.com

Hidden Special for the month of March—We are offering our 5 Gallon Glass Carboy #2204 for only \$25.00. This item is regularly \$38.37. Be sure and mention the Hidden Special on the comments section of the order form to receive the special deal on this carboy. You can use one of these for making the Honey Blonde beer kits that are on special this month.

Surprise! We have another Hidden Special for you. Stock Code #VC060 Raspberry Dragonfruit White Shiraz, only 1 available and you can have it for only \$49.99. ~First Come, First Served.~

Wine Drops

Wine Drops is a catch-all for various tidbits that we find interesting. This month we have classes at Appalachian State University that you may want to attend, news about this year's WineMaker Magazine Wine Competition, and a chance to tell us what you would like to see next month.

The enology and viticulture program at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC is sponsoring a series of workshops on viticulture, wine sensory training and wine business beginning March 10.

Registration for the March workshop is open and costs \$20, which includes lunch. To register for the workshop, contact Franya Hutchins at hutchinsfe@appstate.edu or call at 828-262-8158.

Mark your calendar now to attend the 3rd Annual Home Winemaker Showcase here at grapestompers in Laurel Springs on Sunday, May 29. Download a winemaker or vendor form on the homepage of our website www.grapestompers.com.

Time is almost up to enter your best homemade wines in the world's largest competition for hobby winemakers, the **2011 WineMaker Magazine International Amateur Wine Competition**. Enter your wines and compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in 50 categories awarded by a panel of experienced wine judges. Entry deadline is March 4, 2011. For more information and entry forms visit www.winemakermag.com/competition.

WineMaker Magazine

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Your Turn!

Have some input as to what you'd like to see in a future issue of *The Stomper*?

We'd love to hear your idea! Just call us at 800-233-1505 or complete and [submit our contact form](#) to let us know.