

Issue #207 November 2017
<http://www.grapestompers.com> 1-800-233-1505
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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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Important Announcements
New Employee Hired - Say Hello to Bill Young
By Brant Burgiss

If you've called or visited grapestompers since the first week of October, you've probably noticed that we're missing the friendly, caring face of Renā Barnes, our warehouse manager. Renā is currently out of work dealing with a medical issue, and we really miss her and the enthusiasm she brings to the job. I'm sure all of you will want to join all of us at grapestompers when we say "Get well soon, Renā !"

In the meantime, the orders kept coming in and we needed someone to help Katie in the warehouse. Enter Bill Young, a good buddy of mine from Camp Cheerio, to the rescue! I asked Bill to tell us a little bit about himself, and here is what he submitted:

I'm Bill Young and I am the newest employee at Grapestompers. I am originally from Pittsburgh, PA but for the last 8 years I have been privileged to call Piney Creek, NC home! Before I started working for Grapestompers I worked for YMCA Camp Cheerio until I got married in May.

I am an avid outdoorsmen whether it is hunting, fishing, rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, caving, or backpacking.

Working for Grapestompers has been great, mainly due to my newest hobby of brewing. I started brewing beer and ciders about a year ago. The more time I spend at grapestompers, the more I feel that wine making will become my newest hobby. Even though beer and wine making is similar, there has been a lot to learn here so I really do appreciate everyone's patience.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Hot Tip

FastFerment Hint
 Do you own a FastFerment conical fermenter? If so, we recommend:
 Keep the collection ball valve closed until you've reconstituted your wine kit with water and stirred well. Doing so prevents the heavier grape juice concentrate from settling in the collection ball.
 Submit your hot winemaking tip here:
grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.aspx

Although he's only been working a couple of weeks, it's easy to see that Bill is a hard worker with a "can do" attitude. He's picking up the nuances of wine making pretty quickly and isn't afraid to try anything new, whether it has to do with fermentation, conducting wine tastings in Thistle Meadow Winery, labeling bottles of wine, or projects involving manual labor.

Welcome, Bill! We're glad to have you here with us in Laurel Springs.

This month, we begin a 3-part series of Tom's Cellar on the topic mentioned in the title above: What wine kit manufacturers will not tell you. This is not so much an indictment of the wine kit industry; rather, it's an explanation of why they do the things they do and to hopefully explain why the directions are written the way they are.



1 Wine Kit Manufacturers Assume Everyone's a Newbie

I really don't blame the manufacturers for making this assumption. In their defense, they must assume the worst-case scenario: That this is the first time the purchaser is making a batch of wine. It's a safe bet, but the trouble with this is that there's not a lot of information available (on the enclosed sheet of instructions, that is) for intermediate or advanced winemakers. I suppose they figure if a winemaker wants more information, they can always ask the retailer where they purchased the kit or explore answers online. There's also a bit of oversimplification of procedures (more on that later), so if someone was hoping to learn everything they could from one set of instructions, they are simply out of luck.

2 What Kind of Grapes are REALLY in My Wine Kit?

If you buy a Chardonnay wine kit, what are the odds that it contains 100% chardonnay juice and/or concentrate? The truth is, no one but the manufacturer knows! Much like McDonalds or Kentucky Fried Chicken, they refuse to reveal what is in their "secret sauce" or in their "12 herbs and spices". Based on what I've been told by industry insiders (and a bit of common sense), the purity of a single varietal wine kit is probably somewhere between 50 to 80%, depending on the price point / style of the wine kit. Logic tells us the ratio shouldn't be less than 50%, or else they couldn't legally claim it to be what the package says. On the other hand, in order to provide a consistent tasting product year to year and to mitigate the costs of raw material, other types of grape juice are no doubt added to round out the contents.

If it's one thing that consumers like, it's a product that tastes and performs the same way, year in and year out. I mean, how would you like it if a Big Mac tasted entirely different from one McDonalds restaurant to another? By changing up the mixture of juices from year to year, the manufacturers are able to manipulate the aroma, mouthfeel, alcohol, etc. so the kit is a consistent performer. That makes sense.

Speaking of truth in labeling, wine aficionados already know that their favorite commercially available bottled wines from the USA only have to be 75% pure before they can be labeled as "single" varietals. In other words, commercial winemakers can put as much as 25% of any other grape wine in a bottle before they are required to list the other varietal.

3 Bentonite Isn't Really Needed for a Wine Kit

OK. I've finally put in print what I've been saying for years... you do not really need bentonite at all when making a wine kit. So now that the cat is out of the bag and I am approaching wine kit heresy, let me explain myself.

Ask any professional / commercial winemaker about the purposes of bentonite, and he/she will tell you that this special type of absorbent clay is used almost exclusively for fining and protein stability in table whites. Nothing more. If used in reds in large doses, bentonite can actually strip color.

Now wait a dadgum minute! If this is the case, why would wine kit manufacturers not only provide bentonite in every kit, but tell you to use it for ALL wines, and to add it and stir it in on the FIRST DAY?

(Continued on page 4)

Customer Feedback

We love to hear your feedback! Let us know what you like about our products or service, and we may post your comments here soon.

Brant Burgiss
Manager

Katie,
Sounds great. Thanks for all your help.

You are all great.

Dr. Christopher Ray
Monroe, GA

Brant,
I will take a moment to say thank you.
The elderberry wine is bubbling away.

Great work!

Bill Byford
co. Wicklow, Ireland

Hi Katie,
Quick ship as usual. Thanks!

Dempsey Fritts
Thomasville, NC

Is this what you've been looking for? This month's hidden special is the Capsule Heat Shrink Machine, item # 2400HS. Save over \$50 off the regular price and make capsuling a breeze when you mention this in the comment section of your next order, or mention it when placing a phone order. Special for \$179.99. Offer expires 11/30/2017.

We've been in business since 1998, always striving to bring you the best in winemaking products and customer service. Thank you for your business!

New Products

Here is a list of new items that can be found on the grapestompers web site:

ITEM #	DESCRIPTION
VC6794	Viognier White (2) \$132.60
VC6930	Choc. Salted Caramel Port \$109.99
VC6931	Toasted Marshmallow Port \$109.99
VC3029	NM Raspberry Dragon Fruit, 7.5L \$72.28

There's more new stuff where that came from!

[See all these 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

Pectin Haze

An undesirable gelatin-like haze in wine caused by the presence of the pectin molecule, which is usually associated with boiling or mashing of fruit to extract flavor or color. You can prevent a pectin haze by adding [pectic enzyme](#) to the must 12 hours prior to adding yeast.

Hot Tip

Which Sanitizer to Use?

grapestompers stocks different sanitizers, but the one we like best for all around effectiveness is [Star San](#). It only requires one minute of contact time to be effective, as opposed to a strong solution of KMS and water, which stinks to high heaven, can pit stainless steel and requires 10 minutes of contact time.

However, we DO recommend that you rinse the inside of wine bottles (just prior to bottling) with a strong KMS solution to add an extra bit of protection against oxidation.

Have a winemaking tip to submit?

grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.aspx

Monthly Specials

Specials for November 2017

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special Price
VC0370	Niagara Mist Wildberry White Zinfandel, 7.5L (1 available, expired 9/2017)	\$72.28	\$50.60
VC6298	Atmosphere Australian Cab/Shiraz/Merlot, 16L (1 available, expiring 10/2017)	\$139.64	\$97.75
CF3561	Sterling Barbera, 12L with crushed grape pack (1 available, discontinued, expiring 11/2017)	\$94.04	\$65.83
VC0871	Legacy Liebfraumilch, 16L (2 available, discontinued expiring 11/2017)	\$94.88	\$66.42
VC787	California Connoisseur Sauvignon Blanc, 7.5L (1 available, expiring 11/2017)	\$67.72	\$47.40
VC0307	Cheeky Monkey Washington Pinot Gris, 10L (1 available, expiring 11/2017)	\$90.53	\$63.37
CF3577	Cellar Craft Specialty Dessert Wine (Port), 12L (1 available, expiring 11/2017)	\$96.84	\$67.79
VC787	California Connoisseur Sauvignon Blanc, 7.5L	\$67.72	\$54.18
VC768	California Connoisseur Bergamais, 7.5L	\$71.23	\$56.98
VC0875	Legacy Pinot Grigio, 16L	\$110.11	\$88.09
VC0865	Legacy Cabernet Merlot, 16L	\$125.54	\$100.43
3255	Cru Select Pinot Grigio, 16L	\$124.00	\$99.20
3269	Grand Cru Pinot Blanc, 10L	\$71.00	\$56.80
3277W	Grand Cru Zinfandel Blush, 10L	\$75.00	\$60.00
4854	Orchard Breezin' Citrus Sunshine, 5.4L	\$67.80	\$54.24
CF3551	Showcase WA Merlot, 18L with crushed grapes	\$164.21	\$131.37
2253	Bottle Rinser, Vinator	\$17.11	\$13.69
2731	Campden Tablets, 2 oz.	\$3.95	\$3.16
2742	Potassium Sorbate, 1.5 oz.	\$2.20	\$1.76
2223	Airlock, Double Bubble	\$0.87	\$0.70
2217	Spigot for bucket, fits 1/2" tubing	\$2.90	\$2.32
2120	150 ml Screw Top Bottles w/caps, case of 12	\$10.92	\$8.74
2747	Dried Elderberries, 4 oz.	\$5.50	\$4.40
2609T	Tubing Brush, 1/2" x 48"	\$6.99	\$5.59
2743	French Oak Chips, medium toast, 1 lb.	\$4.83	\$3.86
2708	Lalvin 71B-1122 Wine Yeast, 5 g. packet	\$1.00	\$0.80
2320	Corks, Agglomerated #9 x 1.75" (44 mm)	\$0.14	\$0.10
2416P	PVC Capsules, Blue Metallic, each	\$0.14	\$0.10
3200	Complete Wine Kit - White (includes 1st kit!)	\$297.16	\$236.99
3100	Complete Wine Kit - Red (includes 1st kit!)	\$303.33	\$245.99

10 Things Wine Kit Manufacturers Won't Tell You

Continued from page 2

There are two logical explanations: Bentonite can be used to help clarify cloudy raw grape juice, but since all the juice / concentrate in a wine kit has already been filtered, it's a moot point. To a lesser extent, I suppose it can be used to help compact the lees and make racking a bit easier, but the REAL reason manufacturers ask you to add bentonite is to get you to STIR your must on the first day.

For the vast majority of wine kits out there, they come in concentrated form and you must add water to reconstitute the grape juice to its original strength. If you should fail to stir the resulting mixture well enough, you may end up with striated layers of water and juice. Since water is lighter than grape juice, it tends to stay closer to the surface of the must. So if you were to pitch your yeast on water instead of grape juice... well, you get the idea. Also, even if you were to stir a bit lazily, so long as bentonite were in the mixture, at least the yeast would have a chance to ride on the back of the bentonite as it progresses through the striations. So bentonite is insurance against poor stirring!

We'll continue this three-part series next month. In the meantime, take care and remember to share the wine!

Brant

Passport Pre-Order Deadline Rapidly Approaching

Order now, or miss your chance at these single opportunity wine kits

You have 4 kits to pick from; one kit per month will be released starting in December 2017. You won't be billed until the kits are ready to ship, but by pre-ordering you are committing to purchasing the kit(s) you order. We guarantee you'll love these wine kits!

December 2017: **Grenache** - France [PP6844](#) pre-order price \$117.89

Jan 2018: **Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne** - France [PP6845](#) pre-order \$111.16

February 2018: **Aglianico Cabernet Merlot** - Italy [PP6846](#) pre-order price \$117.89

March 2018: **Two Roads Red w/CGP** - California [PP6848](#) pre-order price \$133.61

The deadline to order these kits is Friday, November 17, 2017 at 4 pm EST.

The Stomper

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Wine Drops

Wine Drops is a catch-all for various tidbits that we find interesting. This month we have an interesting wine fact and more. Also we want to give you a chance to tell us what you would like to see next month.

Interesting Winemaking Fact!

Magic Workers?

Remember the tale of Tom Sawyer, written by Mark Twain? There's a part of the story where Tom gets his friends to whitewash the fence for him because he is able to describe how much fun it is to do the work, and they simply can't wait to join in.

Try this same strategy the next time you clean your equipment or need an extra hand to start a batch or bottle a bit of wine. After all, many hands make for light work!

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Thank you for choosing grapestompers for your wine making supplies.

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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](#).