



Issue #209 January 2018
<http://www.grapestompers.com> 1-800-233-1505
 Hours: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Eastern Monday - Friday

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	
Important Announcement	1
Tom's Cellar	2
Customer Feedback.	2
Corky's Wine Word	3
This Month's Specials.	3
Kit Expiration Dates	4



Happy New Year from
 grapestompers.com!

Hot Tip

Shipping Hint
 If you're like most proud parents, you want to show off your winemaking skills with all of your friends by sharing a bottle or two. But be careful when shipping wine, even as a gift. Shipping alcohol via USPS is totally illegal, and FedEx has been known to destroy amateur wine shipments. Your best bet is to pack the box yourself and ship via UPS Ground without revealing the actual contents. Label it as "fruit juice"!
 Submit your hot winemaking tip here:
grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.aspx

Important Announcement 2018 WineMaker Amateur Winemaking Competition By Brant Burgiss

Prepare your homemade wines now and enter your best ones into the world's largest amateur winemaking competition, sponsored by WineMaker Magazine. Held in the Spring of each year, this is your chance to earn bragging rights for 2018!

Enter your wines and compete for gold, silver, and bronze medals in 50 categories awarded by a panel of experienced wine judges. You can gain international recognition for your winemaking skills and get valuable feedback on your wines from the competition's judging panel.

The entry deadline is March 16, 2018. Winemakers can enter up to 15 different wines. Unlike many other wine competitions, you only need to enter one 750 ml bottle of wine, and all entrants will receive a copy of the judging notes for their wines, along with a copy of the results.

Wine kits and concentrate-based wines will compete side by side with fresh fruit and juice-based wines in all 50 wine categories. It's always interesting to view the results and see that wines made from kits easily hold their own against wines made from freshly picked grapes.

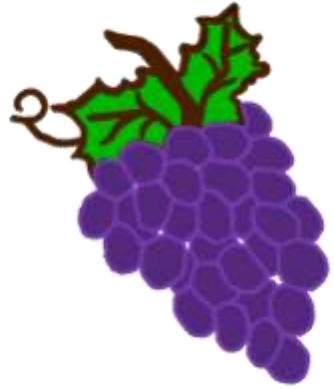
Important dates to remember about this wine competition:

- **March 16, 2018** - Entry deadline. All wines must arrive by this date.
- **April 13-15, 2018** - Wines are judged
- **May 19, 2018** - Winners first announced at the WineMaker Magazine Conference in San Diego, CA

Entry forms and rules may be obtained by contacting us, or you can learn more about the competition by going to www.winemakercompetition.com.



This month, we conclude our 3-part series 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.



7 Potassium Sorbate is Not Really Needed for Dry Wines

Remember those two packets of powder that you add around day 21 or 28? One of them is potassium metabisulfite (aka KMS), and the other one is potassium sorbate. Winemakers typically add potassium sorbate to a sweet wine (that is to say, any batch that contains residual sugar over 0.3%). If your wine kit includes a flavor / suss reserve pack, you can rest assured that you definitely need to include the potassium sorbate to prevent refermentation in the bottle.

But what about wines that finish dry? My recommendation to you is to never add anything to your wine that is not truly needed. So in the case of dry wines, you could easily leave out the packet of potassium sorbate. But you have to be careful and make sure that alcoholic fermentation has absolutely completed prior to bottling without benefit of potassium sorbate. This means your specific gravity is somewhere in the neighborhood of 0.990 to 0.996 and hasn't changed in at least a week.

So a natural question might be: If potassium sorbate isn't really required for dry wines, why do the wine kit manufacturers include it for a dry wine style? The reason is simple: Potassium sorbate is great insurance against bottle bombs in the event an over-eager home winemaker decides to bottle before fermentation has really completed.

8 You Should Not Do an MLF With a Wine Kit

First of all, let's briefly define what MLF is, and why it might be desirable. MLF stands for malolactic fermentation, which is a special kind of secondary fermentation that typically occurs after alcoholic fermentation is complete in a wine. Instead of converting sugar into ethanol (which is what alcoholic fermentation does), MLF uses special bacteria to convert malic acid into lactic acid. Malic acid is the sharp acid you taste when biting into an unripe, green apple. MLF converts this sharp taste of naturally occurring malic acid into the acid found in milk (lactic acid), thus softening the harsh bite of malic acid. Many red wines benefit from MLF, and a few whites do as well (mainly Chardonnay).

But you should NOT attempt an MLF with a wine kit, because wine kits contain an inordinate amount of malic acid due to the way they are made. Were you to perform MLF on a wine kit, the resulting wine would be absolutely flabby and without the zing and zest one normally associates with good wine.

9 Wine Kits Have a Longer Shelf Life Than You Think

All wine kit manufacturers set a "best before" date when they make a batch of wine kits. The expiration date may be easily detected or not, depending on the brand of kit. All kits have a "best before" date of at least one year from the date of manufacture. Some kits have a longer official shelf life, lasting 18 months to two years from the date they were created.

Regardless of official shelf life, it's pretty safe to say that as long as the kit is stored properly (temperature wise), it's not unheard of for a kit to be used to successfully make wine several months beyond its official expiration. I once made a kit that had expired 3 years prior, and the resulting batch came out

(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

Thanks Katie!

Appreciate the quick response.

Todd Gross
Plymouth, MN

Thanks, Bill.

I have a few more things to order. I haven't kept up with the art since we moved and want to get back into it.

Best to you, and Merry Christmas.

Lance Horne
Jacksonville, FL

Is this what you've been looking for? This month's hidden special is a free giveaway based on your order amount, item # 2344. Get one free expansion stopper for every \$50 spent when you mention this in the comment section of your next order, or mention it when placing a phone order. Offer expires 1/31/2018.

Thanks, Katie. We received both sets of pads. The filtering went well.

Thanks!

Jim Riesselman
Woodville, WI

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
CL25E	PBW Cleaner - liquid concentrate \$4.50
1369	PVC Capsules, Green Tea heat shrinkable \$0.10 each
4800A	Star San concentrate, 4 oz. \$5.65
AD346A	Yeast Hulls, 5 grams \$1.22

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

Acetaldehyde

A colorless liquid produced by yeast in the 4th stage of enzymatic action. The enzyme carboxylase forms acetaldehyde and CO2 from pyruvic acid. At the final stage, most of the acetaldehyde is reduced to ethyl alcohol, but a trace remains and adds to the flavor and complexity of the wine. If too much remains, it taints the wine with a strong off-taste.



Hot Tip

Step Up To Two Carboys

If you're a beginning winemaker, with one bucket and one carboy on hand, did you know you could very easily double your production with the addition of only one more carboy?

It's true. By timing the start of your batches properly, one bucket could easily serve two, and possibly three, carboys at a time. Start your second batch in the bucket once you rack your first batch into the carboy. From that point, use buckets for degassing and bottling.

Have a winemaking tip to submit?

grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.aspx

Monthly Specials

Specials for January 2018

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special Price
VC787	California Connoisseur Sauvignon Blanc, 7.5L (1 available, expired 11/2017)	\$67.72	\$47.40
CF5326	Yakima Valley Pinot Gris, 18L (2 available, expiring Feb. 2, 2018)	\$164.21	\$114.95
CF5338	Showcase CA Mystic, 18L with crushed grapes (2 available, expiring Feb. 8, 2018)	\$164.84	\$115.39
VC787	California Connoisseur Sauvignon Blanc, 7.5L	\$67.72	\$54.18
VC768	California Connoisseur Bergamais, 7.5L	\$71.23	\$56.98
VC0312	Cheeky Monkey South African Sauv. Blanc, 10L	\$90.53	\$72.42
VC0879	Legacy Riesling, 16L	\$110.11	\$88.09
VC0878	Legacy Primo Rosso, 16L (compare to Rosso Fortissimo; no grape pack)	\$125.54	\$100.43
3255	Cru Select Italian Pinot Grigio, 16L	\$124.00	\$99.20
3116E	Grand Cru Sangiovese Merlot, 10L	\$81.36	\$65.09
3269	Grand Cru Pinot Blanc, 10L	\$71.00	\$56.80
VC6788	NM Melon Berry Merlot, 7.5L	\$72.28	\$57.82
3279	Orchard Breezin' Blueberry Bliss, 5.5L	\$69.99	\$55.99
CF3554	Showcase Rosso Fortissimo, 18L w/CGP	\$176.84	\$141.47
2742	Potassium Sorbate, 1.5 oz.	\$2.20	\$1.76
2731	Campden Tablets, 2 oz. (approx. 110 tablets)	\$3.95	\$3.16
2748	Calcium Carbonate, 4 oz.	\$2.19	\$1.75
4800A	Star San concentrate, 4 oz.	\$5.65	\$4.52
2262	Portuguese Double Lever Hand Corker	\$23.43	\$18.74
2203	Gallon Jug, glass, with screw cap	\$5.29	\$4.23
4837	Carboy Harness, fits 5 to 6 gallon carboys	\$19.95	\$15.96
5262	Wine Bottle Tags, 12 reusable w/dry erase pen	\$4.00	\$3.20
2614	Wine Filter, Buon Vino MiniJet, #3 Sterile	\$3.80	\$3.04
2521	French Oak Cubes, light toast, 1 lb.	\$24.78	\$19.82
2706	Red Star Premier Cuvee Wine Yeast, 5 g. (12 available - expired 12/2017)	\$0.56	\$0.25
2707	Lalvin EC-1118 Wine Yeast, 5 g. packet	\$1.00	\$0.80
2322	Corks, Agglomerated #9 x 1.5" (44 mm)	\$0.12	\$0.10
2437D	PVC Capsules, Cobalt Blue Matte, 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

just fine. The trick is to look closely at the expiration date on the packet of wine yeast and replace the yeast if necessary.

So why do wine kit manufacturers even bother with expiration dates?

For one thing, it helps retailers keep stock in proper rotation. Older kits should be sold before newer kits of the same kind. And, over time, a bit of oxidation can occur which can darken the resulting wine. Lastly, the manufacturers offer a money-back guarantee on their kit so long as the kit is made according to the official instructions before the expiration date.

See "Official Expiration Dates" in the sidebar to the right.

10 Simpler Isn't Always Better

In an effort to make the entry into the hobby of winemaking easier for novices, I have noticed that each small tweak made to the official kit instructions over the past 10 years seems to simplify the process of winemaking to the barest of bones. I can understand why they do this: Less steps in the winemaking process means there's less need to muck with the wine as it matures, less chance for errors or racking spills, thus increasing the success rate for newbies.

I would just caution every winemaker to learn as much about his / her craft as possible, so that every step is understood, planned in advance, and has a purpose of moving the wine to its final destination: the bottle, and eventually, your discerning palate.

I hope everyone has enjoyed this short three-part series of essays about wine kits. Have you run into something similar? We would really appreciate your comments.

Until next month, cheers!

Brant

The Stomper

List Maintenance: How to Subscribe or Unsubscribe

To subscribe to *The Stomper* winemaking hints newsletter, simply go to our subscription request page at <http://www.grapestompers.com/stomper.aspx> or go to our home page and click the "Subscribe to the Stomper" button. If your email address has changed and you have ordered from us before, update your email address the next time you shop or send an email to tom@grapestompers.com and let us know your name and your old and new email address.

To quit receiving *The Stomper* winemaking hints newsletter, simply visit this page: http://www.grapestompers.com/quit_stomper.aspx

If you have never purchased anything from us, and wish to change your email address, simply unsubscribe the old address using the link above, then subscribe with the new one.

Past issues of the Stomper can be found at this page on our web site:

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

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.

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!

Official Expiration Dates

Vineco / Global Vintners Brands

The following wine kits officially expire one year from date of manufacture:

Cellar Craft	Cheeky Monkey
Legacy	California Connoisseur
Niagara Mist	European Select
Après	Atmosphere
KenRidge	Passport Series

RJ Spagnols Brands

En Primeur	One year
Cru Select	One year
RQ	One year
Grand Cru	18 months
Cru International	18 months
Cru Specialty	18 months
Orchard Breezin'	24 months

Happy New Year!

Thank you for choosing grapestompers for your wine making supplies.

WineMaker Magazine [Get a free trial issue](#) to WineMaker Magazine, the leading magazine and reference guide for the hobby of home winemaking.

You'll be amazed at all the winemaking articles, including hints, recipes, stories, new products, and much, much more. Start your risk-free subscription today.

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](#).