



# 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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### Katie's Competition Wine Challenge Update

By Katie Winnick

Hey everyone! Last month, you'll remember that Don and I decided to do a competition of who could make the best wine from store bought juice. I have started mine with a blend of two different ocean spray juices Pomegranate Cranberry and White Cran-Peach. We are all excited to see how it turns out!

Here is a photo of the first racking! It looks a little cloudy but it has really cleared up a lot.



I started my wine last month on July 30th, with a starting specific gravity reading of 1.05. In case you're wondering, I chose not to chaptalize on purpose.

I racked it on the 7th of August. The specific gravity was 1.000 on the 15th, which gives me an alcohol level of almost 7%.

In the two months we have been planning and discussing this competition, Don has yet to buy all the juice needed to ferment. I think he is stalling to see if mine turns out good or not. He promises to get his started this month. So I will be postponing my bottling until he at least starts his. I'm thinking that I might just go to Walmart and buy the big jug for him so he has no excuses!

Don and I have decided to put our egos aside after this competition and buy a wine kit together. It was hard trying to decide which one we wanted to make. We were torn between the Crème Brûlée and the Raspberry Mocha. The deciding factor was when Brant told us that Crème Brûlée tastes like vanilla custard. Once Don heard that, he was all for the Crème Brûlée, which was one of the pre-orders from Spagnols we advertised. The dessert wine kit pre-orders have been placed and we will let you know when they arrive, hopefully sometime this month.



Happy Labor Day  
from grapestompers!

## Hot Tip

### Be Prepared for Free Fruit

This time of year, it behooves the well-organized winemaker to have all the yeast, enzymes, nutrients, etc. and equipment available at a moment's notice in case you score a bunch of fresh fruit from a friend or neighbor.

The last thing you want to have happen is to get a bunch of ripe fruit without an immediate way to make wine!

Submit your hot winemaking tip here:  
[grapestompers.com/submit\\_ideas.aspx](http://grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.aspx)

*Tom's Cellar*  
**It's Apple Harvest Time in NC Mountains**  
*By Brant Burgiss*

When my parents moved our family back to the mountains of Alleghany County (where both sets of grandparents lived) in 1969, my mother was adamant about planting apple trees as soon as possible. It was her favorite fruit, and we had a big yard, so why not? She chose several different heritage varieties of trees to plant, apples with names I'd never heard of... the ones you couldn't buy in the grocery store. We didn't do a very good job of pruning or spraying, but in spite of our laziness somehow those trees produced juicy, tart apples year in and year out.



*Don and Katie picking apples while in the creek*

Some harvests were better than others; if we got a late frost, which is common in the NC mountains, the blossoms would suffer and we wouldn't get a big crop. But we always had plenty of applesauce, apple cobbler, and other apple dishes regardless of the weather conditions.

My grandfather Roy Burgiss (Tom's dad) had his own farm just a couple of miles down the road. He was apple crazy too, and produced gallons and gallons of fresh apple cider every year. He had a huge apple press (whatever happened to that thing?) and even had an extra refrigerator in his garage to house all of his cider!

So I suppose it's little wonder that I like everything apple as well. If only I could make fried apple pies as well as my neighbor, Susan Yarbrough! This past week, our crew in Laurel Springs has been busy picking, sorting, chopping, and pressing the ripe apples into fresh juice that will eventually become hard cider. I'm hoping that my attendance at a recent apple cider boot camp up at Cornell University will help make this year's cider the best I've ever made.

My instructor in Ithaca gave me a hint about a highly recommended yeast to try, so I am eager to get the apple juice fermenting and see what happens. I am also anxious to try out a new Unitank that performs double duty as both a fermenter and a brite tank, which will help with carbonation of the hard cider.

Do you have an apple wine or cider story to share? Let us know your family traditions!

Cheers,  
Brant

Well, now you've done it. You finally figured out where our monthly hidden special is located. During the month of September 2018, we're offering a whale of a deal on the Buon Vino MiniJet Wine Filter. Save \$30.00 off the regular price. Check out item #2611 and learn more about this neat tool. Be sure to mention this hidden special when ordering so you can get the deal!



## 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

### **CELEBRATING OUR 20th YEAR**

*From our customer archives*

Hey guys,  
Really enjoyed the festival on Oct. 7. Weather, although damp, gave a nice touch of fall. We all appreciate the great customer service and the quick response to my question is a perfect example! :-)

John Washam  
Huntersville, NC

Brant,  
Thank you for your newsletter advice regarding the re-fermentation of bottled wine. I recently had a similar experience with my own grapes.

A gallon bottle of wine (which had already been opened) EXPLODED in my kitchen. Thankfully no one was home at the time as there were glass shards and wine everywhere--even in the ceiling. Obviously my [potassium sorbate](#) is bad and I need to order a fresh batch.

Rachel Casillas  
Cudahy, 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!*

## Close Outs

Here is a list of some winemaking or brewing products that we are closing out on the grapestompers web site:

### ITEM # DESCRIPTION

2740A Liquid Oak Essence, **\$1.99**  
 2745 BTF Iodophor, 4 oz, **\$3.99**  
 2745A BTF Iodophor, 32 oz, **\$16.99**  
 Varies All rubber stoppers, size 11 or larger, **more than 30% off** items 2277, 2229, 2278, & 222A

### Extra Passport and RQ Wine Kits Now Available

PP6844 French Grenache **\$147.37**  
 Only 1 kit left  
 PP6848 CA Two Roads Red w/CGP (blend of Cab/Zin/Petit Syrah) **\$167.00**  
 2018RQ2 Carmenere - 1 left **\$165.99**

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

### Corky's Corner

## Winemaking Definition

### Titratable Acidity

Sometimes called total acidity; the total amount of acids in a wine or must that is measured by titration of the wine or juice with a base such as sodium hydroxide. The amount of acid (expressed in grams of acid per liter of wine) will tell you roughly how acidic the wine will feel in your mouth. Knowing this information will allow you to make any needed adjustments.

## Hot Tip

### Always Use New Corks

This may be obvious (and hopefully so), but whenever you are ready to bottle, be sure to use brand [new corks](#) to close up your bottles.

There's always the sad tale of the unprepared winemaker who tries to save a trip to the shop by re-using corks. It sounds crazy, but we've seen it happen, and of course, that person's wine was ruined, not to mention that it leaked everywhere!

Have a winemaking tip to submit?

[grapestompers.com/submit\\_ideas.aspx](http://grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.aspx)

### Monthly Specials

## Specials for September 2018

| Item # | Description  | Reg. Price | Special Price |
|--------|--|------------|---------------|
| VC6928 | Après Dessert Wine, 11.5L (ruby port style; makes 3 US gallons) (2 available, expired August 28, 2018) | \$98.25    | \$68.78       |
| CF5328 | Cellar Craft Yakima Valley Viognier, 18L (expired 8/18 - only 3 available)                             | \$176.84   | \$123.79      |
| CF3551 | Cellar Craft Yakima Valley Merlot, 18L with crushed grapes (expiring 9/12/18, only 2 avail)            | \$164.21   | \$114.95      |
| VC773  | California Connoisseur Chardonnay, 7.5L (only 2 available)   | \$67.72    | \$54.18       |
| VC780  | California Connoisseur Pinot Blanc, 7.5L (only 2 available)  | \$65.96    | \$52.77       |
| VC779  | California Connoisseur Merlot, 7.5L (1 available)  | \$72.98    | \$58.38       |
| VC769  | California Connoisseur Cab Sauv, 7.5L (4 avail)  | \$72.98    | \$58.38       |
| VC0875 | Legacy Pinot Grigio, 16L (only 4 available)  | \$110.11   | \$88.09       |
| VC0878 | Legacy Primo Rosso, 16L (only 1 available)   | \$125.54   | \$100.43      |
| 3258   | Cru Select Sauvignon Blanc, 16L  | \$132.32   | \$105.86      |
| 3166   | Grand Cru Merlot, 10L  | \$86.71    | \$69.37       |
| 3273   | Grand Cru Chardonnay, 10L  | \$86.27    | \$69.02       |
| VC5104 | NM Orchard Crisp, 7.5L   | \$72.28    | \$57.82       |
| 3168   | Orchard Breezin' Cranberry Craze, 5.5L   | \$72.49    | \$57.99       |
| CF5338 | Showcase Mystic, 18L w/CGP (only 2 available)  | \$164.84   | \$131.87      |
| 2726   | Ascorbic Acid, 2 oz.   | \$4.99     | \$3.99        |
| 2721   | B-Brite Cleanser, 8 oz.  | \$2.55     | \$2.04        |
| 2105C  | Bottles, cobalt blue stretch hock, 24 x 375 ml   | \$45.00    | \$36.00       |
| 2237B  | Small fine straining bag, 12" x 19"  | \$5.70     | \$4.56        |
| 2784   | Sake Homebrew Kit  | \$12.25    | \$9.80        |
| 3752   | Soda Ash, 5 lb. Used to clean oak barrels  | \$7.21     | \$5.77        |
| 2218   | 1/2" Bottle Filler, FastFlow   | \$4.65     | \$3.72        |
| 2608A  | 5" Floating Thermometer, with suction cup  | \$5.29     | \$4.23        |
| 2906   | Wine Preserver, inert gas  | \$10.99    | \$8.79        |
| 2263   | Blue Italian Floor Corker (only 1 available)   | \$149.99   | \$119.99      |
| 2743   | French Oak Chips, medium toast, 1 lb.  | \$4.83     | \$3.86        |
| 3630   | Safale S-04 English Ale Yeast, 11 g.   | \$3.15     | \$2.52        |
| 2411   | PVC Capsules, black w/gold grapes, each  | \$0.14     | \$0.10        |
| 2301   | Corks, Agglomerated #8 x 1.5" (38 mm), each  | \$0.15     | \$0.12        |
| 3200   | Complete Wine Kit - White (includes 1st kit!)  | \$323.39   | \$236.99      |
| 3100   | Complete Wine Kit - Red (includes 1st kit!)  | \$339.71   | \$245.99      |

## Understanding Shipping Charges

by Brant Burgiss

About the only thing I don't like about the hobby of home winemaking, especially for those of us who make wine from wine kits, is the weight of the box of grape juice concentrate and the freight cost to transport those kits.

The wine kit manufacturers have done us a great favor by concentrating the juice for us. Without this loss of extra water weight, all juices would be shipped in their natural water state... that is to say, at a heavier weight. And remember, water alone weighs over 8 lbs. per gallon. You can imagine that the sugar-laden grape juice weighs more than that!

Even though the weights of the grape juice have been reduced by concentration, the boxes of juice still weigh a lot for their size and require heavy duty boxes to safely ship the contents. In our case, we've had special crush-resistant boxes built to accommodate this weighty, dense product.

So when it comes time to ship the kits to you, we carefully pack the wine kits in these strong shipping boxes, surrounded by environmentally-friendly packing peanuts.

As far as freight charges go, we only charge you the exact cost of FedEx / UPS fees, plus the cost of the box. Unlike some merchants, we never add any handling charges to your orders, so there's no fluff added to your overall order cost.

We know that as long as the kits arrive safely, we do our job of shipping in a timely manner, and charge you only for the cost of freight, we'll go a long way towards earning your business time after time.

That's why we have very loyal customers... good service beats inflated shipping charges any day!

*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 information about our annual wine festival. Also we want to give you a chance to tell us what you would like to see next month.*

### Our 21st Annual Wine Festival

Don't look now, but it is already time to start thinking about Thistle Meadow Winery's annual wine festival.

This year's festival will be on Sunday, October 7th at our location in Laurel Springs, NC from 12-5 pm.

Live music will be provided by Time Sawyer, a great band from Elkin, NC, from 1-4 pm.

Admission, which includes a souvenir wine tasting glass, is only \$10. Using that glass you'll be able to taste wines from our winery as well as other NC wineries. Food and craft vendors will be here, so come on up to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains, bring a lawn chair, and plan to spend the day!

### Happy Labor Day!

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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](#).