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THE STOMPER

The Monthly Winemaking Newsletter of grapestompers.com  
January, 2005 Issue #54  
http://www.grapestompers.com 1-800-233-1505

Winter Hours (weather permitting)

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Eastern Mon, Wed, Th, Fri, Sat  
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM Eastern Tuesdays  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Eastern Sundays (call ahead)

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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 wine-making friends; we only ask that it be sent in its entirety.

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\*^\* Hot Tips are sprinkled throughout the newsletter

#&# There is at least ONE hidden special in this issue

^#^ This month's specials and new products are found towards the bottom of this document

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FEATURE ARTICLE: New Winemaking Video Released  
By Brant Burgess, Editor

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Happy New Year everyone! All of us at grapestompers hope you had a great holiday season. The orders you sent kept us busy until the last possible minute... we worked until Santa's sleigh could hold no more! Thank you for your loyalty and your business; we're happy to serve you.

Good news... the new improved winemaking video starring Tom, Bonnie, Scott, and yours truly has hit the shelf. The video now encompasses over one hour of content ranging from the main tutorial of how to make wine from a kit, to full descriptions of common winemaking equipment. As we've said before, we won't win any Academy Awards, but we think you'll enjoy the video and will learn a lot. The most important thing is that now the video matches the latest winemaking instructions for the wine kits manufactured by RJ Spagnols. The video shows how easy it is to make a batch of wine from a kit, even if you're a first-time winemaker.

Order the video in one of two formats:

VHS format - Item #6100

CD ROM (plays on a computer or CD ROM-capable DVD) #6104

Next, we'd like to hear from you! Many of you have commented about the winemaking articles we've written and have posted on our web site. But we're wondering... have we missed anything? Is there a particular winemaking topic you'd like us to address in the coming months? If you have an idea for a new winemaking article, write to us with your suggestion.

The current list of winemaking articles is shown here:  
<http://www.grapestompers.com/articles/>

Finally, we've posted some more customer inputs (photos and wine labels) on the "Customers" portion of our web site:  
<http://www.grapestompers.com/customers/>

Here's to you... and Happy Winemaking!

You can write to Brant at [webmaster@grapestompers.com](mailto:webmaster@grapestompers.com)

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BONNIE'S BIN: Diverse Wines Prevent Cellar Palate  
By Bonnie Brown

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OK, it's time to clear off the palate. I found another good reason besides out of boredom!

"Cellar Palate" is something a winemaker gets from tasting his own wine hundreds, maybe thousands, of times without the benefit of tasting other wines. Pretty soon he has the myopic view of wine and the flavors wines possess.

For example, a Sonoma County winemaker with a cellar palate might think a French Gigondas is bad when, in fact, the Gigondas tastes perfectly correct (it just doesn't happen to taste like a Sonoma County wine).

In a sense, you can get a cellar palate, too. If all you drink is one type of wine from one place (say Chardonnay from Napa Valley), then your palate may soon be skewed. All of a sudden a German Riesling, or anything else you taste, will seem disappointing - not because it is inherently disappointing, but because it doesn't taste like Napa Valley Chardonnay. So be careful of developing a cellar palate. Having one means you will miss the richness, pleasure, and diversity that makes wine so fascinating in the first place.

I thought that was another interesting concept from this wonderful "Wine Lover's Calendar," 2004. Sure hope Tom gets one for 2005!!!

I also read an interesting article on storing wine glasses. Do you store them stem up or down on your cabinet shelf? Storing them stem up holds the smells/aromas from the shelf in the bowl which will carry over to your wine. Maybe that is why the wine glass rack was invented? This also holds true of storing your winemaking equipment. Make sure air can circulate and you are not trapping an aroma in them.

I wish you all a HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR.

Life is too short... to drink bad wine... so make your own!

You can write to Bonnie at [bonnie@grapestompers.com](mailto:bonnie@grapestompers.com)

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TOM'S CELLAR: The Sherlock Holmes of Wine  
by Tom Burgess, Owner

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I am often called upon to solve mysteries in the field of winemaking. On some days, I feel like Sherlock Holmes! Those of you who have seen me say I even favor the famed detective in looks, even though I don't smoke a pipe. Of course in the beginning, I have to ask many questions as I gather the "facts". Most questions at the start are rather routine in nature, i.e. the manufacturer of the concentrate, the date you started, SG of the must at the beginning, temperature at the onset of fermentation, SG reading before going into the secondary fermentation, temperature now, the activity level of the fermentation process, and...

sudden changes of WEATHER!

Wait a minute here now, did you say weather??? Why would you think that weather can be a factor? Oh, now I have your attention! If severe weather hits your area such as a tornado, hurricane, or other severe and sudden weather change, then this will alter the fermentation process.

Look at your air lock! The last time you looked, your wine was just ready to come off and now it is unbalanced... What happened? Not to worry, this is a natural phenomenon; the normal atmospheric pressure will come back when the "front" passes through. Just recheck your air lock to be sure it still has liquid in it.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Need an easy way to crush Campden tablets?

Just use 2 spoons, one over another with a Campden tablet between them, and crush them easily. It works great when you are only crushing a few at a time.

Our thanks to Paul Davey from Wheatfield, NY for providing this tip.

Hidden special:  
#2732A Potassium Metabisulfite, 1 lb.  
Reg. \$4.21, this month only \$2.99

That's a 29 percent savings for a product that will pull double duty as a sanitizer for your equipment and a preservative for your wine.

BE SURE to mention this hidden special when ordering, or you will not get the right price.

Have a tip you'd like to submit?  
Send it to [tips@grapestompers.com](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

When you purchase a must, take along your hydrometer so you can check out the potential alcohol. It should read 1.09 to 1.095! And for those of you who purchase fresh grapes, take along your refractometer to check out the Brix (it should be 24 or more) of the grapes that you are considering buying from your local farmer or vineyard owner. Just remember, the higher SG & Brix and the older the vine, the better the grape and the better potential you have in making a better wine!

Note: With the concentrates, you don't have to worry. The manufacturers are out there checking all of that out so you will consistently have good wine each and every year!

Which brings up another subject: A few words sprinkled into

a conversation when having a glass of wine with friends can be a lot of fun - As an example, talk about malolactic fermentation. But don't stop there... try these words to stump your friends: flocculation, pectin haze or even diatomaceous earth. These are great conversation starters to throw out to your unsuspecting friends as you impress them with your knowledge of chemistry of winemaking. Then say, "Cheers" and walk silently away! What fun!!!

Tom

You can write to Tom at [tom@grapestompers.com](mailto:tom@grapestompers.com)

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Football Delivery: What To Do If You Have a Damage Claim  
by Brant Burgiss

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At one time or another, I suppose we've all received some damaged goods from a delivery company. It's no fun because the item you've been waiting on can't be used... and in the case of dripping boxes of must or broken wine bottles, we must tip our hats to the folks who drive the delivery vans, for THEY are ones who failed to make the place kicker position for their local NFL team and take out their frustration on unsuspecting parcels from [grapestompers.com](http://grapestompers.com).

What to do if you are the recipient of damaged goods:

1. If you are present when the driver delivers the shipment, start the claim process for damage right there, on the spot. You'll get a damage resolution at least 3-4 business days faster if you can do this. Go to Step 3.
2. If you discover the damage after the delivery person has departed, CALL THE DELIVERY COMPANY FIRST (UPS, FedEx) and start the claim process on their end. The reason? The delivery companies ignore us if we try to file the claim on our own. In some cases, the carrier will send an adjuster to witness the damage. Protect yourself and take photos of the damage to document the event.

DO NOT destroy the package or the product. Place the damaged goods in a trash bag (if it's leaking) and hold onto the merchandise, container and all packing materials for 5 working days after notification to the carrier. Often they will send a claims adjuster to inspect the damage.

How to report damage:

FedEx Claims - 1.800.GoFedEx (1-800-463-3339)  
<https://www.fedex.com/us/claimsonline>  
You will need to register for a fedex.com User ID and password or login before filing your claim.

Or, download, print out and fax a claims form:  
<http://www.fedex.com/us/customer/claims/Claims.pdf?link=4>

UPS Claims - 1-800-PICK-UPS (742-5877)  
[https://www.ups.com/forms/e-mail/damage?loc=en\\_US](https://www.ups.com/forms/e-mail/damage?loc=en_US)

3. Call our toll-free number (800) 233-1505 and report the damages that occurred with your shipment. Be prepared to tell us:

- a. your invoice or order number
- b. your tracking number
- c. the carrier's claim number
- d. which article(s) were damaged, and how so

4. Once we've verified the claims process has started, we'll get a replacement out to you as soon as we can!

Thanks for helping us streamline the claims process.

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FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

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As you might imagine, our office receives quite a bit of correspondence - mostly through e-mail - here are some comments we've recently received:

Tom,  
Just wanted to let you know that I just finished bottling my first kit. I admit when I "tested" the wine 3 weeks ago I was a little worried but I have to say it turned out excellent!

I invited a few friends over and we opened a bottle of "the good stuff", which is about \$18 and a bottle of mine. Out of a blind taste testing, most people either couldn't tell the difference or preferred my wine! I'm very pleased with the quality and will be up as soon as I can to start my next kit! Thanks.

-- Brent Gonet  
The Honch Cellars

Tom:  
I bought your Fast Seal Tool (Item #2399). I have tried everything under the sun to provide a smooth looking well finished PVC capsule on a bottle, with varying success. In search of a professional look and relative ease I used the aforementioned item. It cannot get any simpler.

A simple pot of boiling water, a three second inverted dunk and viola. I can easily finish a complete batch of 29 to 30 bottles in less than 15 minutes and every single one turns out perfectly, evenly shrunk, centered and without "hot spots" or lifted opening tear tapes. As a bonus it also cleans up any residue left on the bottle, and all you have to do is wipe it dry with a dish towel.

-- Mark Lozano  
Plymouth, IN

Tom:  
The PDF file with the Holiday Label works great and makes a really nice [wine] label.

Do more.

Thanks,

-- Ken Hovis  
Summerfield, FL

Tom,  
I received 3 packages today via FedEx and UPS. Thank you so much for the prompt service. Now is the waiting to give it as a Christmas present. I am sure we will have more correspondence when we get this cellar in working order.

Thank you again,

-- Faith Hunt  
Lexington, NC

Tom,  
Thanks [for the winemaking stuff]. We're looking forward to a new adventure in winemaking.

-- John Montgomery  
Austin, TX

Send us your comments about your experience with grapestompers... we may just make you famous next month!

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GUEST COLUMN - How to Judge Clarity of Wine  
By Tony Petruso, St. Louis, MO

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I have used two different ways to check on the clarity of wines while they are in the carboy.

#1 Some winemakers advise turning off the lights and shining a flashlight through the wine. A laser pointer, available at office supply stores, works better. It can be used with the lights on and has a more uniform beam. Shine it through the wine onto a light colored wall or paper. You will be able to see how it diffuses in the wine and, as the wine clears, it will become more of a pinpoint on the wall.

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

Instead of adding water to the carboy to "top off" and eliminate air, do what I do:

Just add marbles (clean ones!) to displace the wine until the level reaches about one inch from the airlock.

Our thanks to Brian Dries from Wescosville, PA for offering this winemaking tip.

Have a tip you'd like to submit?  
Send it to [tips@grapestompers.com](mailto:tips@grapestompers.com)

\*-----HOT TIP-----\*

#2 The second method is to make a "gauge" on your computer. Simply print numbers vertically on a sheet of paper. Start with "1" at the top and work your way down to about the number "20." Now go back to the number "1" and make it the largest size font possible. Then go down the list of numbers and make them with increasingly smaller and smaller size fonts. You will end up with a large number "1" at the top and a tiny "20" at the bottom. Sort of like an eye doctor's chart. Print out a couple of these gauges on white paper. Hold one behind the carboy and see which numbers you can read through the wine. At first you will only be able to read the larger numbers. When you can "read the fine print," your wine will be clear.

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Like To Be A Guest Columnist For The Stomper Newsletter?

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If you'd like to be our next guest columnist, simply send your three- or four-paragraph article to [articles@grapestompers.com](mailto:articles@grapestompers.com). If your article is selected for use in a future Stomper newsletter, you'll receive the attention of thousands, a coupon good for a discount on your next grapestompers.com order, as well as our heartfelt thanks. So what are you waiting for??

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CORKY'S WINEMAKING DEFINITION

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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.

Look for other wine-related definitions by clicking on the 'Glossary' button from our home page at <http://www.grapestompers.com>

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#### NEW PRODUCTS

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These are products that were recently added to our catalog:

- Item #3179 CSP Cabernet/Shiraz/Merlot, \$88.00
- Item #2793A Peach Flavoring for Wine and Beer, \$3.85
- Item #2107A Grolsch Gaskets (replacement gasket for flipper top beer bottle), \$.06 ea

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.

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#### THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS

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grapestompers' specials for the month of January 2005:

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3226	CC Piesporter	72.38	61.52
3233	CC Chenin Blanc	66.88	56.85
3256	CSP Riesling Traminer	86.13	73.21
3126	AB Strawberry/Sangiovese	60.00	49.99
3219	VDV Chardonnay	47.63	39.99
3112	AB Raspberry/Pinot Nero	62.37	51.99
2601	Plastic Wine Thief	5.50	4.33
2263	Italian Floor Corker (brass iris)	95.81	76.66
2263B	Italian Bench Corker (brass iris)	89.87	69.87
2260	Portuguese Floor Corker	57.75	49.03
2262	Portuguese Hand Corker	15.13	11.99
3200	Complete White Wine Starter Kit	232.29	180.00
3100	Complete Red Wine Starter Kit	241.42	190.00

See below for a description of the Complete Starter Kit.

Did you see this month's hidden special? It's located elsewhere in this newsletter.

The VDV, WA, and OB wine kits are designed to make about thirty 750 ml bottles of great wine in as little as 28 days; CC, CCH, GC, CSP, En Primeur, and CSG kits create wine in as few as 45 days. The Orchard Breezin' and Wine-Art Country Mist wine kits are refreshingly sweet with plenty of fruit flavor, with an alcohol content from 7% to 9%.

Wine and beer kit abbreviations explained:

- AB = Advintige Bellissima wine kit
- BH = Brew House beer kit
- CC = Cellar Classic wine kit
- CCH = Cellar Classic Harvest wine kit
- EP = En Primeur wine kit
- GC = Grand Cru wine kit
- WA = Wine-Art wine kit
- MM = Mosti Mondiale wine kit
- OB = Orchard Breezin' wine kit
- VDV = Vino del Vida wine kit
- VDVWT = Vino del Vida - World Tour Series wine kit

CSP = Cru Select Platinum wine kit  
CSG = Cru Select Gold wine kit  
RQ = Cru Select Restricted Quantities

Here's what you get with the Complete Starter Kit:

If choosing the Complete White Kit, your choice of either:  
Fume Blanc, Piesporter, or Chenin Blanc VDV concentrate

If choosing the Complete Red Kit, your choice of either:  
Valpolicella, Shiraz, or Cabernet/Merlot VDV concentrate

Plus all these goodies:

Tom's Winemaking Video	Bottle Rinsers
Fermenter Bucket with lid	Three-Piece Airlock
6-Gallon Glass Carboy	Carboy Brush
Bung (stopper)	Bottle Filler
Five feet of vinyl tubing	B-Brite Sanitizer
Portuguese Hand Corker	FermTech AutoSiphon
2 Cases of 750-ml Bottles	Long Handled Spoon
Bottle Washer Adapter	Brass Bottle Washer
Bottle Drainer, 45 station	Adhesive Thermometer
Fast Flow Spi got	Potassium Metabisulfite

And you get the following items free (\$16.79 value):

- 30 Customized Wine Labels (text of your choice)
- Triple scale hydrometer
- 1.5" Corks (30 corks, enough for one batch)

Just think: This complete kit offers everything a brand-new hobbyist would need to begin making his or her own wine. All you need to decide is which wine kit you want!

And don't forget... you can always return your winemaking video and receive a refund of \$19.95 on your credit card... that's like getting the video at no cost! All we ask is that you return it in good condition.

This is the best deal we've ever offered on a complete kit, so don't miss out... order one for yourself or a friend today. Ask for Red Complete Kit # 3100 or White Kit # 3200 and be sure to let us know which wine concentrate you want, as well as the text you want on your free wine labels.

If you prefer, you can "personalize" your Complete Kit - You can also save on shipping if you can locate your own wine bottles... if you don't need wine bottles, just be sure and let us know when you place your order, and we will adjust the price of the equipment kit accordingly. You can also upgrade your wine kit and get any other type of wine you desire, by paying the difference for the upgrade from the standard concentrate to the upgraded one. Likewise, you can upgrade from the hand corker to either of the floor corks we offer by paying the difference.

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#### NEXT MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

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- More Winemaking Stories from Tom's Cellar
  - Another Surprise from Brant
  - More Specials
  - The next article from Bonnie's Bin
  - More Customer Testimonials
  - Another Guest Article - Submit yours today!
  - New Winemaking Products
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#### LIST MAINTENANCE

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OR go to our home page and enter your address in the box.

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Past issues of the Stomper can be found at  
<http://www.grapestompers.com/newsletter/archives>

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