



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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Feature Article

Enter the 2006 Winemaker Mag's Wine Competition

by Brant Burgiss

Happy Easter, everyone! Time is really flying by... believe it or not, now is the time to start making your wine if you intend on having it ready in time for a summertime refreshment.

It's very likely you have made a wine that everyone raved about. Well, why not enter your wine in North America's largest international amateur competition for home winemakers? The best homemade wines from across the globe will compete for medals in 50 categories awarded by a panel of experienced wine judges. This competition, sponsored by Winemaker Magazine, is a very popular event. In 2005 there were 2,247 entries from as far away as Israel. Enter your wines and compete against the world's best home winemakers!

It does not matter whether your wine was made from a kit or was made from scratch. All it takes is a little time to fill out the paperwork and box up / send your wine. Please note: the deadline to enter is April 14, 2006.

Read the complete details and download the entry form at:

<http://www.winemakermag.com/feature/543.html>

The Wine Cellar Design Winner Tells His Story

How I Built My Own Wine Cellar

by Frank Campano

I have been making wine since 1998 and like most new home winemakers, the wine was consumed or given to friends before it had a chance to age. As I got a little ahead, I would store the bottles in an unfinished basement closet, which I tried to insulate from the rest of the finished basement. The problem was the humidity was too high in the summer months and there was too much temperature variation from summer to winter.

I took a 4' X 8' section away from my finished recreation room in the basement and designed a wine cellar for 30 bottle batches instead of individual racks which saved a lot of space. In the center of the wall opposite the door, I made some triangle shaped sections for storing the remainder of batches being consumed. The lower two shelves on both sides of the door is double depth so I can get two batches per section for aging. Once the batches have matured for 1 or 2 years (or I run out of that wine) I move the wine up to the eye-level shelves. I can store over 1150 bottles in the 4' X 8' space.

The floor is on solid insulation panels 1 1/2" thick. The 2" X 4" walls are spaced away from the basement walls so I lined the masonry walls with a plastic vapor barrier, used R-19 insulation in the walls and put a second vapor barrier over the insulation. The ceiling is insulated with R-30 and also covered with a double vapor barrier. The walls and ceiling are covered with green sheetrock and an inexpensive paneling both specified for use in a basement (or high humidity location). A \$40 remnant of vinyl flooring that looks like tile was used to cover the plywood floor.

I found an insulated exterior door on clearance with a nice etched glass that had been in the showroom at the local lumberyard for \$60. The same lumberyard had some cy-

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Tom says, "Have a Happy Easter!"

Hot Tip

Store Bottles with the Label Facing Up

If bottles are stored with the labels up, it will be easier to see the deposit of sediment that forms on the opposite side of the bottle when it comes time to open it.

Tell us your favorite winemaking tip!

www.grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.asp

Help Us Design A New Winemaking Gadget

by Tom Burgiss

A hearty thanks to all of our contestants for sending us descriptions and photos of their wine cellars. We had a wide gap in construction cost, ranging from \$20.00 and up! Each contestant made remarks about handling temperature control. Most were located in areas of their basements or space built with well-insulated walls and doors with small electrical cooling units. The utilization of space was impressive! So much storage in a small space!

Our winner is Frank Campano from New Jersey. And with his permission, he allowed us to share some photos of his cellar with you. We congratulate him on his fine effort! After a phone conversation with him, he decided on a 16 liter Heron Bay Cabernet/Shiraz (# HB934) as his prize. So with that information, Jimmy Benge, our warehouse manager has shipped it out to Frank and we hope he enjoys this fine wine as he relaxes in his easy chair.

Ray Mitchell from Fayetteville, PA was our runner-up and close behind were three honorable mentions: Dan Hunter from Carey, OH; Joey Marshall from Graniteville, SC and Ronald Faro out of Williamson, NY. Thanks for your entry and a good pat on the back for your efforts.

Can you guess what single item we sell the most of and why? Hydrometers!! I think it's because they are placed on a flat surface after use, and they ROLL off the countertop onto the floor only to get broken AGAIN !!!

We have 2 basic hydrometers and both are triple scaled (providing readings in specific gravity, alcohol percentage / potential, and Brix levels). An example reading might be: specific gravity of 1.095 = 13% alcohol = 24 brix.

One listed as Item #2603 is called "Triple Scale" for \$5.50, while the other one is #2604 and is called Green Line for \$5.50 Both fit inside the #2598 Wine Thief with test jar. The #2603 weighs 21 gms and the #2604 weighs 24 gms; therefore, the #2604 has more body and a little thicker glass.

On our web site you may read more info under "Articles" and the very first one is about hydrometers. Now I have ANOTHER CONTEST for you to enter !! Read on...

We will award a gift certificate for a DESIGN or IDEA on something that a hydrometer can be placed ON or IN that will prevent it from ROLLING, thereby preventing break-ages of hydrometers. So GO FOR IT and let me know your ideas for a new gizmo!

Thanks again, Tom.

Latest Wine Kit News

New Wine Kits Introduced

[Heron Bay Wines](#) recently announced the release of a **Chardonnay/Viognier** blend from California in the Ultra Premium 16L format.

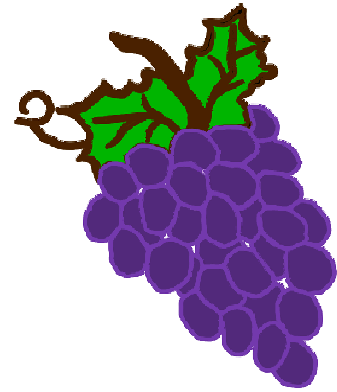
This unique blend of Chardonnay and Viognier produces a full-bodied wine that is pale yellow in color with a bouquet of tropical fruits. The acidity and body of Chardonnay balances the creamy texture of the Viognier. Introducing the palate to crisp and refreshing citrus flavors and exotic fruits; ending with a fresh, creamy finish.

Item # HB958 Body: 4 (out of 5); Sweetness: 0

grapestompers has already ordered a supply of these new Chard Viognier kits; they should be available for purchase as early as the first or second week of April.

[Cellar Craft](#) has also released a new wine this month, namely a Global Cuvee **Gewürztraminer**. According to Cellar Craft, this is a new blend designed to show typical Gewürztraminer character while priced for everyday wine use. Available mid-April 2006.

The Gewürz is 55% Californian and 45% Washington. The Washington juice contributes delightful spice and subtle grapefruit and lychee elements which are typical of cool climate Gewürztraminer. The California content introduces green apple and ripe pear notes to the aromatics and flavor of the wine. The exclusive, all natural Flavor Reserve heightens the aromatics and creates a fresh and well-balanced sensory impression. Lighter in body and less complex than our Showcase Gewürz, this blend shows its charm in just a few weeks but will continue to develop for 6 months or more. The more subdued character and off-dry finish of this wine makes it particularly well-suited for use as an aperitif or accompaniment for a wide range of light dishes. We believe that this will be regarded as the best Gewürztraminer in its price category. It may well become your new House wine.



Customer Feedback

Dear Tom,
WOW! I can't believe how wonderful the "new" grapestomper newsletter is. I find myself printing extra copies and giving to my winemaking friends and home vintners club members!! I have started a notebook of useful info on winemaking and the "Stomper" has its own section!!

Thanks for all of your efforts! It's so great to share knowledge!!

Paula Drake
Jasper, GA

Hello,
BRAVO! The pdf format is SPEC-TACULAR. I am sure I am not the only one who has told you this either. Good luck and keep up the great job you are doing to satisfy your customers.

Brian
via the web site

Hi-- Got most of my answers from your Newsletter after I wrote you the 1st time. What a good site this is and sounds like a really good bunch of folks. Am kinda just getting started in wine making. Have made some wild plum, apple and choke cherry wine that is aging now. Hopefully it will be all right. I prefer grape wine and so am looking forward to making that. Oh, I also just started a batch of concord grape wine (using concord grape juice and cranberry juice, both from the 64 ounce bottles that can be bought at the stores). My own recipe. See how it turns out. If good will forward the recipe for folks to use if they like. Thanks for your help and I look forward to doing what business I can with you.

Fred Hochhalter
Elgin, ND

New Products

Here is a list of new products we've added since last month:

5050 Flip Flop Glass Holder, \$4.39
 5027 Wine Picnic Basket for 2, \$99.99
 5028 Wicker Wine Bottle Chiller \$19.99
 5025 Picnic Pack Gift Set, \$49.99
 5031 Wine & Cheese Tote, \$19.99
 5026 Picnic Pack w/Blanket, \$69.99
 5029 Picnic Pack Set, Burgundy \$31.99
 5032 Wine & Cheese Tote, \$19.99
 5030 Picnic Pack Set, Green \$31.99

Plus we have several new decorative wine bottle holders that are too new to list!

See our web site for details.

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.

Corky's Corner

Winemaking Definition

Mead

A fermented beverage usually made from honey, water, acid, nutrients, and yeast. Tannin may be added, but the only flavor is derived from the honey itself. Honeys made from different nectar sources (flowers), yield different flavors. Melomel is a mead made with honey and fruit, while Pyment is a mead made with honey and grape juice.

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

Hot Tip

A Tip for Topping Off Carboys

When topping off carboys after a racking I try to never use water. I think it only dilutes your wine. Most of the time I use a similar wine for topping. You are not losing wine because you get it back when you bottle the next batch.

You should also taste a wine before using it for topping. If the wine has gone bad you surely want to know. You won't want to spoil a new vintage by topping off with a spoiled wine!

grapestompers.com would like to thank Tony Petruso for providing this tip.

Have a tip to submit? Let us know!

www.grapestompers.com/submit_ideas.asp

Monthly Specials

Specials for April 2006

Item #	Description	Reg. Price	Special
3225	VDV Sauvignon Blanc, 7L	\$49.99	\$39.99
3282	OB Calypso Bianco, 7.2L	\$49.99	\$39.99
3168	OB Cranberry Chianti, 7.2L	\$51.82	\$42.19
3304	Red Ice Wine, L	\$83.64	\$59.99
3302	White Ice Wine, L	\$83.64	\$59.99
HB938	HB Shiraz, 16L	\$82.50	\$59.99
<i>Next 2 Wine Kits - Only While Supplies Last - Limited Quantities on Hand</i>			
HB951	Colombard/Chardonnay, 16L (exp. 2/06)	\$79.99	\$47.29
HB940	HB Vieux Reserve, 16L (close dated)	\$82.50	\$49.99
2729	Acid Blend, 1 lb.	\$4.99	\$3.99
2731	Campden Tablets, 2 oz.	\$2.64	\$1.99
2732	Potassium Metabisulfite, 4 oz.	\$1.98	\$1.48
2733	Fermax Yeast Nutrient, 4 oz.	\$2.36	\$1.88
Various	ALL in-stock T-Shirts	\$15.00	\$9.99
Various	CLOSE OUT on ALL Sweatshirts	\$25.00	\$13.99
2597A	Refractometer, 0-32 Brix w/ATC	\$49.99	\$29.99
2801	Wine Recipe Handbook	\$3.19	\$2.49
3100	Complete Wine Kit - Red	\$241.42	\$199.00
3200	Complete Wine Kit - White	\$232.29	\$189.00

Guest Column

Making Your First Mead

This month's article comes to us from Joshua Johnson of Liberty, MO.

So you want to get into mead but don't know where to start. My first mead (10 years ago) was the Ginger Mead in the New Complete Joy of Homebrewing which is probably the first Mead that a lot of people made. After making a number of meads and winning a number of medals and ribbons. I would suggest that one's first mead should have several characteristics:

HIDDEN SPECIAL

Capsule Shrink Machine, Item # 2400HS. Regular price \$210.00, on sale during April 2006 (while supplies last) for only \$119.99. Be sure to mention you want the hidden special price in the "Comments" box when ordering online, or you will not qualify for the special price.

1. Be low enough gravity that it ages relatively quickly (Don't start with a 15% alcohol monster)
2. Have some easily fermented ingredients to get the mead going and avoid stuck fermentations.
3. Don't use too many non-honey flavor ingredients so the flavor of the fermented honey is evident.

Based on these criteria my choice would be to make a very simple cyser (apple melomel). A basic recipe for this would be (for 5 gallons):

3.5 Gallons Apple Juice - Mott's or the like will work fine; just make sure there aren't any sorbates or sulfates listed in the ingredients

6 Pounds of Wildflower Honey from a Food Co-op, Farmers Market, or Homebrew Store (Grocery store honey is fine if that is all that is available)

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(Continued from page 1)

press decking on clearance that I used for the shelving. You could use plywood or get exotic and use mahogany but nothing aromatic like cedar.

The most expensive item was a wine chiller. I found one for about \$500 for the small space called "The Vintage Keeper". It keeps the temperature at my setting of 56 degrees with 2 or 3 degrees all year. The humidity gets down fewer than 50% in the coldest months and was too high in the summer until I put a small dehumidifier in the wine cellar to keep the humidity below 75%.

In another climate, one might get away without the chiller, but I would plan the framing and electric so one could be added. The balance of the wine cellar, with some bargain clearance items, was about \$400 worth of materials. Of course this was 4 years ago and prices now are probably higher on most items.

See Frank's photos on the right!



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1 Gallon of Water

Yeast Nutrient (use however much the package directs) - I also tend to use some yeast hulls and yeast energizer if I can find them in my stack of brewing supplies

Yeast - I would recommend D-47 or 71B-1122.

Boil the water - once it boils take the pot off the burner and add the honey and stir until it is dissolved. Put the pot back on the stove and heat it until it is at about 180 if you have a thermometer or until it threatens to boil if you don't. Turn off the heat and let it sit for 15 minutes. At the end of the 15 minutes place the pot in a ice water bath to cool the liquid - once it is down to around room temp add half the juice to the fermenter, then the honey/water must, the yeast nutrient/hulls, the yeast, and then the remaining juice - leaving some head space for fermentation.

This should be kept cool (under 70 degrees - under 62 is better) and allowed to ferment and racked to a new carboy when the fermentation has subsided. Let age for a couple of months, degas and rack again to a new carboy. You may need to add some finings if the mead isn't clear after a few months (do not bottle the mead if it isn't clear) When you are ready to bottle if you taste the cyser it is going to be very dry and may not have much flavor. To make this a more pleasant beverage get one more pound of honey and treat in a pint of water as outlined above. Add 2.5 tsp of potassium sorbate and ¼ tsp of sulfate (or 5 crushed Campden tabs) and then add about 1/3 of the honey mixture and gently stir and taste, if you like it great, otherwise add a bit more and taste until it seems to be about right. Bottle and wait a couple of months for your first bottle. Start your second mead soon (a nice orange-blossom traditional mead perhaps) and make sure you keep a least a few bottles at least a year.

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Wine Drops

Wine Drops is a catch-all for various tidbits that we find interesting. It may be anything - a wine recipe, a wine joke, links to neat web sites, etc. This month, we offer some photos from the winner of our wine cellar competition.



The entrance to the wine cellar



Lots of storage for wine in here!



Notice the cooling unit below!

