Q: I am a new wine maker in New Jersey. I made my first batch this year with my father and have a question about a phenomenon I've experienced with my wine. After crushing and fermenting for about a week, we placed our wine in 5 gal glass jugs for continued fermentation (last September). In late December after the fermentation stopped, we decanted the wine into other 5 gal jugs. As we did that, I took a taste and noticed that it was bubbly, not visibly, but when you drank it you could feel it on your tongue. Otherwise it tastes great. Do you have any idea why this has occurred? A: Residual CO_2 is the bubbly/spritzy sensation that you are noticing and there are at least a couple of possible reasons for this phenomen.

The most likely reason is that there is residual CO_2 left in the wine - a natural by-product of the fermentation process. There are several ways to get rid of this CO_2. My preferred method is barrel storage for a few months - the barrel's natural wood surface breathes and literlly sucks out all the CO_2. However, if you are making wine in 5 gallon carboys this is not likely practical for you. The next option is to vigorously stir the wine several times/day over a period of a few days. You can do this with a long stir-stick or with a mechanical aid attached to a drill (Fizz-X is available at most wine making supply stores).

The other possible reason for residual CO_2 is the from a malolactic fermentation (MLF). It may be a wild fermentation or you may have innoculated for MLF. If your sulphite levels are above 25 ppm you are not likely to have a wild MLF. The treatments is the same as above.
(
J. George
)

This article compliments of VAWA .