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King Family Vineyards Meritage Awarded Prestigious 2010 Virginia Governor's Cup

Richmond, Va. - Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains 15 minutes from Charlottesville, a small, family-owned vineyard has achieved what Thomas Jefferson dreamed of at his Monticello vineyards: the production of an award-winning Virginia wine. The King Family Vineyards 2007 Meritage has won the coveted 2010 Virginia Governor's Cup award for red wine. Selected from more than 200 entries representing all of the appellations in the Commonwealth, King Family Vineyards 2007 Meritage is a blend of 56% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot, 16% Cabernet Franc, and 8% Malbec.

"We could not have done this without our winemaker, Matthieu Finot and our entire staff at King Family Vineyards. It is an honor and a privilege to receive this award, and it is a testament to the dedication, hard work and talent of our entire team," said Ellen King, owner, King Family Vineyards.

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"It is truly an honor to be recognized by your peers. We are always trying to make the best wines we can, and we're glad to know people are enjoying them," said David King, owner, King Family Vineyards.

The 28th Annual Governor's Cup Wine Competition, sponsored by the Virginia Wineries Association (VWA), took place January 23 at Lansdowne Resort. The Virginia wine industry changed the Governor's Cup competition this year, tasting only red wines. A total of 126 medals were awarded, including 15 Gold, 53 Silver and 58 Bronze. The Governor's Cup was selected from among the Gold medal recipients and announced at the Virginia Wine Expo's Governor's Cup Grand Tasting February 26th. The Virginia white wines will be judged later this year and announced in conjunction with October Virginia Wine Month.

"When I make wine I put my heart and soul into making wine and sometimes in competitions you don't get the result you expect. So it is really nice to get this kind of recognition," said winemaker Matthieu Finot. "It really is so flattering because there were other really good wines that entered the competition. What is important also is to stay humble and work hard because every vintage presents a new challenge. Even though I feel great receiving this award, I am always pushing and working hard to make the best wine I can every year."

A family-owned and operated boutique winery located in Crozet, the King Family Vineyards specializes in small productions of ultra-premium wine that showcase the remarkable qualities of nearly 100% estate grown fruit. Founded in 1998, the winery's first vintage was only 500 cases. Today, the winery produces approximately 5,000 cases of wine per year.

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The rapid growth of Virginia's vibrant wine industry has made it one of the fastest growing agricultural sectors in the state. In 1979, there were only six wineries in Virginia. Today, there are more than 140 wineries, with growth escalating as fast as the state's advancements in wine quality and reputation.

For a complete list of winners and further information about events, tours and tastings, please visit the Virginia Wine Marketing Office's website at www.virginiawine.org or call 1-804-344-8200.

King Family Vineyards 2007 Meritage Tasting Notes/Background

The wine was aged in French oak for 18 months. There are dark fruits, especially black cherry and raisin, on the nose with a hint of toast. Full mouth of black cherry, smoke and clove. Perfect structure with firm, balanced tannins. The finish is smooth and lingering. It is recommended that you drink this wine now through 2015. A total of 615 cases were produced. The 2010 Governor's Cup winner also won a gold medal at the 2009 Monticello Cup.

The grapes were hand-harvested, hand sorted, then de-stemmed without crushing (whole berry). Fermentation vessels were a combination of open-top stainless steel tanks and fermentation bins. The lots were kept separate. Punch-downs and gentle pump-overs were done during fermentation to extract color, tannins, and structure. Different yeast strains were used for each batch to start alcoholic fermentation, to increase the wine's complexity.

Many lots underwent an extended maceration to increase mid-palate body, after which the lots were transferred to French oak barrels for malolactic fermentation and aging. The final blend was determined through exhaustive tastings, trial blends and individual barrel selection prior to the first racking in June 2008. After eighteen months in barrel, the wine was fined with egg whites just before bottling. No filtering was done in order to maintain the complexity and life of the wine and increase the aging potential.

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