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The Virginia Wine Experience in London Selects 65 Virginia Wines to Showcase at Historic Wine Tasting in May 2007

London media and wine trade members set to taste, experience unique versatility and variety of Virginia wines

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — February 21, 2007— The Virginia Wine Experience in London, LLC, today announced the results of its qualifying round to determine which wines will represent Virginia at a historic May 2007 wine tasting in London, England. After tasting more than 88 wines from 33 Virginia wineries, the qualifying wines to be presented at the London wine tasting represent a diverse range from sparkling wines and meritage blends to the native Norton grape. A complete list of the Virginia wines can be found at www.vawineinlondon.com.

"We are pleased to be taking 65 high-quality wines to pour for media and trade members in London. They truly represent the best quality in today's Virginia wines," said Richard Leahy, executive director of the Virginia Wine Experience in London, LLC.

The one-day qualifying round took place at White Hall Vineyards and featured a panel of ten wine experts tasting the full range of Virginia wines from vintage sparkling to dessert styles. The selected wines will be introduced to an exclusive audience of media and wine trade members at the renowned Vinopolis wine tasting venue in London on May 2nd, 2007, and presented as worthy of comparison to fine wines from any region on the world stage.

The theme at the Virginia Wine Experience in London will be "Virginia, First in Wine" – a reference to both the history and quality of Virginia's wine. "Since this is the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement, now is an excellent time to highlight the fact that Virginia was the first place in North America where English settlers deliberately set out to produce wine," noted Leahy. "We believe Londoners will appreciate the historical significance of our theme, and it's a tremendous opportunity to showcase recent progress in the Virginia wine industry."

Virginia is both literally and stylistically between California and Europe. Due to its favorable Mid-Atlantic location – between North and South – Virginia wines represent both New World and Old World wine making styles. Leahy noted further that Virginia’s climate produces the most versatile range of fine wines in the Eastern United States.

Leahy points out that Virginia is on the cutting edge of the regional wine industry, with a national reputation for Viognier and with major awards in national and international competitions. "Our recent fine 2002 and 2005 vintages demonstrate just how far we’ve come, and we're looking forward to showing the British that their dream of establishing a world-class wine industry in Virginia has finally been realized," said Leahy.

Virginia is known to produce a good wine for any palate. Varieties worthy of note include Chardonnay, fine red Bordeaux blends, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot (two of the red Bordeaux varieties), Viognier (a white grape from the Rhone that many believe performs better in Virginia than anywhere else in the country), specialty varieties, such as Petit Manseng, and Virginia’s own native Norton grape.

A complete list of judges, participating wineries and the wines selected for presentation at the London event, in addition to photos from the qualifying event and more information about the The Virginia Wine Experience in London can be found at www.vawineinlondon.com.

About the Virginia Wine Experience in London

The Virginia Wine Experience in London, LLC, was formed by six Virginia wineries (Keswick Vineyards, Kluge Estate Vineyard & Winery, Pearmund Cellars, White Hall Vineyards, Williamsburg Winery, and Veritas Winery), and is generously sponsored by the Farm Credit of Virginia. Richard Leahy, the Executive Director, has written as a journalist on Virginia wine for 20 years, including acting as Mid-Atlantic and South Editor for the *Oxford Companion to the Wines of North America*, and he is currently the East Coast Editor for the trade magazine *Vineyard & Winery Management*.

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More Background on the Virginia Wine Industry

A primary aim of the Virginia Company in establishing Jamestown was to start a successful wine industry in the New World. "Acte Twelve" of 1619 ordered all male household heads in Jamestown to cultivate 20 grapevines each and failure to do so carried the death penalty. Yet, native pests and diseases prevented success.

Thomas Jefferson, the third President, continued attempts to cultivate European grapevines at Monticello. Today the vines have been re-planted on American rootstocks, a technique necessary for success unknown to colonial farmers, and one which has helped the Virginia wine industry grow from a mere curiosity in the 1970s to one of the leading wine producing states today. With over 100 wineries, Virginia ranks sixth nationally, and is the second largest state in the East for fine wine production.

There are several factors that contribute to the success of the contemporary Virginia wine industry: Virginia's favorable temperate climate avoids the problems of northern winters and the hotter summers to the south; favorable state legislation through the Farm Winery Acts of 1980 and 1985 established funding for viticulturist Dr. Tony Wolf and enologist Dr. Bruce Zoecklein, whose research has resulted in vast improvements in wine quality; and enterprising winery owners willing to plant new and unusual grape varieties in addition to the international favorites.