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## PRESS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

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Contact: Anne Flinn, Anne Flinn Advertising, 434-825-9320

## Loving Cup Vineyard & Winery Celebrates 10 Years Certified-Organic

Loving Cup Vineyard & Winery, just 15 miles southwest of Charlottesville, is the only certified-organic vineyard and winery in Virginia and is one of three on the East Coast. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the vineyard's organic certification. From experimentation with new varieties to new materials and new techniques, there is a lot to celebrate!

Growing grapes organically in Virginia is not easy. According to owner Karl Hamsch, "it's nearly impossible." Grapes are particularly sensitive to the mold, mildews, and rots that thrive in Virginia's summers. Without synthetic fungicides, Loving Cup relies on the natural disease resistance of unusual grape varieties and "lots of hard work," says Hamsch. "We are outside everyday with our hands on the vines. And after 10 years, we can sense what's going to happen almost before it does." The varieties Cayuga White, Corot Noir, and Marquette have been selected by their ability to grow organically after testing over 75 different varieties of grapes. The wines are produced and bottled 100% onsite at its winery with its own estate-grown fruit. All are low-sulfite, vegan, and certified-organic.

Loving Cup has overcome numerous challenges, including the 2018 season, which saw historic rainfall totals. "That was almost the end of our organic-certification," Hamsch says. "We pressed on and worked really hard to overcome all that rain, but honestly what saved us was it hardly rained the following year." Through perseverance, long hours, and luck, Loving Cup managed to rescue the vineyard and produce great wines that year. Hamsch was awarded the 2018 Grape Grower of the Year Award by the Virginia Vineyards Association for his dedication and hard work.

The organic certification of the vineyard is renewed annually with a farm inspection and 'lots of paperwork.' "But it's worth it," says Hamsch, "Because our customers know we do what we say we do." Their organic certificates are prominently

displayed in its winery tasting room. Despite Loving Cup's success, the prevailing notion in Virginia is that growing grapes organically is just not possible.

Being organic is more than just a piece of paper. Environmental stewardship priorities include soil health, beneficial insect habitats, erosion prevention, water conservation, and an approach to farming *with* nature instead of against it. "This means surrendering absolute control to the mind-numbingly complex systems of life above and below the ground, and then respectfully elbowing out a little space for our grapevines," says Hamsch.

Tasting room guests will enjoy a long, scenic drive which finishes on a hilltop overlooking the vineyard. Wines can be tasted, purchased, and enjoyed on site. The tasting room is dog and picnic friendly, and opens 11 am – 5 pm, Friday – Sunday, for 9 months every year.

Come visit Loving Cup this year and help it celebrate 10 years of doing the impossible. The Loving Cup tasting room will be open March 25 – December 11.

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