

The **Northern Neck Uncorked (VA)** chapter met on September 11th at Belle Mount Vineyards. Wayne & Judy Wessels presented “California Pinot Noir”, a look at the Pinot Noir wines from California. 19 members and guests attended. Food, including smoked salmon spread, summer sausage, baby cheddar, Monterey Jack, pear gingerbread, and breads and crackers were provided by Valorie Venslov. Judy Wessels discussed the characteristics of Pinot Noir, the great number of clones and the great difficulty in growing and producing Pinot Noir. She indicated it is called the “heartbreak grape” due to the difficulty of producing a good wine from it. Wayne discussed the characteristics of each wine as we tasted them, including such descriptors as “barnyard”! After each wine and after all had tasted, we were asked for opinions about the wine. Wayne then read the winemaker notes to see if all agreed. It was a fun evening and everyone learned a bit about the California Pinot Noir wines provided. The wines below were tasted in the order shown.

Jargon 2007 – Napa	\$ 10
Kenwood 2007 – Sonoma Russian River	\$ 13
Sterling Vinter’s 2007 – Sonoma Central	\$ 13
Gallo Sonoma Reserve 2006	\$ 13
McManis 2008 – Modesto	\$ 10
Cambria 2006 – Santa Maria	\$ 18

There was a great variance among the wines and most scored in the 10-15 point range, with a few below and a few above. The favorite for the evening was the McManis 2008 from Modesto.