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LOU a wine bar in Holliwood

November 22nd: red walnuts, orange wine

Each fall we purchase some of [Jim Haag](#)'s wonderful, fresh picked Yolo red walnuts. Jim is a small walnut farmer in northern California, with a little over 200 trees in production. He grows several varieties of walnuts but our favorite is his Yolo red walnut, a type of English walnut that has distinctive bright red bran, rather than the more familiar dark brown. The beauty of these nuts is more than skin deep: they are creamy, meaty, and mellow, with only a wisp of tannic bite to them. Jim harvests a finite quantity of Yolo reds, and when they're gone, they're gone (it is sometimes possible to purchase in-shell Yolo reds from him during the off-season). We just received our box from Jim, so naturally our first course this Monday is an autumnal salad that we are garnishing with a few of these lovely, lovely nuts.

Our second course is braised lamb shanks with which I am pouring [Clos de Roilette](#)'s Fleurie "Vendange Tardive" 2009. When you drink this wine, you taste a gamay that pushes the boundaries of what wine growers can do with the gamay grape. Now, I really dig gamay and I always strive to have one on my wine list. Over the years I've poured dozens of different gamays, mostly from Beaujolais, but also the [Loire](#), the [Val d'Aosta](#), and California's [Sierra Foothills](#), but I have come to accept that *les amateurs de Gamay* is a tribal affiliation: you're either one of us, or you're not. I liken the worship or abhorrence of gamay to [cilantro](#): it's either love or hate, with no shades in-between. However, with this wine I have a perfect gateway drug that seems capable of converting even the inveterate anti-gamay partisan. The 2009 vintage in Beaujolais was superb, but that is only part of what makes this wine so lip-smackingly easy to love, and, yes, it is slutty compared to Beaujolais from a classic vintage like 2007. In addition to the vintage, what makes this wine so good is the age of the vines (the Vendange Tardive is from vines that are more than eighty years old), a unique plot of land (there's manganese in them there hills), judicious use of some oak, and honest, good old-fashioned low-intervention winemaking that lets the grape pretty much speak for itself. The Fleurie we are pouring on Monday is easily a 10 year wine, though one of the many happy things about Beaujolais is that you do not feel like you are committing a crime when you drink it young.

With our cheese course I am pouring a unique, skin-macerated Verduzzo from Italy's Friuli region. Verduzzo is a white grape that is indigenous to Friuli, and I cannot say that I have really paid much attention to it before I tasted this wine. The Bressan family has been at it for over two centuries, so they clearly now have some idea of how to work with Verduzzo. Like other skin-macerated "orange" wines, what strikes you at first is the captivating, coppery-golden color. However, the wine's true story reveals itself when you taste it: it is a fruit salad explosion of pomaceous fruit but also stone fruit and citrus—a full-bodied, complex and playful wine.

Thanksgiving Salad, Yolo red walnuts

Raventós I Blanc Cava Rosé "de Nit" 2007

Braised lamb shanks, orecchiette with roast baby broccoli

Clos de Roilette Fleurie Vendange Tardive 2009

Hook's Tilston Point Blue, Kikusui Asian pear, roast grapes

Bressan Verduzzo Friulano 2006

Cranberry walnut upside down cake, whipped crème fraîche