

# Château Valandraud 2020

CSPC# 848134

750mlx6

15.0% alc./vol.

<b>Grape Variety</b>	90% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon
<b>Appellation</b>	St. Emilion
<b>Classification</b>	Promoted 1st Grand Cru Classé B in 2012
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://valandraud.fr/en/">http://valandraud.fr/en/</a>
<b>General Info</b>	<p>In 1989, Jean-Luc Thunevin and his wife Murielle bought a tiny 1.5-acre plot in Saint-Émilion near Châteaux Pavie-Macquin, Ausone, and La Clotte. Without the capital to build a full winery, a nearby garage was used...</p> <p>The resulting wine, Château de Valandraud, was first released in 1991 (the name "Valandraud" is an amalgam of "Vallon de Fongaban" –where its vines grow– and "Andraud" –Murielle's maiden name). By 1995, it was rated 95 by Robert Parker. Thus, was born the "garage wine" movement, so influential in the 1990s, and earning Thunevin the nickname of "Bad Boy". In 2012, Château Valandraud has been promoted as a 1st classified growth of Saint Emilion. In 2017, Château Valandraud became a full member of Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux</p>
<b>Winemaker</b>	Eric Talavet. Jean-Luc Thunevin and Murielle Andraud - owners.
<b>Vintage</b>	<p>The year 2020 had harsh weather conditions that disrupted vine growth. The year started off with heavy rainfall that was beyond historical averages. A combination of rain and cold temperatures led to the widespread outbreak of mildew. Fortunately, the effects of mildew subsided when temperatures rose in April and May. In fact, there were a few estates that reported losing a significant number of grapes due to mildew (unlike in 2018.) There was no rain between mid-June and mid-August, and most estates (like Saint Emilion and Margaux) reported dehydration on the Cabernet Sauvignon vines. Additionally, the grapes were smaller in size, and the yield was very low. The Merlot grapes were harvested around mid-September, while the Cabernet grapes were picked about a week later.</p>
<b>Vineyards</b>	In all, Valandraud is produced from 10 hectares of vines. 8 hectares are devoted to plantings for the red varieties. the vineyards are planted to 70 % Merlot, 20% Cabernets Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and small portions of Malbec and Carmenère. 2 hectares are devoted to the production of white wine.
<b>Harvest</b>	Manual harvest.
<b>Vinification/ Maturation</b>	A combination of traditional and modern techniques is used at every step of the production: double Guyot pruning, de-suckering, thinning, green harvesting... The harvest is done manually and lasts only a few days. A first grape sorting is done directly in the vineyard in order to pick only the ripest bunches. Once brought to the "organic" spirited cellar of Mr. Thunevin, the grapes are sorted one more time, before being de-stemmed. The following step consists in bursting the grapes. The very rich and pure must produce is run into the fermenting vats (wood, stainless steel, or concrete). The winemaking of Château Valandraud takes place with regular pumping over and punching down of the cap. At the end of the alcoholic fermentation, the new Valandraud cuvee is poured into 100% new French oak and aged for 24-36 months.
<b>Tasting Notes</b>	<p>Purple/black at the core, more viscous than any other wine that I have tasted thus far and another one of those wines where the colour seems almost to have been dripped in from a pipette and has yet to set – if one swirls the glass, one imagines the colour will stay put!</p> <p>An utterly sumptuous and entirely hedonistic nose of violets and rose petals, confit and Palma violets and candied rose petals, black cherries, concentrated blue berry compote, the graphite rods from the reactor core, tar and baked earth, tobacco leaf, cedar (with more to come) and vanilla. The palate is no less hedonistic, with silky soft and ultra-fine-grained tannins, masses of deep, dark rich cherry and berry fruit, black forest gateau and a rolling-rippling sappy fresh juicy fruit that helps hold this all in some kind of balance, strange though it might seem to think that any kind of balance could be struck. There's something a little mad and chaotic about this, but it has its own sense of integrity and harmony. Not perhaps for the faint-hearted; but wondrous in all its excess.</p>



<b>Serve with</b>	Valandraud is best served at 15.5 degrees Celsius, 60 degrees Fahrenheit. The cool, almost cellar temperature gives the wine more freshness and lift. Valandraud is best served with all types of classic meat dishes, veal, pork, beef, lamb, duck, game, roast chicken, roasted, braised, and grilled dishes.
<b>Production</b>	3,200 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2025-2043
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>93 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2023</p> <p><b>92 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>99 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023</p> <p><b>97-98 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2023</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, Decanter.com - May 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2023</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only) - April 2021</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - April 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2023</p> <p><b>95-97 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021</p> <p><b>99 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023</p> <p><b>97-99 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - May 2021</p> <p><b>98 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - March 2023</p> <p><b>96-97 points</b> - Yves Beck (score only) - June 2021</p> <p><b>94-96 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2021</p> <p><b>97 points</b> - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021</p> <p><b>96-98 points</b> - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - January 2022</p> <p><b>17 points</b> - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only) - September 2021</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"Tilts to the showy side, with a flourish of black currant and fig preserves, warmed black tea, melted black licorice and a hint of alder smoke as well, all framed by a warm loam- and espresso crema-accented finish. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2027 through 2040. 3,200 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"If the 2019 vintage at this address was something of a guilty pleasure, the 2020 Valandraud is simply guilty as charged. Exhibiting aromas of jammy black fruits mingled with toasted coconut, spices and caricatural slathering's of new oak, it's full-bodied, rich, and chewy, with generously extracted tannins that clamp down on the finish. All that oak and extract impedes access to the wine's generous fruit, rendering it less demonstrative and gourmand than its 2019 counterpart, and that's a pity, as recent vintages of Valandraud have been among the more successful of the few remaining hold-out "garagiste" wines of the Right Bank."</i> - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Opaque purple-black colored, the 2020 Valandraud bursts with scents of crushed black plums, boysenberries and blackberry preserves, followed by hints of dusty soil, garrigue and clove oil. The medium to full-bodied palate delivers a lot of energetic, crunchy black fruits with a lively backbone and beautifully ripe, rounded tannins, finishing long and fragrant."</i> - LPB, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Very opulent and expressive aromas of black fruit and pine needles. So floral. Full-bodied with plush, velvety tannins and lots of fruit and texture. It goes on for minutes. Rich at the finish but remains fresh and vivid. Superb. One of the great Valandraud's. Drink after 2027."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p> <p><i>"Wow. This is really super polished with incredible length and intensity, offering blackberries and hazelnuts. Superb richness that is reserved and poised. Great length. Full-bodied, extremely long, and exciting."</i> - JS, JamesSuckling.com</p>

**Reviews** *“This 17-acre vineyard gives a wine with an explosion of black fruits. It offers sweetness balanced by acidity and impressive tannins. The wood aging gives a polished texture with richness and style in balance. Drink this wine from 2027.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“This wine from the premier classé estate is seriously structured, dense, and firm. At the same time the beautiful black currant fruits, acidity, and fine perfumed character balance its richness. It is an impressive, memorable wine that will develop well over many years.”*

- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“This is excellent, broad-shouldered with ample depth to the brambled fruits, liquorice, cigar box spice, with a gorgeously saline finish. Chalky, grippy tannins keep tugging you back into the body of the wine. The tannic grip is helped by a linen rather than silk texture that stops things being overly smooth and instead adds depth and interest to the powerfully knitted body, as do white flowers on the aromatics as it opens. Good stuff. 100% new oak for 24 months. A yield of 49hl/ha. Thunevin has sold a 50% stake in Valandraud to the Lefevre family at Sansonnet (also the new owners of Villemaurine, so a busy year for them). (Drink between 2029-2046).”*

- JA, Decanter.com

*“Completely opaque in color, the nose explodes with chocolate, espresso, smoke, blackberries, black cherries, truffles, smoke, and licorice. Full-bodied, opulent, and intense, this hedonistically-textured thrill ride coats your palate with layers of velvety, dark red, black, and blue fruits, mocha, espresso, and Asian spices. The array of sensations here is exactly what the doctor ordered. This is a sublime tasting experience that while it is superb to enjoy young in its primary state, the best is yet to come with some age that will allow the wine to build, expand and gain secondary nuances. Drink from 2026.2055.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“The 2020 Valandraud was a startling Saint-Emilion from barrel. Bottled in July 2022, it retains a very intense bouquet with blackberry, wild strawberry, licorice, and star anis scents that remain beautifully defined. The palate is medium-bodied with succulent, plush, luxuriant tannins. There is a candied quality to this Valandraud, yet the trick is that Thunevin maintains balance and it does not overwhelm on the decadent finish. It sashays along with style. Give it several years in bottle.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2020 Valandraud has a deep purple hue and delivers an intense bouquet of lush blackberry, raspberry, cassis and crushed violet aromas, all beautifully defined. The palate is very well balanced with a sensual opening. This’ll have you smitten from the first sip: silky-smooth with immense depth and harmony. There is tension and precision from start to finish. This 2020 continues a startling run of form by Jean-Luc Thunevin, this represents one of his crowning achievements to date. Chapeau!”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2020 Valandraud is a stunner. Rich, deep and explosive, the 2020 possesses dazzling intensity from start to finish. Silky tannins wrap around a core of plush dark red/black fruit, licorice, spice, mocha, and new leather. Even with all of its intensity, the 2020 is bright and wonderfully focused. Sweet floral and blood orange accents liven up the explosive finish. Magnificent.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The 2020 Valandraud is impressive. Inky, deep, and exquisitely layered, it possesses tremendous richness in every dimension. crème de cassis, chocolate, licorice, new leather, spice, and lavender build as the 2020 gains volume in the glass. Silky and plush, with magnificent balance, this is shaping up to be one of the wines of the year. A magnificent effort from Muriel Andraud and Jean-Luc Thunevin. Superb. Tasted two times.”*

- AG, Vinous

**Reviews** *“One of the wines of the vintage is Jean-Luc Thunevin's 2020 Château Valandraud, which comes from the cooler, eastern side of Saint-Emilion. Exhibiting a dense purple hue as well as an incredible perfume of crème de cassis, ripe black cherries, violets, new leather, and an almost Hermitage-like burning embers character, it hits the palate with full-bodied richness, ripe, seamless tannins, remarkable purity of fruit, and a finish that won't quit. A blend of 85% Merlot and the rest Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, it's clearly in the same league as the 2019, if not slightly more concentrated. Give bottles 5-7 years in the cellar, count yourself lucky, and enjoy over the following 20-25 years or so.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Winemaker Jean-Luc Thunevin has hit a home run in the vintage, and his 2020 Château Valandraud is unquestionably up with the crème de la crème out there. Made in a ripe, sexy, plush style, it brings an incredible amount of ripe black fruit, chocolate, vanilla, espresso, and leafy herb-like aromas and flavors. This carries to a full-bodied, powerful Saint-Emilion that somehow stays weightless and graceful on the palate, with moderate acidity, ripe tannins, and a great, great finish.”*  
- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Fragrant blueberry on the nose. Strong new wood. Vanilla. Licorice. On the palate densely packed with fleshy tannin, very compact but dissolving juicily, intense mineral freshness, much tension, a clarified structure without any excess. Suitably supple underpinnings, very good length. The alcohol remains almost imperceptible despite 15 percent by volume.”*  
- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*“Excellent purity and depth with layers of fresh meat, cassis, dark berries, fine wood, mocha, and mild spices. Dense and concentrated with great extraction, powdery tannin like cocoa powder adding a lot of freshness to the ample and dark fruit, high ripeness but no sweetness and a calcareous freshness, really layered, glossy and polished with tremendous length.”*  
- AL, Tasted.com

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