

Château Valandraud Blanc 2020

CSPC# 888294

750mlx6

13.0% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

60% Sauvignon Gris, 30% Sauvignon Blanc, 10% Semillon

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Bordeaux Blanc

Website

<http://valandraud.fr/en/>

General Info

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...

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. In 2000, always looking for new challenges, Jean Luc Thunevin and Muriel Andraud decided to plant some white grape varieties next to the Château Valandraud vineyard. They started the production of a white wine and 'Blanc de Valandraud' was born.

Each year, the blending of Valandraud Blanc is different and chosen after several tastings before the bottling. The style of the white wines is unique. They are filled with lemon, lime, floral, and minerality characteristics, along with ample freshness.

Winemaker

Eric Talavet. Jean-Luc Thunevin and Murielle Andraud - owners.

Vintage

2020 begins with a mild and wet winter and a spring with lots of rain. The vines therefore begin to bud early. The summer is hot and dry which allows the grapes to reach a very good maturity quickly.

Vineyards

While Valandraud started off as a small St. Emilion property, over the years, Jean Luc and Murielle have increased holdings due to continued purchases of vineyard land. Today, the property is 10 hectares. The vines are located in various areas in St. Emilion. Valandraud produces red and white wine. Aged 20 years on average, the vines are planted in clay-limestone soils. 2 hectares are devoted to the production of white wine.

Harvest

Manual harvest (3 sortings) followed by storage in a cold room before pressing. The aging is carried out on lees in barrels (80% new and 20% second-fill barrels)

Ageing: on lees, 80% in new barrels of 225, 300 and 500 L and 20% in 1-year barrels.

Tasting Notes

A dense, layered white with dried apple, pineapple and some nougat and praline on the nose and palate. It's full-bodied with tangy acidity and hints of toasted oak and bitter lemon. Lovely texture.

Serve with

Lobster canapé, shellfish bisque, poultry

Production

350 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2023-2025

Scores/Awards

92 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 2022

93-95 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate - May 2021

93 points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent (score only) - March 2023

94 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - January 2023

94-95 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2021

90 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 2023

94 points - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - January 2023

95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2021

94 points - Neal Martin, Vinous - February 2023

92-94 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - June 2021



Scores/Awards **99 points** - Jeb Dunnuck MW - March 2023
91 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - October 2021
93 points - Vert de Vin - May 2021
95 points - Andreas Larsson, Tasted - May 2021
94-95 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - July 2021

Reviews *"Juicy and fresh, with lots of deliciously bouncy gooseberry gelée and lemon peel flavors streaking through. Laced with quinine and fleur de sel notes on the finish. Sauvignon Gris, Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2024. 350 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2020 Valandraud Blanc opens with the most gorgeous perfume of orange blossoms, honeycomb, and allspice, leading to a core of pink grapefruit, lemon tart and lime cordial, with a waft of aniseed. The medium to full-bodied palate bursts with layer upon layer of tropical and citrus fruits, supported by a crisp backbone and satiny texture, finishing with epic length and perfume. Stunning."
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"A dense, layered white with dried apple, pineapple and some nougat and praline on the nose and palate. It's full-bodied with tangy acidity and hints of toasted oak and bitter lemon. Lovely texture."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"This is a powerfully rich wine, with ripe citrus and yellow fruit flavors. Acidity is balanced by the dense texture and spicy undercurrent. Drink from 2024."
- 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

"Herbal lemon, caramelised patisserie, baked lemon tart with some apple flecks. Round, unctuous, strong, and bold, but clean and clear with a honeyed, caramel pastry tang on the palate balanced by a shot of zesty lemon, lime, orange, and peach - the citrus fruits holding the backbone with high acidity and freshness. Richly layered and powerful but also friendly, generous, and lively. It's serious but with elements of fun!"
- JA, Decanter.com

"The array of yellow and green apples is impressive. Next, you find waxy lemons, honeysuckle, and spice on the nose. The finish balances its creamy texture with bright citrus, juicy apples, and crisp acidity."
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"The 2020 Valandraud Blanc, centered upon 60% Sauvignon Gris, an underrated variety, has a nicely focused bouquet with apple blossom, lemon verbena, chamomile, and light pear aromas. The 80% new oak is neatly enmeshed. The palate is well balanced with a fine thread of acidity, quite complex with a modicum of spice and stem ginger. There is something different about this white Bordeaux emanating from the grape varieties, a wine with character and sufficient salinity to tempt you back for another sip. Just 3,000 bottles made."
- NM, Vinous

"The 2020 Valandraud Blanc offers terrific density but also quite a bit of raw, unbridled power. Lemon confit, almond, dried flowers, mint, and crushed rocks open in the glass with great reluctance. The Blanc is intriguing, but it needs time. Anticipated maturity: 2025-2035."
- AG, Vinous

"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

Reviews *“On the nose, fresh, aromatic, well-conducted and offers a certain gourmandise. It reveals notes of fresh pear, fleshy/juicy nectarine and hints of zest associated with touches of lemon, discrete points of an almost flinty minerality as well as discrete points of white flowers. On the palate, fruity and offers juiciness, minerality, a certain roundness, a little fullness, some concentration, with juiciness, minerality and good definition, precision, and elegance. The wine expresses juicy/sparkling peach and slightly juicy pear notes with hints of lemon, fine juicy/fresh tangerine and discreet white flower tips and an imperceptible butter/vanilla edge. Good length. The tannins are precise and well-conducted.”*
- Vert de Vin

“Pure, intense, and aromatic nose with some stony notes, finely tuned oak, notes of passion, fruit, pineapple, lemongrass with ripe grassy and herbal notes. Good substance on the palate, really fine extract and acidity with lush yellow fruit, sweet citrus notes, well-tuned oak and a very long salivating finish.”
- AL, Tasted.com
