

## Château de Valandraud 2005

CSPC# 786110

750mlx4

14.5% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety**

100% Merlot

**Appellation**

St. Emilion

**Classification**

Promoted 1st Grand Cru Classé B in 2012

**Website**

<http://www.thunevin.com/146/chateau-valandraud.html>

**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".

**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. For the red wine, the terroir varies, but the best soils consist of clay and limestone. At Valandraud, they are one of the few St. Emilion estates to include some plantings of all five, Bordeaux grape varieties; Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Carmenere. For the white wines, they have plantings of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Gris.

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 Carmenere. 2 hectares are devoted to the production of white wine, which is split evenly between Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Gris.

**Vinification/**

**Maturation**

A combination of traditional and modern techniques are 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 produced 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.

**Tasting Notes**

Saturated, deep ruby-red. Very complex aromas of plum, mocha, iron and minerals, lifted by a floral top note. Wonderfully lush and smooth in the mouth, with fully ripe flavors of black raspberry, currant, licorice and mocha perfectly supported by ripe acidity. This boasts terrific balance and somehow manages to hide its 14.5% alcohol. Finishes impressively long, with big but thoroughly ripe tannins. The pH here is a very reasonable 3.6, notes Jean-Luc Thunevin. A splendid vintage for Valandraud, and likely to evolve slowly.

**Production**

1,330 cases made. (16,000 bottles)

**Cellaring**

Drink 2017-2035

**Scores/Awards**

**95 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2008

**95-100 points** - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - June 30, 2006

**97 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #219 - June 28, 2015



**Scores/Awards** **95 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #176 - April 29, 2008  
**93-95 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #170 - April 29, 2007  
**93-96 points** - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #164 - April 23, 2006  
**95 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - July 30, 2009  
**94-96 points** - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - December 31, 2009  
**90-92 points** - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - June 2006  
**94 points** - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2008  
**17 points** - James Lawther, Decanter.com - June 2006  
**94 points** - Jean Marc Quarin  
**95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - June 28, 2015  
**95 points** - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - July 3, 2008  
**18.5 points** - La Revue du Vin France (score only)  
**93 points** - Falstaff Magazine (score only)  
**16.5 points** - Gault & Millau (score only)  
**18 points** - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)  
**2 stars** - Le Guide Hachette des Vins - 2009

**Reviews** *"Dark ruby in color, with intense aromas of blackberry, mineral and dried lavender. Full-bodied, very dense and layered, with powerful tannins. This is big and very rich. A bodybuilder. Needs time. Best after 2016. 1,330 cases made."*

- JS, Wine Spectator

*"Astounding. Intense aromas of crushed berries, violets and toasted oak. Full-bodied and wonderfully concentrated. Long and velvety. Out of the garage. Could be best ever here. Score range: 95-100"*

- JS, Wine Spectator

*"This may be the most prodigious wine Jean-Luc Thunevin and his partner Murielle Andraud have made to date. Inky purple to the rim at age ten, this wine's explosive aromatics include espresso, chocolate, plum, blackberry and cassis. The oak is well-hidden behind an extravagant, full-bodied, multi-layered palate. Stunningly pure, super-intense and just beginning to move into middle adolescence, the "Bad Boy" of Bordeaux has produced a legend in 2005. Anticipated maturity: 2017-2035."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"This is one of the most riveting examples of Valandraud Jean-Luc Thunevin has made over the last fifteen years. Thunevin and his partner, Murielle Andraud (who has much of the responsibility for their brilliant Margaux, Marojallia), exhibit impeccable attention to detail, resulting in an inky/blue/purple-colored 2005 Valandraud boasting a sweet nose of melted chocolate, licorice, graphite, espresso roast, and copious quantities of black cherries and blackberries. Pure, layered, and full-bodied, with gorgeous integration of acidity, tannin, alcohol, and wood, this stunning effort will be drinkable in 7-8 years, and should keep for three decades. Slightly more than 16,000 bottles were produced."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"The 2005 Valandraud should turn out to be one of their greatest efforts. Although closed, it reveals phenomenal texture, a dense purple color, and a gorgeous bouquet of espresso, chocolate, sweet blackberry and currant fruit, and hints of lead pencil shavings and incense. With extraordinary purity, layers of concentration, full-bodied power, and elegance as well as symmetry, this stunning St.-Emilion should be at its peak between 2012-2030. The irrepressible de facto head of the garagiste movement, Jean-Luc Thunevin, along with his partner, Murielle Andraud, continue to achieve marvelous things at this estate, always pushing the envelope of quality."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

*"A terrific effort from bad boy and leading garagiste, Jean-Luc Thunevin, and his sidekick, Murielle Andraud, the inky/blue/purple-tinged 2005 Valandraud exhibits superb aromas of graphite, black currants, blackberries, violets, white chocolate, sweet licorice, and espresso roast. Boasting great intensity, full-bodied power, beautiful purity, and layers of complexity, this stunning wine should be unusually long-lived. Anticipated maturity: 2010-2025+."*

- RP, Wine Advocate

**Reviews** *“Tasted single blind at Southwold. The nose seemed to be at an awkward stage with -funky- black cherry and plum-tinged fruit that lacks cohesion at the moment. The palate is smooth and sensuous, very fleshy but underlying some beautifully extracted tannins that coat the mouth. It seems to crescendo in the mouth, improving with very sip. An intellectual Valandraud. Drink 2012-2025+ Tasted January 2009.”*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*“Having not tasted recent vintages of Valandraud, I was impressed by this wine. A deep black inky hue. Layers of sweet black fruit with a hint of prune on the nose. The palate is quite tight with moderate acidity, but very focused. One could not say this is an entirely modernist wine: there is something austere and held back which I like. Very fresh on the finish. Sweet and cedary. A lovely wine.”*  
- NM, Wine Journal

*“90-92 Barrel sample. One of the likely candidates for promotion to Grand Cru Classé status, this is Jean-Luc Thunevin's original estate. This year there is considerable restraint in what is normally an immensely opulent wine: it is elegant, rather than having a no-holds-barred attitude, that will make this wine a classic.”*  
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

*“Saturated, deep ruby-red. Very complex aromas of plum, mocha, iron and minerals, lifted by a floral top note. Wonderfully lush and smooth in the mouth, with fully ripe flavors of black raspberry, currant, licorice and mocha perfectly supported by ripe acidity. This boasts terrific balance and somehow manages to hide its 14.5% alcohol. Finishes impressively long, with big but thoroughly ripe tannins. The pH here is a very reasonable 3.6, notes Jean-Luc Thunevin. A splendid vintage for Valandraud, and likely to evolve slowly. (ST)”*  
- ST, International Wine Cellar

*“Great body, magnificent and precise spicy nose, ample texture, great immediate impact, lively after-taste. Great wine made with dedication and perhaps more accomplished than the 1998 and 2000 vintages. Great future.”*  
- JL, Decanter.com

*“In the mouth, it is the most refined Valandraud that I have tasted. Very supple in mid-mouth, strong, it keeps a good freshness. Very great finish with fine grain, the finest ever seen on this estate, the most aromatic, too. It is a delight while maintaining very good quality. A must*  
- J-MQ

*“Lush, rich and silky, with layers of dark chocolate coated black cherry and plum, with truffle in the nose get you going. The intensity of plush, ripe fruit on the palate is even better as it coats your palate and expands.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“This stylish Bordeaux wine kicks off with a blast of licorice, spice, and blackberry liqueur fruit accented aromas. Very plush entry with an opulent, sexy finish filled with ripe plums, berries, chocolate and dark cherry flavors. This is polished, lush and sensuous.”*  
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

---