

Château de Valandraud 2014

CSPC# 771455

750mlx12

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".

Vintage

2014 was marked by an extraordinary Indian summer that saved the vintage. Fine spring weather was conducive to a good start to the growing season. However, challenging summer conditions seriously slowed down ripening. Fortunately, the month of September was absolutely beautiful, with dry, extremely sunny weather accompanied by highs of close to 30°C. This superb weather, with cool night-time temperatures, enabled the grapes to ripen beautifully, and they were able to be brought into the vat house having reached a perfect level of ripeness.

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.

Harvest

October 3rd-9th

**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.

**Vinification/
Maturation
Production**

2,000 cases made.

Cellaring

Drink 2020-2040

Scores/Awards

95 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2017

94-97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2015

96 points - James Suckling, Wine Spectator - February 2017

96 points / Cellar Selection - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 1, 2017

95-97 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2015



Scores/Awards **93 points** - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2015
94-95 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2015
94-96 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2015
95 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - March 2015
95 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2017
93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2015 (score only)
92-94 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)
16.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)
17 points - Vinum Wine Magazine (score only)
17.5 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only)
17.5 points - Gault & Millau (score only)

Reviews *"Delivers a gorgeous display of fruit, with boysenberry, raspberry and blackberry coulis notes that are fresh and racy, allied to a graphite spine and framed judiciously with a well-singed apple wood accent. This has a lot of coiled-up energy. Best from 2022 through 2035. 2,000 cases made"*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Delivers a mouthwatering core of boysenberry and blackberry fruit, with ample anise, fruitcake and plum sauce notes emerging through the flashy finish. Not just flamboyant, as there's a serious graphite spine to keep this honest. A beauty in the making. Score range: 94-97"
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Wow. The blackberry, licorice and blueberry aromas are really spellbinding. Full-bodied, chewy and polished with beautiful fruit. Super depth and richness. Always subtle and polished behind the power. Try in 2023."
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

"Here's an impressive wine that is so ripe and with great structure. It is a major wine with a dark complex texture and the finest acidity. The wine is very complete, all the elements in place from the black fruits to the tannins to the hints of wood aging. Now at the top of the tree in Saint-Emilion's classification, the wine will take years to mature. Drink from 2027."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"95-97. Barrel Sample. This is a powerful wine for the year, solid and structured. The structure is reinforced by swathes of dark, brooding fruits. With all this weight, it is good to find it also has style and just the right amount of freshness."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Predominantly Merlot. Pure and dense on the nose. Cherry, damson notes. Palate equally pure in extract. Rich and smooth in texture and packed with fruit. Tight-knit tannins. Lovely persistence. Little glow of alcohol but balanced by the freshness of the tannins."
- JL, Decanter.com

"With plump, luxurious, black cherries and boysenberry notes which grab you as soon as you get close to the glass, this wine is full bodied, concentrated, fleshy and there is a fresh, supple quality to the dark cocoa, licorice and ripe fruits in the finish. Valandraud has been on quite a run for the last several years. 94-95 Pts"
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"2014 Deep and saturated; opaque; very dark and saturated; tight to rim; layered and tight – but a ball of the glossiest fruit; seam of sublimated black cherry and ripe plums; quite tight; layers here; fruit so glossy; creamy; pure; saturated; but not over extracted; creamy; black fruits; plums; very creamy and sexy indeed; chewy and dense but with very ripe tannins; not at all dry; full and glossy. Extract on the finish. Brilliant effort in the Valandraud style. Tasted Jean-Luc Thunevin, 3 April 2015. Drink 2019-2030. 94-96"
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"This is a gorgeous wine with lovely texture, intensity and focus. The palate is generous and sumptuous with ripe, elevated tannins and layers of dark berry fruit and spices. The finish is very long. A great Valandraud."
- JCL, asianpalate.com

Reviews *“The 2014 Valandraud is laced with dark cherry compote, spice, new leather and chocolate notes. In 2014, Valandraud is marked by a super-appealing combination of intense dark fruit and fresher, more floral-driven nuances that beautifully express the freshness of the year. The 2014 is a wonderfully complete Valandraud to drink over the next 10-15 years, perhaps longer*
- AG, Vinous
