
Château de Valandraud 2015

CSPC# 771455

750mlx12

14.5% alc./vol.

Grape Variety	85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon
Appellation	St. Emilion
Classification	Promoted 1st Grand Cru Classé B in 2012
Website	http://www.thunevin.com/146/chateau-valandraud.html
General Info	<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”.</p> <p>In 2012, Château Valandraud has been promoted as a 1st classified growth of Saint Emilion.</p> <p>In 2017, Château Valandraud became a full member of Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux</p>
Vintage	<p>The year 2015 appears to be the warmest and sunniest, throughout our country, since the beginning of meteorological statistics. A long heat wave and dry period allowed to achieve excellent flowering conditions until the arrival, in August, of miraculous rains. This rain enabled the vines to maintain the necessary water reserves and to provide requisite nourishment for perfect ripeness. The harvest began in September under a clear blue sky. Thanks to this ideal weather, we were able to wait for optimum ripeness for each grape variety.</p> <p>All the conditions are there to allow 2015 to join the greatest vintages of Bordeaux.</p>
Vineyards	<p>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 Carmenère. For the white wines, they have plantings of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Gris.</p> <p>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, which is split evenly between Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Gris.</p>
Harvest	October 3 rd -9th
Vinification/ Maturation	<p>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</p>
Vinification/ Maturation	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.
Production	3,417 cases made
Cellaring	Drink 2021-2040



Scores/Awards **95 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2018
94-97 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2016
96+ points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, Wine Advocate Interim Issue - February 2018
95-97 points - Neal Martin, Wine Advocate #224 - April 2016
95 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - March 2018
98 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - February 2018
98-99 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2016
98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - February 2018
96-98 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - March 1, 2016
16.5 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2016
94 points - James Lawther, Decanter.com - April 2016
97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2018
97 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 2016
96-100 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - March 2016
91 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com - April 2016
16+ points - Farr Vintner - March 2016
90-93 points - Derek Smedley, MW - April 2016
97 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2018
93-96 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - April 2016
99 points - Jeb Dunnuck MW - November 2017
18.5+ points - Matthew Jukes, MW - April 2016
94-96 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only) - May 2016
17.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only) - June 2016
18 points - Bettane & Desseauve (score only) - April 2016
18 points - Gault & Millau (score only) - June 2016

Reviews *"Melted licorice, plum sauce and blackberry puree notes flow through here, with ample but velvety structure running underneath. Alluring ganache, violet and tobacco accents add nuance on the finish. Long and beguiling, featuring echoing fruit and a captivating mouthfeel. Drink now through 2035. 3,417 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Displays beautiful fruit from the start, with cassis, raspberry and boysenberry notes moving together seamlessly, carried by a polished structure through the caressing finish. Seriously pure. Score range: 94-97"
- JM, Wine Spectator

"The 2015 Valandraud is medium to deep garnet-purple in color with a profound nose of baked cherries, warm black plums, blueberry preserves and smoked meats with tilled earth, mocha, Indian spices and dried herbs nuances plus a touch of licorice. The mouth is big, full-bodied and powerful with notable, velvety tannins and it is packed with savory and spice flavor layers, finishing with epic length. This big-boned, voluptuous, Rubenesque beauty will blow hedonists' minds!"
- LPB, Wine Advocate

"The 2015 Chateau Valandraud is founded upon Jean-Luc Thunevin's ever-reliable Merlot parcels, and this year the blend is augmented with 10% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. It has a glorious and damn irresistible bouquet of crème de cassis, blueberry, crushed violets and a scintilla of citrus fruit, all beautifully defined and very precise. In 2015 it is determined to put a gap between itself and the Virginie de Valandraud. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannin, creamy in texture but not in the slightest cloying. The acidity is well judged with layers of caressing black fruit towards a finish for which I could only deploy the word - nubile. This will be a stunning Valandraud to savor over the next couple of decades, though it will be difficult to resist temptation in its youth."
- NM, Wine Advocate

"The 2015 Valandraud has a very perfumed bouquet, quite feisty in the glass with macerated black cherries, griottes, blueberry jam and graphite. It feels impenetrable at the moment and constitutes one of the opaqueness Valandraud's that I have encountered just after bottling. The palate is smooth as satin on the entry: well-judged acidity, neatly integrated new oak, quite rich but well balanced with a sumptuous blackberry and cassis finish that lingers in the mouth. This is a classy offering from Jean-Luc Thunevin, although it deserves several years in bottle."
- NM, Wine Journal

Reviews *“Plenty of toasty oak and extract here. This has immensely concentrated fruits with powerful yet silky tannins. Blackberry and dark-plum aromas dominate the nose with hints of dark chocolate and candied orange. Flavors follow suit amid fluid, muscular tannins that hold long into the finish. Great wine. Try from 2023.”*
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“A fabulous Valandraud with verve and distinction. So much bright blackberry, mineral and dark chocolate character. Full and ultra-silky textured. Powerful and balanced finish. A joy to taste. Purity. Greatest Valandraud ever. 85% merlot, 10% cabernet franc and 5% cabernet sauvignon.”
- JS, JamesSuckling.com

“Since the first vintage in 1991, this wine and its vineyard have travelled far. Now close to the top of the classification tree in Saint-Émilion, this vintage shows the impressive nature of this powerful wine. With a good balance between acidity and black fruits backed up by tannins, the wine is powerful and stylish. Drink from 2027.”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“96–98. Barrel Sample. This is a sumptuous wine, with dark tannins and powerful fruits. It is concentrated and dense, with sweet acidity, fine spice and luscious berry flavors that are framed by fine, lasting tannins.”
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

“New label. Very dark crimson. Almost roasted nose seems rather vieux jeu. Salty and sweet. Pushed to the limit. Sweet and sour impression. Not one of my favourite styles but I'm sure it will find favour with some palates. Awfully demanding and dry on the end. Though it certainly is concentrated.”
- JR, JancisRobinson.com

“85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Ripe, bright and dense dark fruit and spice aromas. Layered fruit on the palate with a real vibrancy – lots of energy. Texture smooth and velvety and tannins extremely fine. Persistent finish. Tension as always but with ripe tannins and generous fruit to give it harmony.”
- JL, Decanter.com

“Deep, dark and almost inky in color, the wine is equally deep on your palate. Thick, rich, lush, and opulent, the black plums, boysenberry chocolate and licorice stand out here due to the velvet textures and fresh attitude. The wine is lively, and incredibly rich, a difficult act to achieve. The finish leaves you with layers of black cherry liqueur, dark chocolate, licorice and truffle. This is one of the best vintages of Valandraud ever produced, and that says something, with so many great vintages made at the estate over the years”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Inky in color, with purple accents to the rim, this wine has an amazing effect on your mouth and your mind with its concentrated display of sensuously textured, ripe, dark plums, spice, smoke, licorice, incense and espresso bean. Silk, purity and freshness create the finish. Using 85% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 5%, Cabernet Sauvignon, the wine reached a pH of 3.6. The harvest took place October 1 to October 12.”
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

“Arterial; colour right up to the edge; doesn't get any denser or more viscous than this; tears slowly creep down the glass; lovely aromatics; very sexy and very full – could a wine be fuller, more pent up and lush I wonder? This wine is from another planet – Planet Hedonist; but there is precision here too – a wonderful seam of concentrated fruit on the nose; full attack on the palate with layers of ripe plummy, concentrated sweet fruit; not jammy in the slightest though; concentrated and quite phenomenal; weight and extract are really considerable but the tannins so soft and the extraction expert; lots of coffee and mocha tones on the finish; very big but somehow defies the gravity of its own proportions. Remarkable. Tasted Jean-Luc Thunevin, 6 April 2015. Drink 2022-2035. 96-100”
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

Reviews

“Jean-Luc Thunevin has made an ambitiously structured Valandraud in 2015: rich, supple and super ripe with plenty of dark berry concentration, lashings of oak and sturdy tannins. Time will tell if there’s enough acidity to keep the wine fresh in bottle. Drink: 2022-30”

- TA, timatkin.com

“Valandraud is painstakingly hand made in new, mainly Seguin Moreau, oak barrels by the guru of the garagistes Jean-Luc Thunevin and his wife Murielle. First produced in 1991 (just 1900 bottles) with the help of Ausone's Alain Vauthier, this was the first of the "Garage Wines" of Saint Emilion and is still the benchmark by which all others are judged. Previously seen as an "outsider", Valandraud was awarded Premier Grand Cru Classé status in the 2012 classification of the wines of Saint Emilion. There will be 30,000 bottles of the 2015 made from 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Black, glass-staining colour in the glass and deep and brooding on the nose with licorice, tar and raisins. The palate is viscous and rich with dark chocolate, fig, damson and charred meats. The tannins are huge and structured, just as intense as the powerful fruit core. The finish is spicy and exotic with resinous fruit and puckering dryness. This is an extreme wine.”

- Farr Vintners

“Rich and ripe on the nose the palate starts with fleshy sweet black fruits. There is a balancing freshness bright and lighter at the back with layers of flavour complexity the finish has depth the richness of ripe fruit. 2022-35”

- Derek Smedley MW

“Massively concentrated and incredible plush and layered, this is a phenomenally sexy wine with masses of power and really great spice and depth. There is exoticism here rarely seen in wine and the coffee and Asian spices embedded in its chassis are extraordinary. Very well-built and very hedonistic, with some Douro spice creeping in, too, this is a thrilling wine, albeit of a decadent and pumped-up style.”

- MJ, matthewjukes.com

“A gorgeous, arrestingly beautiful wine, the 2015 Valandraud delivers on all the promise it showed as a barrel sample, and then some. Soft contours and layers of sumptuous fruit add to its considerable appeal. Readers will have to give the 2015 at least a few years to develop aromatic complexity. Today, the wine's off-the-charts intensity and opulence are attention-grabbing, to be sure, but the best is yet to come. This is a superb showing from Jean-Luc Thunevin and Murielle Andraud. The 2015 is 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, all fermented in barrel. (AG)”

- AG, Vinous

“Deep, and beautifully layered, the 2015 Valandraud offers fabulous richness to match its seamless, alluring personality. Crème de cassis, blackberry jam, spice, licorice, menthol and lavender give the 2015 much of its unctuous feel. Silky tannins help reinforce an impression of opulence. As always, Valandraud is one of the most exotic, intense wines in Saint-Émilion, and yet, all the elements are very nicely woven together. The 2015 is 80% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, all fermented in barrel. Tasted two times.”

- AG, Vinous

“A wine that will be a candidate for perfection at maturity, the 2015 Valandraud is a heavenly wine that exhibits a deep, saturated ruby/purple color as well as a sensational bouquet of blackcurrants, cassis, crème caramel, graphite, and chocolate. This full-bodied, expansive, super concentrated 2015 is a hedonistic dream and has exceptional purity, balance, and equilibrium. While it offers pleasure today, it needs short-term cellaring and will keep for 20+ years”

- Jeb Dunnuck
