

# Château Valandraud 2021

CSPC# 867460

750mlx6

13.5% alc./vol.

**Grape Variety** 85% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon  
**Appellation** St. Emilion  
**Classification** Promoted 1st Grand Cru Classé B in 2012  
**Website** <http://valandraud.fr/en/>

**Analysis** pH: 3.5

**Sustainability** Farming practices: No herbicides have been used since the 90' and only a small amount of pesticides is used. Thunevin ventured into biodynamics in 2001 but that proved too difficult for the climate. In addition, all the properties of Jean-Luc Thunevin are ISO 9001 & ISO 14001 certified.

Château Valandraud has also led the way in terms of energy efficiency, having implemented bioclimatic architecture into their new winery, which opened in 2021. Bioclimatic architecture is an approach to construction that focuses on sustainability and energy conservation. Château Valandraud's new winery was designed with natural materials like wood, stone, and clay sourced from nearby suppliers, as well as solar panels on the roof for generating electricity. In addition to providing shade to reduce cooling costs, rainwater harvested from the rooftop is collected and reused for irrigation purposes.

The facility also employs an innovative ventilation system that reduces energy consumption while ensuring optimal temperature control at all times and seasons. Natural air currents are directed around the building in order to keep it cool during hot summer days. Any wastewater created by production processes is treated right onsite before being released back into nature, in a full-circle approach to winery efficiency and sustainability.

Incorporating these green initiatives has enabled Château Valandraud to ensure their operations leave minimal environmental impact while still maintaining their high standards of quality wine production. Investing in eco-friendly technology helps them build towards a more sustainable future.



**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

**Winemaker** Rémi Dalmasso – head oenologist

**Vintage** If 2021 was drier than previous years, two intense climatic episodes impacted the vintage. The first one is the April frost which mobilized our teams for 9 nights. The second is linked to the strong episodes of rain in June, with nearly 180 mm of precipitation. The trio August / September / October was accompanied by low rainfall, allowing to harvest in optimal conditions and preserving the qualitative potential of the vintage.

**Vineyards** 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.

**Harvest** Manual harvest. harvested from 3 to 15 October from 30-year-old vines. 29hl/h yield

**Winemaking** 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

<b>Winemaking</b>	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>	Deep crimson. Fresh dark plum, praline, hint liquorice aromas with herb garden notes. Dense, brambly textured wine with ample dark plum, dark cherry fruits, fine graphite muscular tannins and underlying toasty/ vanilla/ espresso notes. Finishes sappy firm. Buoyant with a sinewy structure.
<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>	2,000 cases made
<b>Cellaring</b>	Drink 2025-2048
<b>Scores/Awards</b>	<p><b>92 points</b> - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - December 2023</p> <p><b>90 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - February 2024</p> <p><b>93-94 points</b> - William Kelley, Wine Advocate - April 2022</p> <p><b>91-93 points</b> - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent - May 2022</p> <p><b>95-96 points</b> - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>94 points</b> - Georgina Hindle, Decanter.com - March 2022</p> <p><b>96 points</b> - Jane Anson, janeanson.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - March 2024</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - May 2022</p> <p><b>92-94 points</b> - Neal Martin, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - February 2024</p> <p><b>93-95 points</b> - Antonio Galloni, Vinous - May 2022</p> <p><b>94-97 points</b> - Jeb Dunnuck MW - June 2022</p> <p><b>17.5 points</b> - Matthew Jukes - August 2022</p> <p><b>95 points</b> - Jean Marc Quarin (score only) - April 2022</p> <p><b>93 points</b> - Peter Moser, Falstaff Magazine - May 2022</p> <p><b>94-95 points</b> - Vert de Vin - July 2022</p> <p><b>96-97 points</b> - Bettane &amp; Desseave (score only) - May 2022</p>
<b>Reviews</b>	<p><i>"Boasts a blackberry and black currant fruit core that belies the vintage's generally light persona, while a chalky structure and notes of sweet tobacco and bay leaf fill in nicely through the finish. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2036. 2,000 cases made."</i> - JM, Wine Spectator</p> <p><i>"The 2021 Valandraud offers up aromas of minty berries framed by a generous application of creamy new oak. Medium to full-bodied, with a creamy attack that segues into a mid-palate built around chalky barrel tannins, it concludes with a vanillin-inflected and discreetly herbal finish. This showed more harmoniously en primeur than in bottle."</i> Jean-Luc Thunevin once worked for a bank owned by the Mouiex family, and, without knowing all that much about wine, requested some bottles of the 1955 Pétrus, his wife's birth year. As a good employee, his request was gratified, and his passion for wine began; the rest is history. But today, this emblematic vin de garage has become a vin de terroir, defined by holdings on the cool, shallow clay-over-limestone soils of Saint-Étienne-de-Lisse; and the garage has become a state-of-the-art winery, with all the precision and temperature control that comes with it. The Valandraud style is undeniably fleshy and dramatic, even hedonistic, and the estate's 2021 (all 24,000 bottles of it) exemplify that style in an unusually elegant, middleweight register." - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"Opening in the glass with inviting aromas of dark berries, baking chocolate, exotic spices, and vanilla pod, the 2021 Valandraud is a medium to full-bodied, ample and fleshy wine that's seamless and layered, exhibiting impressive concentration, beautifully ripe tannins and a long, succulent finish. Bursting with fruit, this is an especially elegant Valandraud, with below-average alcohol at 13.5%, but it doesn't lack for anything. Tasted four times, twice at the château."</i> - WK, Wine Advocate</p> <p><i>"The 2021 Valandraud is made from 85% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc, and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon, harvested from 3 to 15 October from 30-year-old vines planted on clay-limestone. It is aging in 100% new oak for 18-24 months. Deep garnet-purple colored, it slowly emerges from the glass with profound scents of stewed black plums, juicy blackberries, and raspberry leaves, plus hints of Indian spices, stewed tea, and</i></p>

**Reviews** *licorice with a waft of unsmoked cigars. Medium-bodied, the palate is packed with tightly wound black fruit and exotic spices flavors, framed by firm, grainy tannins, and beautifully knit freshness, finishing with great length. pH 3.5.”*

- LPB, Wine Independent

*“Full-bodied with a silky yet very firm and broad tannin structure. Lots of ripe, cool blue-fruit and stone character. Red tea, too. Textured. Well balanced and focused for the vintage. Lovely length.”*

- JS, JamesSuckling.com

*“A rich and hedonistic nose full of perfumed black fruits that are so beguiling. Smooth, supple, and generous on the palate in every way - tannins are present and mouth filling but do well to give the blackcurrant and black cherry frame in the mouth. The fruit has quite a high tone to it, stopping short of being sharp but really vibrant with sparky edges from the acidity and liquorice, clove, toasted wood and cinnamon spice. It's characterful with lots going on - well presented with elegance and a cool freshness throughout. It's the detail that is just so excellent here. It's still got a lot of youthful excitement, but this has beautiful intention, direction and understated power. A bold and more hefty style for the vintage with clear confidence.”*

- GH, Decanter.com

*“One of the most successful wines of the vintage. Welcoming aromatics, carefully handled, creamy raspberry and blackberry fruits, gentle toasted pine nuts and cigar box smoke. You still get the lemongrass, slate tannins and acidities that are so signature to 2021, but also a sense of pull-and-push movement of the fleshy but fresh fruits through the palate, and hidden power. Good stuff. This is a vintage where you need the warm hug of a softly smoked oak barrel, and Thunevin knows how to administer it. 29hl/h yield, 3.5ph.”*

- JA, janeanson.com

*“One of the top wines of the appellation offers an intense nose of flowers, licorice, chocolate-coated black cherries, smoke, cedar, and mint in the perfume. With a dark garnet color, the wine is plush, polished, silky and loaded with sweet, dark, ripe, deliciously-expressive fruits. The wine blends 85% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc, and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink from 2025-2048.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“Put your nose in the glass and smell all the chocolate, espresso, black plums, black raspberry, licorice, and wet earth. Deep garnet in color, the wine is plush, polished, silky and loaded with sweet, dark, ripe, lusciously-textured red fruits. The wine blends 85% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. 13.5% ABV, pH 3.5. The harvest took place October 3 - October 15. drink from 2025-2048.”*

- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

*“The 2021 Valandraud was picked October 3–15 and matured for a planned 18–24 months entirely in new oak. Again, this has quite an intense bouquet of perfumed blackberry, briar and mineral scents, the latter distinguishing it from the Virginie. The palate is medium-bodied with lithe, supple tannins that frame the pure, lightly spiced red berry fruit. More linear than previous vintages, yet fresh, this is well-defined toward the finish, where a pleasant spiciness carries over on the aftertaste.”*

- NM, Vinous

*“The 2021 Valandraud is sumptuous, dark, and enveloping to the core, even if some of the underlying contours need time to soften. Black cherry, plum, mocha, new leather, and spice gain intensity in the glass. The rich, heady style is classic Valandraud, tempered by the distinctive qualities of the 2021 vintage.”*

- AG, Vinous

*“The 2021 Valandraud is compelling. Bright acids give the 2021 terrific purity and cut. The style of the year is perhaps a bit unusual for Valandraud, which tends to be an opulent wine, but there is a ton of potential. Aeration brings out the wine's natural texture and breadth. Wild dark cherry, mocha, spice, new leather, and licorice all build nicely. In most vintages, Valandraud offers tons of near-term appeal. The 2021, on the other hand, is a long-distance runner.”*

- AG, Vinous

**Reviews**

*“The Grand Vin 2021 Château Valandraud checks in as 85% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc, and the rest Cabernet Sauvignon, and it's still resting all in new barrels. Deep purple-hued, with rocking bouquet of ripe black and blue fruits, chocolate, spicy oak, and spring flowers, it hits the palate with medium to full-bodied richness, velvety, ripe tannins, terrific mid-palate depth, and one heck of an impressive finish. Despite the new barrels, this wine leads with its fruit, has everything in the right places, and delivers notable freshness as well as a great finish. I'd put it up with any of the top wines out there.”*

- Jeb Dunnuck

*“Valandraud is always a super-exotic and incredible dense wine, and in 2021 this character was imprinted on a 13.5% alcohol framework. This alone is remarkable. With crazy concentration and a very dry finish from the 100% new oak, this is a very ostentatious wine, but unlike some of the other hugely extracted or oaky Saint-Émilions, it is balanced wine – not least because constituent element everything is massive! 17.5+”*

- Matthew Jukes

*“Deep dark garnet with purple reflections at the rim. Fine noble wood nuances, a touch of cedar, blackberries, ripe cherries; an inviting bouquet. Juicy, fresh blackberries, a little liquorice, fresh acidity, hints of coconut and vanilla, mineral finish; shows ageing potential and finesse.”*

- PM, Falstaff Magazine

*“The nose is beautifully racy and reveals elegance, delicate power, complexity, authenticity, a nice multi-layered character, and a fine spicy/peppery edge. There are notes of fresh wild blackcurrant, fresh/pulpy blackberry and more lightly fresh red berries combined with hints of pepper, lily, fine spice, and a subtle varietal/savoury edge. The palate is fruity and reveals juiciness, sweetness, acidity, sweetness, good definition, melodiousness, freshness, racy minerality, fine chiseling and a fine crispness. On the palate, this wine expresses notes of pulpy/juicy blackberry, cherry and, more slightly, violet, combined with hints of fresh/juicy red berries, as well as hints of iris and fine points of liquorice. Sapidly on the finish/persistence. Elegant, racy tannins revealing some mellowness. Some sapidity on the finish.”*

- Vert de Vin

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