

Virginie de Valandraud 2012

CSPC# 771445

750mlx12

14% alc./vol.

Grape Variety

80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc

Appellation

St. Emilion

Classification

Grand Cru Classe B

Website

www.thunevin.com

General Info

In 1989, Jean-Luc Thunevin and Murielle Andraud 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...

Château de Valandraud was one of the first Garagiste wines with its inaugural vintage being the difficult 1991.

Created in 1992 as a second wine, Virginie de Valandraud since 1997 is its own wine, named after Jean-Luc Thunevin's daughter. The vineyard is the same as Château Valandraud, and the wine is made the same way, by the same team, under the supervision of Murielle Andraud, Jean-Luc's wife.

De Valandraud produces only about 400 cases a year and, not surprisingly, this very rich and concentrated St-Emilion is now one of the most sought-after wines in Bordeaux. Valandraud was upgraded in the official 2012 St. Emilion Classification to Premier Grand Cru Classe B.

Vintage

After the very cold and dry winter of 2011–2012, bud break lasted throughout April. The rains of April and May, coupled with mild temperatures, resulted insignificant mineralization and strong vegetative growth of the vines.

Flowering was late (29 May) and drawn out, with a delicate fruit set. The old Merlot plants have at times seen yields reduced due to coulure (shatter, a failure of the fruit to set) or millerandage (shot grapes, incomplete development).

There was settled summer weather from 15 July, with the hottest August since 2003, allowing partial recovery of the growth cycle. From mid-July onwards, 2012 was one of the driest vintages of recent years (along with 2005, 2009 and 2010), resulting in a significant water deficit (120mm lower than the thirty-year average). Ripening in early August was prolonged, with peaks of temperature from July to September and reduced rainfall. The biggest daily temperature difference recorded was 12.9°C, the highest in eight years, favoring a high level of anthocyanins and aromatic intensity. September and October were mild, close to the seasonal norm (27–28°C on 5 October).

Vineyards

Jean-Luc and Murielle Thunevin own a mere 2.7 hectares of vineyards which consist of 4 separate parcels and are planted with 75% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc and 5% Malbec. 11 acres of clayey limestone, sand, and gravel soils. Average vine age 30 years. De Valandraud's yields are pitifully low and the grapes are de-stemmed by hand before being fermented in 2 open-top fermenting vessels. The younger vines are used in the making of this wine, which is then aged for 20 months in 100% new oak barrels, some 10 months less than Château Valandraud. Virginie de Valandraud is comparable to Château Valandraud in some vintages and is an impressive stand-alone wine.

Harvest

Hand harvested

Vinification/ Maturation

After the grapes are harvested by hand, they are first sorted by the pickers, then undergo a second picking by density at the winery. Temperature-controlled vinification in stainless steel tanks, with manual punching down of the cap, pumping-over, and maceration of about 3 weeks.

Tasting Notes

Dark purple red with violet hue and almost black center. Pure fruit, blackberries and blackcurrants, toasted oak and discreet spiciness. On the palate well balanced tannins, good weight and length.

Production

1,665 cases made

Cellaring

Drink 2015-2025



Scores/Awards **89 points** - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - March 31, 2015
88-91 points - James Molesworth, Wine Spectator - Web Only 2013
87 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #218 - April 2015
88-90 points - Robert Parker, Wine Advocate #206 - April 2013
90-92 points - Neal Martin, Wine Journal - May 2013
87-88 points - James Suckling, JamesSuckling.com - April 2013 (score only)
91-93 points - Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast - April 9, 2013
88-91 points - Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar - May/June 2013 (score only)
17 points - Jancis Robinson, JancisRobinson.com - April 2013 (score only)
89 points - Jean Marc Quarin (score only)
92 points - Tim Atkin, MW - timatkin.com (score only)
89-91 points - Jeff Leve, thewinecellarinsider.com - April 13, 2013
90-92 points - Jeremy Williams, winewordsandvideotape.com - April 2013
86 points - Jeannie Cho Lee MW, asianpalate.com - April 2013
89-91 points - Falstaff Magazine (score only)
15.5 points - La Revue du Vin France (score only)

Reviews *"Features bramble, blueberry paste, and currant preserve notes, with a firm graphite spine that gives way to a slightly chewy ganache and roasted vanilla edge on the finish. A touch burly in feel, but the gutsy character will win this some fans. Best from 2016 through 2020. 1,665 cases made."*
- JM, Wine Spectator

"The bright raspberry, cherry and blood orange fruit is laced with a distinct savory note, which emerges on the briary, chewy finish. Score range: 88-91"
- JM, Wine Spectator

"Delicious blackcurrant, black cherry fruit, a dark ruby/purple color and sweet tannin characterize this relatively soft, plump, medium-bodied St.-Emilion. It is in no way comparable to the brilliance and profound quality of its bigger sister, Valandraud, but it is a pleasant wine. Drink it over the next decade."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"Copious aromas of black cherries and black currants intermixed with hints of loamy earth, Provençal herbs and oak emerge from this nicely textured, medium-weight, elegant St.-Emilion. Enjoy it over the next 7-8 years."
- RP, Wine Advocate

"The Virginie has a compact bouquet of intense dark cherries and wild strawberry fruit with fine delineation, although I suspect it will need a couple of years in bottle to come around. The palate is medium bodied with crisp, edgy tannins. There is always a "classic" feel to the Virginie that I really appreciate and there is very fine structure on the finish that is somehow conservative, but very well crafted and unimposing. Very fine. Tasted April 2013."
- NM, Wine Journal

"91-93. Barrel sample. The second wine of Château Valandraud is richly powered by spice from new wood and delicate acidity. It's smooth—showing opulent tannins—and attractive freshness."
- RV, Wine Enthusiast

"Oak, vanilla and red with black fruits, round textures, this wine is tannic with some dryness in the finish. 89-91 Pts (18-Apr-2013)"
- JL, thewinecellarinsider.com

"Deep and saturated; dark and arterial looking; colour extremely tight to the meniscus; lots of violet lift and very lush again; ripe and rich palate with plenty of matter here and also fair bit of oak; lashings of everything; lots of density. Big wine. 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 35,000 bottles produced. 90-92 Tasted Friday April 12 at Jean-Luc Thunevin"
- JW, winewordsandvideotape.com

"Intense red with tightly wound flavours of plums and dark berry fruits. The tannins are structured and firm but velvety in texture. Fairly serious red that will benefit from at least 4+ years in bottle. Tasted in: Bordeaux, France."
- JCL, asianpalate.com
