

# Schmitt 'Rot' 2017

**Producer** - Bianka and Daniel Schmitt (hence the d.b on the label)

**Provenance:** Rheinhessen

**Farming:** Biodynamic

**Grape(s):** 30% Merlot, 30% Pinot Noir, 20% Dornfelder, 20% Portugieser

**Vineyard(s):** A field selection of different parcels of varied sandstone, loess, clay with plenty of limestone running throughout.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** The Rot is the press juice with all of the left over pomace from the crush for the rose so there is a great deal higher ratio of skins to juice than a normal red wine. Fermented spontaneously on the skins and left to macerate for a total of 6 weeks. Aged in one 4000 L Bavarian oak barrel on the gross lees for a year.

**Fining/ Filtration:** none.

**Sulfite:** none added.

## The Producer:

In 2012 at the tender age of 21, Hungarian winemaker-to-be Bianka journeyed to Flörsheim-Dalsheim in the southern part of the Rheinhessen to pursue and opportunity to harvest and make wine with the Schmitt family. Bianka's mother and grandmother were both holistic healers, practitioners of Prana Nadi, so it comes as no surprise that biodynamic agriculture would be a source of deep curiosity for Bianka. Eager to learn from an old hand, she was surprised to learn that the Schmitt patriarch Peter who she'd thought to learn from had handed the reins over to his son Daniel who had already begun converting the 230+ year old, 16 hectares of family vineyards to biodynamic agriculture. What started as comradery quickly emerged into a romantic relationship that has blossomed into an impressive and collaborative professional partnership and eventually, marriage.

Having studied conventional wine in school Bianka and Daniel journeyed to Alsace to investigate a style of winemaking more in line with their growing philosophy and to find out if Bianka's professors had been wrong when they said "spontaneous fermentation is humbug." The following harvest, inspired by their travels they immediately starting making wines without selected yeasts, commercial additives, fining, filtration, added sulfite or any other nonsense. Today they make 105,000 bottles in a good vintage and have garnered a genuine and enthusiastic following for their highly energized wines that



amplify minerality without sacrificing the fresh, rawness that make natural wines so exciting.

**The Vineyard:**

The family's 16 hectares that were once devoted to cereals and sugar beets some 200 years ago are now lush with grape vines. Daniel Schmitt achieved organic certification in 2007 and joined a small number of Demeter certified German growers in 2012, shortly before Bianka's arrival. They sell the equivalent of about 4 hectares as bulk wine or grape juice as well as potatoes and herbs they grow.

"We have limestone everywhere in the soil,' Bianka says as well as sandstone, loess and clay. Before harvest they drive out twice a day through the fields, checking in on different parcels and comparing the maturation of their grapes to the wines they intend to create. Between Daniel's quintessentially German organizational streak and Bianka's more intuitive, though rigorously scientific approach they make joint decisions in reflection of the shifting realities of each blend.

**The Winery:**

The deeply inky red wine is a byproduct of rose production: after all the grapes are sent through the crusher destemmer, the free run juice is used for the pink wine. The remaining juice trapped in the skins is fermented into the red with a greatly altered ratio of skins to juice. Merlot, Pinot Noir, Portugieser, Dornfelder are macerated together for 6 weeks and then aged for a year in a single 4000 L Bavarian oak barrel on gross lees. Bottled without sulfite addition, fining or filtration. The only differences between 2016's Rot and '17's are the wildly different weather conditions, fewer varieties and the wine is bottled under cork instead of screw cap.

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