

# Schmitt 'Muller-Thurgau' 2018

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

**Provenance:** Rheinhessen

**Farming:** Biodynamic

**Grape(s):** 100%

Muller-Thurgau

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

**Vintage:** 2018 was a warm and unexpectedly dry vintage with a long harvest resulting in some crisped skins yielding more tannins which led to typically shorter macerations and lower acidity.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** 50% direct press, 50% fermented on the skins with 4 weeks total maceration. Aged separately in two 1200L neutral barrels for 9 months. Blended just before bottling.

**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 grandmother and her mother before here were both holistic healers and practitioners of Prana Nadi so it comes as no surprise that biodynamic agriculture would be a source of deep curiosity. 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:**

Muller-Thurgau's naturally low acidity resulted in a two-fold approach. The fruit was split in two with half pressed directly to preserve acidity while the other lot was fermented on skins with a total of 4 weeks maceration before press. Both base wines were aged on gross lees in neutral 1200L barrels for 9 months. Blended just before bottling without added sulfite.

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