

# Schmitt 'Spätburgunder' 2018

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

**Provenance:** Rheinhessen

**Farming:** Biodynamic

**Grape(s):** 100% Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder in German)

**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:** Intracellular (whole berry) fermentation with 30% stem inclusion and only 3 punchdowns during the fermentation. 4 weeks maceration before pressing into 600L barrels for aging on gross lees.

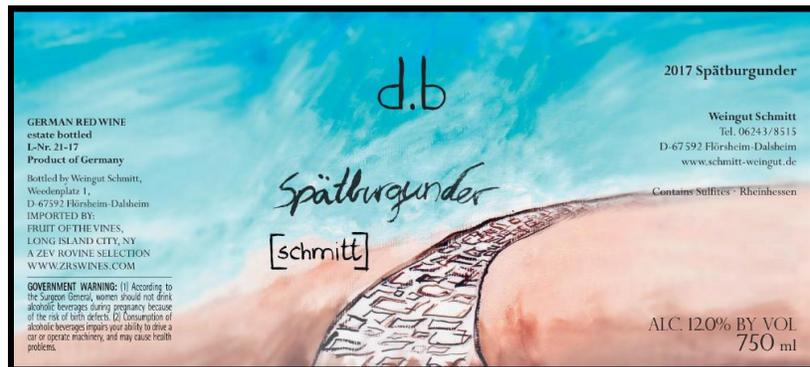
**Fining/ Filtration:** none.

**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:**

With 2018's hot, dry weather and protracted harvest, the Schmitts elected to experiment with intracellular fermentations. Bianka says while it "sounds super professional, it means, practically, that we pound (punch down) maybe 3 times during the whole fermentation." This means mostly whole berries are fermenting with about 30% whole clusters resulting in a gentler, enzymatic fermentation that extracts less tannin and acid and amplifies aromatics. The must is pressed after 4 weeks of maceration in to 600L neutral barrel to age on gross lees. Bottled without fining, filtration or added sulfite.

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