



FLAT ROCK  
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## **The Rogue – By Flat Rock Cellars**

He's been here since day one. He operates behind the scenes, shying away from any recognition or press. He thinks his contribution is insignificant when really his ideas have shaped who we are and what we stand for. And now, after five years, we've finally created a wine that adequately reflects the attitude and character that comes so naturally to him – The Rogue!

Acting in defiance of established rules and customs is what going Rogue is all about. Unlike the other so called Rogues (Sarah Palin comes to mind), his motivation isn't glory, it's more humble than that. He's a man that simply strives towards excellence in all that he undertakes. It just so happens that time and time again his abilities lead him 'away from the herd'. Regardless of the subject, when he turns his attention to a new project it's guaranteed that not only will he learn everything there is to know, he'll find a way to improve upon it. And that usually means breaking the established rules, customs, and practices!

Take his approach to producing wine in Ontario. In a time when Cabernet Sauvignon was King on the world stage (and everyone here was planting it) he planted Pinot Noir - and not just some, but a full 50% of his vineyard! The local practice at the time was to plant 8 or more varieties in order to hedge ones bet against the ever changing consumer taste and the whims of Mother Nature. He decided on just three. And not the three most popular, but the three that his research indicated would prosper in his 'terroir'. One glance at the long list of awards for our Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Riesling and I think it's safe to say that he was right. I simply drink them to know unquestionably that he was right!

But you might think his Rogue'ness in viticulture was a fluke. After all, he has lifetime of experience as a farmer (even while moonlighting as a lawyer). How then might you explain away his prowess with architecture? When faced with the dilemma of building a winery on world-biosphere protected land, he embraced the challenge. He immersed himself in the subject, voraciously reading, traveling to other wine regions, and studying leading edge practices in sustainable design. His vision far surpassed any regulatory requirements. It certainly surpassed the immature thinking about sustainability at that time. The final design was unique in its shape and materials, it minimized the foot-print on the sensitive escarpment land, and it included most of what is now considered essential components of a LEED certified building (geo-thermal, bio-filter, natural lighting, green roof etc.)...and all of this before LEED certification even existed!

I could riff on his Rogue like moves all day long: the first in Ontario to purchase a host of equipment that would ensure we could make the best quality wine possible including an Ozone machine, custom made Italian Velo tanks, leading edge Fabri press from France, and more. If copying is the most sincere form of flattery, then he has more than a few fans amongst Ontario wineries as all of the above equipment is now common place. He is an innovator for our industry!

Arguably, his most difficult Rogue move, the one that impacts our team on a daily basis, every time we open a bottle, is his decision to bottle all our wines under screw cap. It was an outrageous idea a decade ago and one that he didn't take lightly. After all, he and most of the



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wine industry at the time believed that cork was the only suitable closure for super premium wine. Still, he challenged his own beliefs and dove into the research. He couldn't deny the facts. If the mission of the winery was to make the best quality, most consistent wine then there was only one clear choice. It's a choice that may seem obvious today, but can only be explained in 2003 as going Rogue!

So, in the spirit of pushing the boundaries, of being committed to excellence, of mastering your craft, and mostly of listening to your gut and not the background noise, I'd like to introduce you to our new line of wine, The Rogue, by Flat Rock Cellars. A tribute to our founding Rogue, and hopefully a worthy reflection of the attitude and character that he's instilled in this winery from the very roots of our Pinot Noir to the very top of our screw caps. This Rogue's for you Dad!

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