

Beer Talk: Triphammer Bierwerks opens in Fairport



Will Cleveland, @WillCleveland13 4:34 p.m. EDT September 8, 2016



(Photo: SHAWN DOWD/@sdowdphoto/, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

In a previous incarnation the building housed the American Can Company (<http://www.perintonhistoricalsociety.org/index.php/history/agriculture-commerce.html>). Now, in a bit of serendipity, a brewery occupies 7,800-square feet of space in a former warehouse in Fairport that had long stood vacant.

Iron Smoke Whiskey Distillery (<http://www.ironsmokewhiskey.com/check>) breathed a bit of life into building in late 2014, and Triphammer Bierwerks (<http://www.triphammerbierwerks.com/>), 111 Parce Ave., Suite 3A-1, which opened late last week, is the newest tenant.

► **Whiskey brings together LiDestri, Iron Smoke** ([/story/money/business/2016/08/03/lidestri-food-and-drink-and-iron-smoke-whiskey-work-on-craft-spirits-project/87970422/](http://story/money/business/2016/08/03/lidestri-food-and-drink-and-iron-smoke-whiskey-work-on-craft-spirits-project/87970422/))

► **Catching up with Iron Smoke Distillery's Tommy Brunett** ([/story/money/business/2016/02/27/catching-up-iron-smoke-distillerys-tommy-brunett/80878586/](http://story/money/business/2016/02/27/catching-up-iron-smoke-distillerys-tommy-brunett/80878586/))

Triphammer is the second brewery in Fairport (<https://www.facebook.com/triphammerbierwerks/#>) and the 14th in Monroe County. It's represents the grit and determination of owner/brewer Scott Denhart.

"I'm so nervous to welcome people into here," said Denhart. "I've had so many bumps in the road, so many starts and stops, but I'm just really nervous. I'm really critical of my own beers. I just want it to go right. I want people to have a good time. I want people to walk out wanting to come back."

When Denhart and his family moved back to the Rochester area about six years ago (his wife Leslie, a physical therapist, is from Avon, Livingston County), it was with the understanding that he would eventually open a brewery. He purchased a 15-barrel brew house from a shuttering California brewery.

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And then it sat in storage for three years, until the system was moved into the old village factory about five months ago. The building was a perfect blank canvas. The expansive ceilings, lined with with decades-old windows at their highest point, look like they are designed to house a brewery.

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A landmark sign outside of the old American Can Company factory on Parce Avenue in Fairport. (Photo: Will Cleveland/@WillCleveland13/Staff photographer)

The open, airy warehouse location is unlike any brewery in our area. Denhart's 15-barrel brew house includes four 15-barrel fermenters, a 30-barrel fermenter, and a 30-barrel Brite tank. There are also five 15-barrel serving tanks in the walk-in cooler to supply the taproom.

Triphammer opened with four beers: a Hefeweizen, a rye pale ale, a Belgian amber and a Belgian witbier. I first tried Denhart's rye pale ale six years ago when we met during a [monthly meeting of the Upstate New York Homebrewers Association \(UNYHA\)](http://www.unyha.com/) (<http://www.unyha.com/>).

The rye pale ale was the first recipe that Denhart developed as a homebrewer. It's made with 10 percent rye. It's not super spicy like some rye beers can be, but it adds quite a bit to the mouthfeel and dries out the palate nicely on the finish. It's a really easy drinking pale ale. The Hefeweizen was another standout.

"I don't want the beer to be good, I want it to be great," Denhart said.

Head brewer Andy Walker, who spent three years as a production brewer at Rohrbach, echoed those sentiments.

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"We're not trying to do anything groundbreaking," Walker said. "We're trying to make good beer. We feel like the market could use more good beer. We just hope to be part of that community of people who are making really good beer."

Denhart demonstrated his perfection-driven ethos when he and Walker dumped Triphammer's first batch of its India pale ale.

"You can't be afraid to dump something if it isn't right," Denhart said. "It could be a person's first impression of you. Our first try at the IPA, it wasn't fermenting all the way out. It still tasted good, but it was way too sweet."

The new IPA should be on draft soon.

When I first met him, Denhart talked about his plans to open a brewpub. But he decided against opening a restaurant, shifted his vision and started to seek out larger spaces to house one of Rochester's biggest craft breweries. He thought he had settled on a location in Ontario, Wayne County, last year, but those plans fell through.

The location wasn't the only hurdle Denhart faced. He's from Illinois and lived in Wilmington, North Carolina (where he helped found a homebrewing club) and Brooklyn. Sitting in the Sixpoint Brewing taproom in Brooklyn, he fell in love with craft beer and the opportunity to share it with a devoted community.

Triphammer is Denhart's fifth brewery name. (And since it's trademarked, it's all his now.) He considered Nomad and Journeyman, but those were both taken. A bit of local history and geography made Triphammer a natural fit. There's the old Triphammer mill at High Falls on the Genesee River. Triphammer Falls also runs through Cornell University's campus in Ithaca, Tompkins County. There is also a Triphammer Falls near Avon, Livingston County.

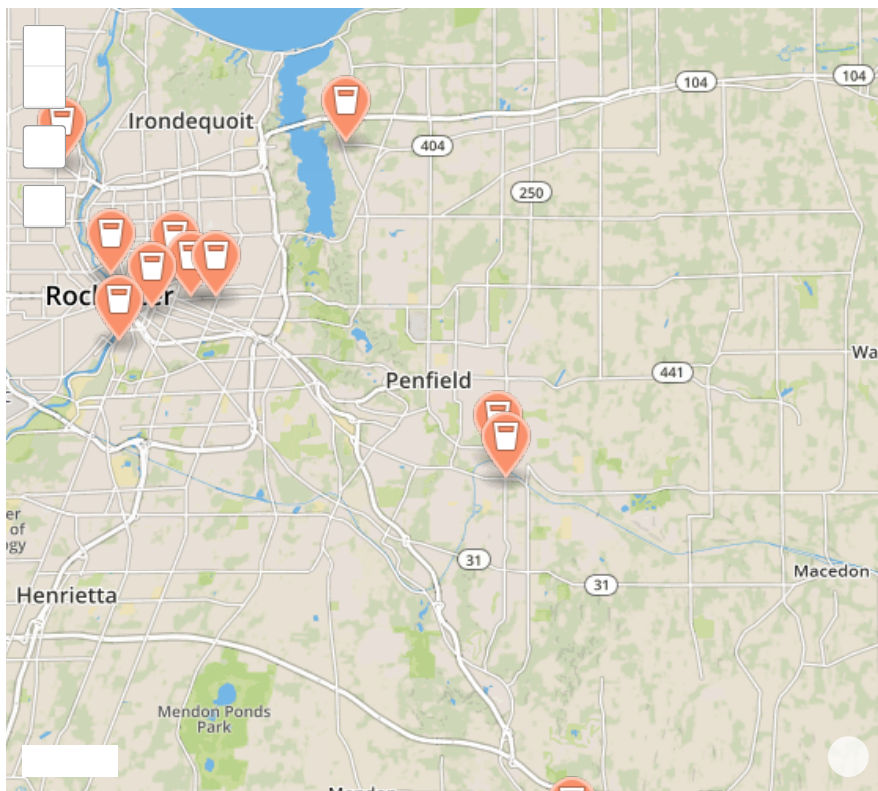
To Denhart, the name represents his resolve and desire to pursue his passion and his dream.

"I just like the idea of a big, driving hammer that no one's going to stop," he said.

"I think breweries like (California craft beer pioneer) Sierra Nevada guide me," Denhart added. "They're not on the outward cusp of craziness, but every time you open a Sierra Nevada, you know it's going to be good. They're known for quality. I want to be known for that. I want to be known as someone who tries really hard, and if I'm going to sell it, you can at least know that we did the best we could. And if it's not good enough, we won't sell it."

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[Map of breweries in Rochester and surrounding areas \(https://a.tiles.mapbox.com/v4/mmleonard.1bc53j8k/page.html?access_token=pk.eyJ1IjoibW1sZW9uYXJkIiwiaYSi6ImNpbjZhNjA1aDBiZWhh2N2trZW00azcxNm9ifQ.Of3KVvCHBXupnFTLIP7BUQ#11/43.1238/-77.4749\)](https://a.tiles.mapbox.com/v4/mmleonard.1bc53j8k/page.html?access_token=pk.eyJ1IjoibW1sZW9uYXJkIiwiaYSi6ImNpbjZhNjA1aDBiZWhh2N2trZW00azcxNm9ifQ.Of3KVvCHBXupnFTLIP7BUQ#11/43.1238/-77.4749)



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