

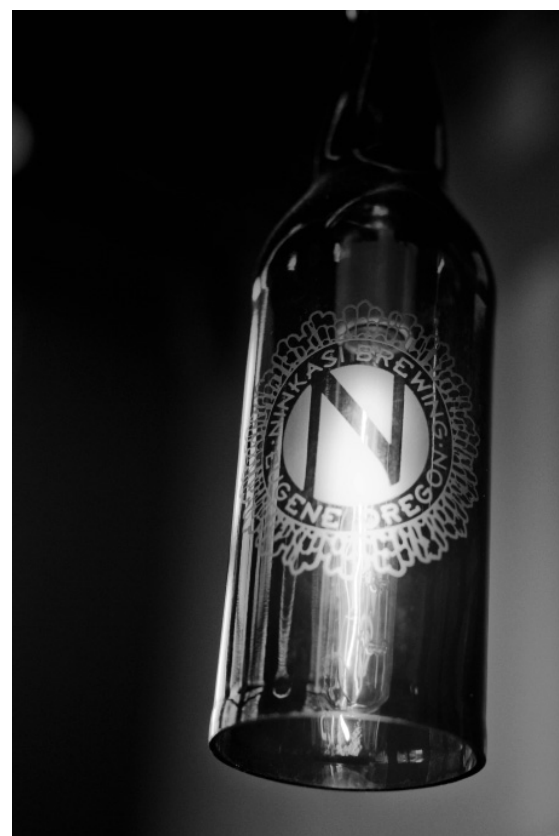


EVEN MORE BEER HERE

Maybe there was a time you could drive down Van Buren and not notice the Ninkasi brewery (272 Van Buren St., 344-2739), but now, the expanded, soaring building, new signs and under-construction patio are unmissable. First came the airy tasting room and the business offices; then the old building was torn down and rebuilt, making space to expand the four-year-old brewery's output yet again. "Our 30-barrel brewhouse is being replaced with a 60-barrel brewhouse," says cofounder Jamie Floyd. In the brewery's first full year, they made 3,000 barrels of beer. In the second, 7,800. "Last year we did 19,500 barrels," Floyd says. "So it's 257 percent growth." The brewery, which now has 42 employees, is "on par" to make 30-32,000 barrels of its popular beers this year (their Total Domination IPA is the number-one selling 22-oz. bottle of beer in Oregon). "At this point we'll start to get more to the reasonable doubling size," Floyd says, laughing.

In the bright, high-ceilinged new building, skylights let in sunbeams that dot the floor around the new bottling machine, which can fill 12-ounce bottles (they should be on the market next year). There's also a new keg washing system, and Floyd is particularly enthusiastic about the addition of a centrifuge. "It uses physics [to spin the beer clean] instead of a filter membrane, which is what I always wanted, because you spend all this money on hops and then filters kind of filter some of that flavor out," Floyd says. "Also, it makes our beer totally vegan."

The latest addition to the Ninkasi empire — which now reaches to two more buildings in the Whiteaker — is the in-progress outdoor seating area. Floyd says it will be done by July 9, when *Oregon Art Beat* comes to tape an upcoming episode featuring Beth Wood, one of the musicians the brewery sponsors. With a combination of pavers and decking, planters, a looming fire pit and a small area for acoustic performers, the patio promises to be a welcoming place to sip Ninkasi's offerings — and maybe make an offering yourself. A statue of Ninkasi, the Sumerian goddess of fermentation, will join drinkers at the tasting room. — *Molly Templeton*



PHOTOS BY TRASK BEDORTHA