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🔑 Headquarters expansion brews for Firestone Walker in Paso Robles

By Marissa Nall / Friday, November 4th, 2016 / [No Comments](#)

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Firestone Walker Brewing Co. will expand its Paso Robles headquarters and brewhouse by nearly 10,000 square feet.

To celebrate its 20 years on the Central Coast, Firestone Walker Brewing Co. is expanding its Paso Robles headquarters and brewhouse by nearly 10,000 square feet.

"They try to give the community as much as they can and they really add back to the community," said Steve Rarig, president of Rarig Construction, which has done construction work with the beer makers since Firestone Walker was founded. "They've been keeping our crews busy ever since they bought that old brewery."

The addition gives the flagship brewhouse a more modern, curved design, with the use of glass paneling and a corten roof for a rusted look, said Chris Rarig, secretary and treasurer of Rarig Construction.

With two Central Coast properties and another in Marina del Ray, Firestone Walker is recommitting to its California customers, who buy 80 percent of their beer, said co-founder David Walker.

The renovations will offer efficiency over capacity, including energy and water savings. It will also bring them down from constant operation to only needing to brew three days a week, Firestone said.

New tanks coming online in 2018 will give them even more breathing room.

The company has made some new hires in its programming and engineering areas, said co-founder Adam Firestone, bringing them up to 528 employees.

"The newer equipment is complicated and requires significant technical skills to manage it properly," Firestone said. "Cal Poly is our secret weapon. More and more of the resumes seem to come from there and the school is putting out well-qualified individuals."

Its anniversary also means a new ale, dubbed "XX."

The final product is a complicated five-beer blend made in partnership with almost a dozen regional winemakers, including two types of oatmeal stout and a blonde barley wine aged in bourbon and brandy barrels.

"These are my friends and brothers in fermentation science," Brewmaster Matt Brynildson said of winemakers they partnered with, adding that "their input is invaluable when it comes to blending a seamless beer from widely varied components."

The finished product was released Oct. 29 at the Paso Robles and Buellton locations and retails for \$23.99 per bottle. Firestone Walker announced earlier in the month that it would be making room for more experimentation as it retires its Proprietor's Reserve line, including its Wookey Jack, Double Jack and Opal beers.

"It's a bittersweet occasion," Walker said at the time. "Each of these beers was forward-thinking and representative of some of our best brewing efforts, but they are now stepping aside to make room for the next generation."

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