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The portfolio includes pepper sauce and hot honey sauce.

grass. He then built vertical gardens on the side of his house, hooking the rain gutters to drip lines for irrigation. "Last year, I had parsley growing up the side of the house," he says.

Ras began developing herb and spice blends, which he initially gifted to friends and family. The response was positive, and the idea for a business was born.

Pike Place Market was an obvious landing spot for Ras's business. His mother worked at the market for decades, first as a teenage busker, then selling silk-screened T-shirts and hand-carved wooden boxes. She later moved into the market office, working as a market master and farm program manager. She'd take Ras along with her.

"I spent a lot of my younger years crawling around behind the table," he says. "In some ways, I grew up at Pike Place Market."

The business, which has evolved to include culinary spice blends, sauces, salts, vinegars, and teas, became a way for Ras to honor his father's legacy.

Ras's father, who was a subsistence farmer in Jamaica, died when Ras was a teenager. Around the time he bought his home, Ras made his first trip to Jamaica after his father's death. He visited with his father's family and friends, visited his dad's old farm, and reconnected with his history.

"It really inspired me and made me want to do something that not only would make him proud, but would also make me feel good," Ras says.

Early on, Ras relied on trial and error, his cannabis-growing expertise, customer feedback, and — he says with a hint of embarrassment — YouTube videos and Google searches to help him learn more about cultivating herbs and crafting blends. But over all, "culinary herbs are very forgiving. They're very low maintenance," he says. His mother and grandmother also pitched in, helping him with recipe development.

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Ras says. "When I was a kid, she used to pay me to work in her yard doing little things like weeding and trimming."

Now, Ras's property is licensed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture as an urban farm. The bottom floor of the house is an approved processing kitchen, where he dries and processes the herbs and crafts his mixes and sauces. It's also where, in winter, he starts seeds for annuals like basil, Scotch bonnet peppers, and tomatoes. He lives on the upper floor.

Ras's portfolio of products continues to grow: hot honey sauce, pepper sauce, more than a dozen herb blends, a Moroccan mint tea, and Scotch bonnet pepper sauce. One of his many herb mixes is a dry jerk rub, an homage to his Jamaican roots, containing traditional ingredients like thyme, allspice, ginger, and Scotch bonnets.

And that means he has naturally outgrown his urban farm. Ras recently purchased land on Vashon Island. He'll seek organic certification for his products there, and the bulk of his production will soon move to Vashon, too. He has more than two acres of land there, but will start small, developing only a half acre for now.

"Within the next two years, ideally, what I'd like to be doing is growing all the perennials on Vashon and then growing the things like peppers and tomatoes and basil that I have to keep more of an eye on, here in the city. It's not a huge space, but compared to what I'm working with in Greenwood, it's a lot," he says.

It's a move that will help him continue to honor the legacies of his parents — one on the farm and the other at the market. *eS*

Megan Hill freelances for a number of food and travel publications. When she's not writing, she can be found enjoying the beauty of the Pacific Northwest via sailboat or hiking trail.

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