

PUGET SOUND BUSINESS JOURNAL

‘DREAMS DO COME TRUE’

Vulcan promotes local entrepreneurs with micro-retail spaces in the Central District

When James Dixon, co-founder of 23rd Ave Brewery, was out looking for spaces to open the business's first taproom, he came across Vulcan's Jackson Apartments development in Seattle's Central District.

Initially, Dixon and his brothers (Mario Savage, Matt Dixon and David Dixon) thought leasing space in the neighborhood they grew up in would be too expensive.

"We were going to have to go really far south or really far north," Savage said. "We were looking around the Central District, but everything is new, everything is nice, with obviously gentrification and high prices."

That's precisely why Vulcan Real Estate, which developed the Jackson Apartments, created a micro-retail pavilion on the site, GERALYN Vannoy, director of commercial marketing and leasing, said.

The pavilion's spaces are intended to serve as stepping stones for entrepreneurs, easing access to brick-and-mortar spaces by offering lower upfront costs and affordable leases in a prime location. Vulcan said it reflects the community's desire to support local businesses, and to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

23rd Ave Brewery will take the last available spot in the pavilion. QueenCare, a body-care company, and booSH, a plant shop, opened last year.

"What we were hoping for these spaces is for them to be able to turn and continue to include and bring in new groups to get their start there," Vannoy said.



23rd Ave Brewery co-founders and brothers Mario Savage, left, and James Dixon will open their first taproom in Seattle's Central District, the neighborhood where they grew up.

The development at 2401 S. Jackson St. includes 532 residential units and 47,000 square feet of retail space.

The three 520-square-foot spaces come with heat pumps, ceiling fans, restrooms and painted walls.

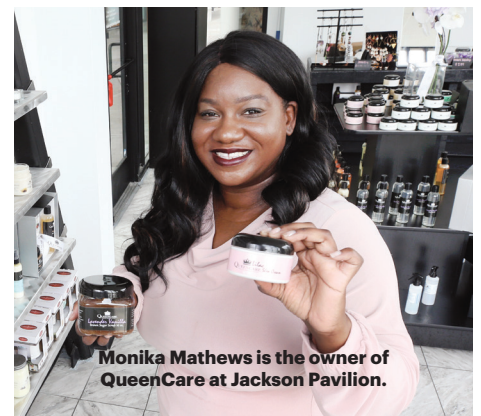
"We know with the smaller businesses, it's really hard to come up with that upfront capital to build up spaces," Vannoy said.

To find tenants, Vulcan partnered with Ventures, a Seattle-based nonprofit that connects entrepreneurs with resources, with a focus on women, people of color, immigrants and individuals with low income.

For 23rd Ave Brewery, the owners reached out to Vulcan on a whim, unaware of the micro-retail concept. The four brothers started brewing together in 2018. The brewery's name comes from the street on which the brothers grew up.

"It was the artery of our neighborhood," James Dixon said. "It was where we laughed, we cried. We missed the bus. Everything happened on that block for us."

As a business, they want their beer to



Monika Mathews is the owner of QueenCare at Jackson Pavilion.

reflect the neighborhood, in addition to their own experiences. That includes a blackberry ale to reflect the Central District's sticker and blackberry bushes, or a beer infused with serrano peppers, from James Dixon's time in Laredo, Texas.

"We're trying to attract a new kind of craft beer drinker to the scene," Dixon said.

Added Savage, "It's like, let's shoot our shot and see what happens. "And here we are. I mean, dreams do come true."