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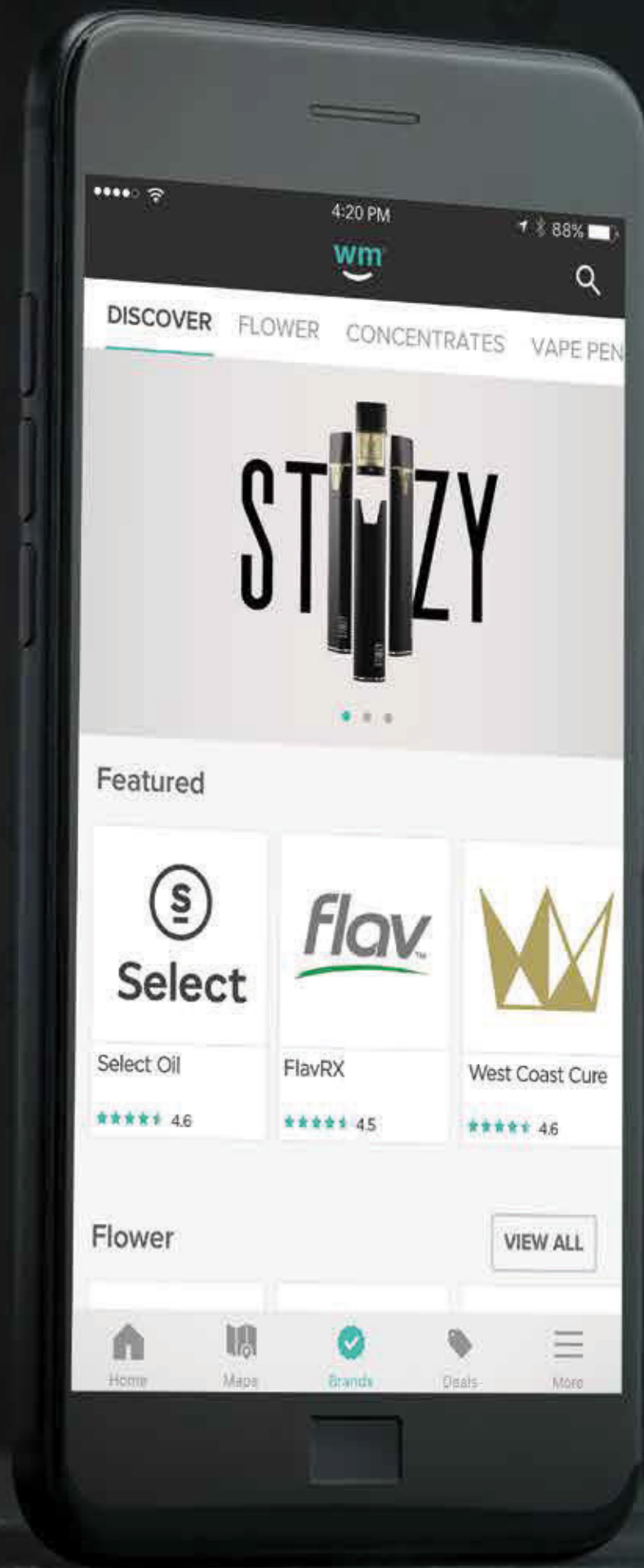
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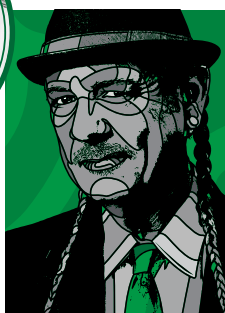


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This month's cover was created by **DAVID P. FLORES**, an artist, muralist, and product designer best known for his segmented style, which he calls "Stained Glass." [@DavidFloresArt](#)



David Flores



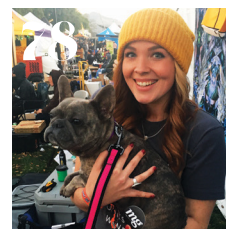
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STORM BEFORE THE CALM

THERE IS A FRENZIED DYNAMIC to the whole cannabis thing that isn't quite consistent with the plant's preferred alignment, which is holistic, calming, and clarifying in nature. Cannabis can get you stoned, but it also helps you focus. Steve DeAngelo recently spoke to this mystical gift when he told me the plant "enables an internal dialogue with an internal part of ourselves, and I think that part of ourselves is the part we most want to be. So, the reason the soul connection is so powerful is that cannabis helps us become the person we really want to be." I agree, and I believe most cannabis people feel the same, which may be why there is a sense of restlessness amid the frantic rush toward legalization, necessary as it may be.

The frenzy will not last. It will subside, and a simplified, efficient system of sweeping commercialization will settle in. Calmness will prevail with scaled-up commodification as the greased wheels of mass distribution quietly deliver our products to market. Time will tell how harmoniously that environment aligns with the plant's preferences, but its hardiness has been proven through the eons. It is the tenacity of our connection to the plant that will be tested, along with our determination to continue battling the stigma that, as DeAngelo put it, "still resides in these unspoken gaps in conversations, and in long, lingering judgmental looks, ridiculous regulations, and faceless sabotage by bureaucrats."

Tom Hymes
Tom@cannmg.com

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CORRECTIONS: In the December 2017 issue, our apologies for not publishing the photography credit for Top Shelf: Elevated in Seattle's photographer, Sean Airhart. Thank you for your contribution.

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AND LOLLIPOPS
OH AND MAYBE
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AFTER A HOT SUMMER, COLORADO'S CANNABIS SALES COOL DOWN



MEXICO TO LEGALIZE SOME
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V.A.: DOCS MAY DISCUSS CANNABIS WITH VETS



WASHINGTON, D.C.— A new policy rolled out in December at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs encourages doctors to discuss medical cannabis with patients but stops short of allowing physicians to make medical recommendations, even in states where weed is legal. The policy also makes clear the V.A. won't pay for veterans' medication acquired at civilian dispensaries.

The V.A.'s longstanding internal policy is not likely to change until marijuana is removed from the list of Schedule I controlled substances. V.A. Secretary David Shulkin has gone so far as to say the agency will not participate in cannabis research until federal law changes.

Advocates are pleased with the V.A.'s relaxed policy but think the agency should have gone further. "With veterans suffering from PTSD, chronic pain, and a variety of other ailments, cannabis cannot be left out of the discussion as a safe and effective treatment," said Steph Sherer, executive director of Americans for Safe Access. "We would like to see the V.A. continue to make steps forward that will improve access to and research in medical cannabis for veterans."

LONGTIME MEDICAL CANNABIS ACTIVIST DIES

SEATTLE— Pioneering Washington state medical cannabis activist JoAnna McKee has died at age 74 of unknown causes.

"McKee and her partner, Stich Miller, founded Seattle's first cannabis co-op, Green Cross Patient Co-Op, in 1993, five years before Washington approved medical marijuana," reported the Associated Press. "Rogers says she grew and

used marijuana to treat debilitating pain from a moped accident, and she wanted to donate excess cannabis to AIDS patients.

"McKee was instrumental in working to pass Washington's medical marijuana initiative and pushing lawmakers to support patients," added AP. "She often appeared in her wheelchair, sporting a colorful eye patch, to testify at the legislature."



DENVER POLICE RAID, SHUTTER SWEET LEAF SHOPS

Following a year-long investigation that turned up alleged instances of "looping," or selling people more than the legally allowed amount of cannabis, Denver police conducted coordinated raids at Sweet Leaf dispensaries December 14. Authorities closed eleven Denver-area shops and suspended twenty-six of the company's cultivation, processing, and retail licenses.



MARYLAND RUNS OUT OF LEGAL CANNABIS

ANNAPOLIS, Md.— Supplies of medical cannabis began running out mere days after Maryland's first dispensaries opened for business. Governor Martin O'Malley signed a bill legalizing cannabis in 2014, but the state did not approve the first licenses until July 2017. Two dispensaries opened December 1.

"It is quite expected," said William Askinazi, co-owner of Potomac Holistics in Rockville, one of the dispensaries to open on the day sales became legal. "The demand...in any new industry is not as consistent as one would like, and so the growers released limited product, and now a lot of folks, because of the high demand, ran out."

Allegany Medical, the other dispensary to open on the first day, sold ounces of flower—about a one-month supply—for \$680. The store's manager told *The Washington Post* he expected the per-ounce price to drop to \$560 by January.



AMERICANS WANT TO GROW THEIR OWN WEED AT HOME

HOME GROWN, USA— Results from a recent survey suggest both gardeners and non-gardeners increasingly are interested in growing cannabis at home whether or not home grows are legal in their state.

The nationwide survey, conducted online in January by Harris on behalf of Green State Gardener, revealed almost 39 million Americans, or 16 percent of all adults, would grow their own if the practice were legal. Millennials (18 to 34 years old) lead the list with 19 percent answering in the affirmative. The generation next most likely to grow at home: Baby Boomers.

The research suggests a trend is in the making, said Paul Cohen, president and research director of Cohen Grassroots Research. "A year or two of research doesn't establish a trend yet, but the jump in these numbers is significant," he noted.

Also revealed by the survey: Growing marijuana for personal use would increase the number of gardeners in the U.S. by 9 percent, to 152.1 million, and 41 percent of American adults think possession of small amounts of marijuana should be decriminalized.



The federal government's annual haul from IRS code 280E.

(Source: U.S. Congress Joint Committee on Taxation)



Growth in the North American cannabis market during 2017.

(Source: Arcview Market Research)



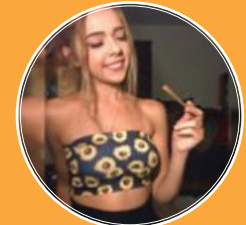
American adults who think medicinal marijuana use should be legalized.

(Source: Harris poll)

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FLOWER PRICES

Week ending Dec. 15, 2017

Indoor:

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per pound; median price \$1,600/lb.

Greenhouse:

\$700 to \$3,100

per pound; median price \$1,104/lb.

Outdoor: :

\$500 to \$2,000

per pound; median price \$900/lb.

(New Leaf Data Services)

HALF OF DISPENSARIES HAVE SEEN NEGATIVE SALES GROWTH SINCE 2016.

Urban markets:

59%

of dispensaries saw growth less than 0%

Rural markets:

54%

of dispensaries saw growth less than 0%

Suburban markets:

50%

of dispensaries saw growth less than 0%

(Source: BDS Analytics)

IN DECEMBER, California's composite price settled below \$1,400/lb. for the fifth consecutive week.

Colorado's

state Spot index fell below \$1,100/lb. in December, setting a historic low.

IN 2017, New Mexico's patient count expanded by 77% over 2016's census. The number of plants in production rose only 20% during the same period.

California

isn't the only state that will go recreational in 2018. Maine and Massachusetts will go rec by July.

(Source: New Leaf Data Services)

CANNAROYALTY TO ACQUIRE BHANG MANUFACTURER, DISTRIBUTOR

OTTAWA, Ontario — CannaRoyalty Corp. has entered a binding agreement to acquire Kaya Management, the exclusive manufacturer and license holder of rights for Bhang® brand vaporizer products in California. The company concurrently signed a binding term sheet to acquire Alta Supply, a distributor of Bhang vaporizer and Bhang chocolate products, as well as products for more than a dozen other well-known third-party cannabis companies throughout California. Richard Sellers, majority owner of Kaya and Alta, has agreed to join the CannaRoyalty executive team when the acquisition is complete.

CannaRoyalty intends to assume Alta's Oakland facility for distribution in the San Francisco Bay Area and move Kaya's Bhang® vape operations to the CR Brands facility in Santa Rosa, California.

CANNAROYALTY.COM



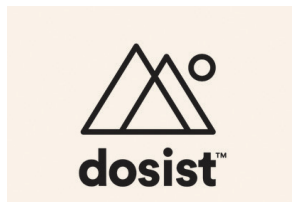
NUGGETS



1 REEF DISPENSARIES is one of the six most visited businesses in Las Vegas, according to ride-sharing service Lyft. REEFDISPENSARIES.COM



2 MIRTH HAS LAUNCHED LEGAL, a line of all-natural sparkling tonics in five flavors and a variety of potencies. MIRTHPROVISIONS.COM



3 HMBLDT HAS REBRANDED AS DOSIST. Logos and packaging will change, but products and formulas remain the same. DOSIST.COM



4 MARY'S MEDICINALS transdermal patches, gel pens, tinctures, distillates, and other products now are available to California retailers. MARYSMEDICINALS.COM

BLOOM FARMS INTRODUCES HIGHLIGHTER PLUS VAPOR PENS

SAN FRANCISCO— Medical cannabis company Bloom Farms has released Highlighter Plus. The cartridge design features a porous ceramic wick and a fully integrated, embedded-coil heating element, allowing patients who require the potent dose distillate offers to draw repeatedly without burning the cannabis oil. A new battery generates up to 10 watts and is built to emphasize consistent power over irregular heat. GETBLOOMFARMS.COM



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FEBRUARY EVENT SCHEDULE

The following is a list of select industry events taking place during February 2018.

NCIA: SEED TO SALE FEBRUARY 7-8

COLORADO CONVENTION CENTER, DENVER

3,000+ leading professionals convene to learn about the latest innovations behind the growing, extracting, infusing, marketing, and retailing of cannabis, in three educational tracks: Cultivation; Infused Products & Extracts; Business Strategies & Innovation.

SEEDTOSALESHOW.COM

CANNABIS WEDDING EXPO FEBRUARY 11

THE BENTLY RESERVE, SAN FRANCISCO

The expo lets couples engage with traditional wedding vendors and specialty cannabis brands to learn how to incorporate cannabis into their wedding day. From full-blown budbars to small nods to cannabis culture, attendees can connect with every vendor they need to make their day unique.

CANNABISWEDDINGEXPO.COM

CANNACON 2018 FEBRUARY 15-17

WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION CENTER,
SEATTLE

A three-day-long interactive gathering of like-minded cannabis professionals and peers. Learn about trends and developments in the industry and place your hands on the latest cannabis technology and consumer products.

CANNACON.ORG

THE HEMP & CANNABIS FAIR FEBRUARY 17-18

VENTURA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - SAN
NICOLAS HALL, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA

THC Fair brings everything related to hemp and cannabis under one roof. Take in sessions about growing, harvesting, medicinal uses, and legislation, and then check out the expo hall, where everything cannabis is in one place.

THCFAIR.COM

CHAMPS TRADE SHOW FEBRUARY 19-21

LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER

Inventors bring their newest and most advanced products to unveil here first, and artists bring their A-game to compete for awards. 800 booths, thirty-six torches for the CHAMPS Glass Games Masters Finals, and cash giveaways every hour.

CHAMPSTRADESHOWS.COM

CANNABIS MARKET STRATEGIES NEW ENGLAND FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 1

DOUBLETREE SUITES, BOSTON

An intimate meeting designed for executives and founders of dispensaries in the rapidly growing New England marketplace, this senior-level summit allows industry members to convene in one place to discuss their biggest challenges and devise strategies to overcome them.

CBINET.COM

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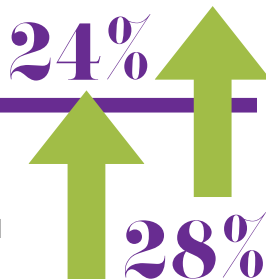
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THE CALIFORNIA REPORT

The state of the Golden State's dispensary and delivery sales is robust, with concentrates on the rise.

DID YOU KNOW?

IN MARCH, concentrates represented **24 percent** of California dispensary sales; by October, concentrates' share of sales had risen to **28 percent**.



CONCENTRATES

WITH **\$481 MILLION IN SALES**, concentrates compose the second-largest category in California and represent **26 percent** of revenues. Whereas flower's contribution is decreasing, concentrates are a high-growth category that continues to gain market share. In March, concentrates represented **24 percent** of sales; by October, concentrates' share of sales had risen to **28 percent**. Concentrate sales on average are growing **3 percent** per month. Vape sales, which constitute **63 percent** of the concentrate category, are growing at a rate of **5 percent** per month.

FAST FACT

On average, California's dispensaries and delivery services sold

29,000

pounds of loose flower each month.



ACCORDING TO BDS ANALYTICS, sales at dispensaries and delivery services across California reached **\$1.856 billion** in the eight months between March and October 2017, and they are on track to exceed **\$2.7 billion** for the year. In contrast, dispensary and delivery services in Colorado, the next largest market, generated **\$1.5 billion** in the past twelve months across medical and recreational markets combined.

In an average month, California dispensaries generate **90 percent** of the sales volume experienced in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington combined, even though the other states have been building recreational markets since 2014.

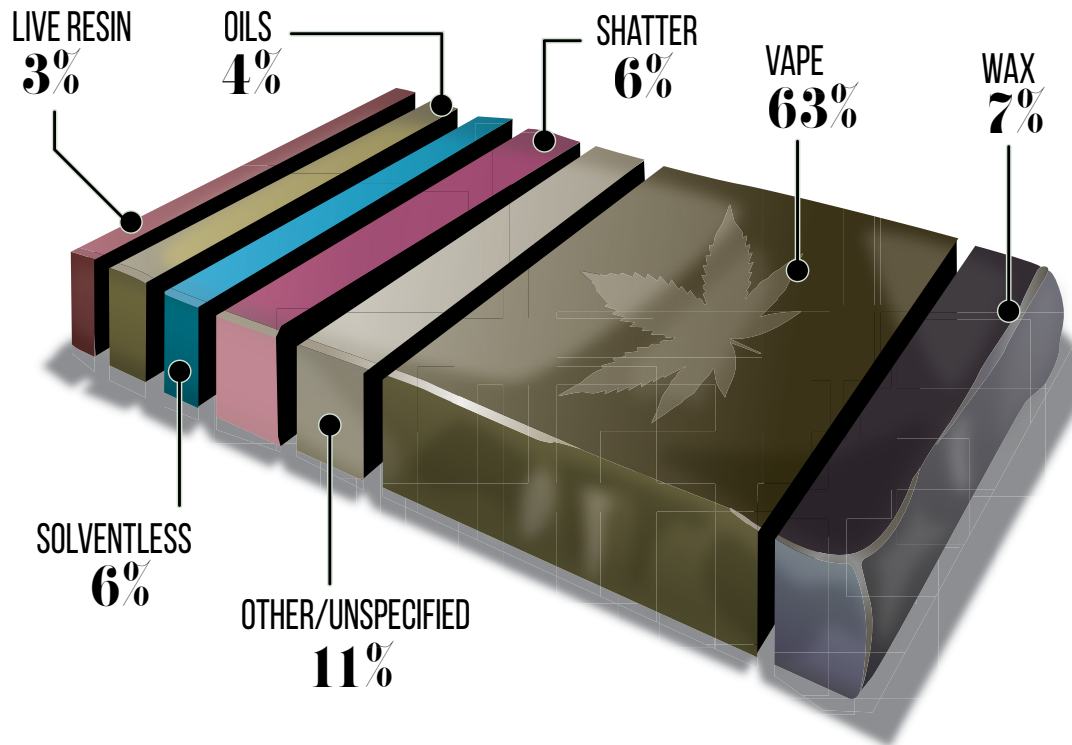
EDIBLES

IN EACH OF THE PAST EIGHT MONTHS, **12 percent** of sales have come from edibles. More than **240** unique brands are sold in California, and they generated **\$228.5 million** in sales in the eight months ending in October 2017. Whereas the concentrates category is dominated by a single subcategory (vapes), edibles have greater distribution across segments, including beverages, candy, chocolates, infused foods, pills, and tinctures. Similar to Colorado, Oregon, and Washington, candy is the largest subcategory within edibles thanks to the strength of gummies, but for now gummies do not hold as commanding a position in California as they do in other states.

FLOWER

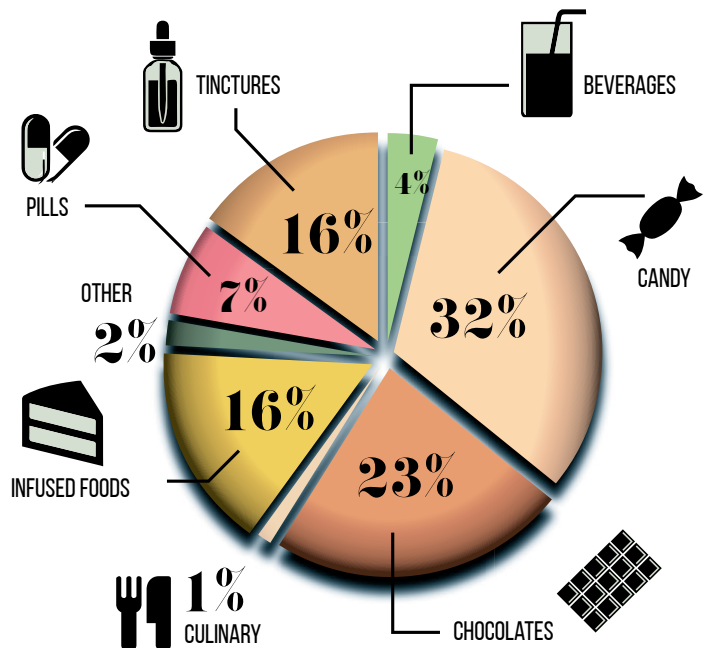
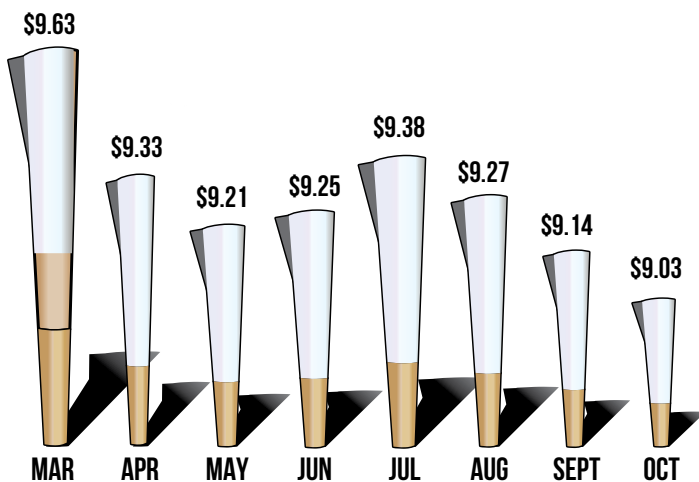
IN THE EIGHT MONTHS ENDING OCTOBER 2017, **53 percent** of cannabis revenues in California came from the sale of loose flower, not including pre-rolled joints, which contributed another **5 percent** of sales. On average, California's dispensaries and delivery services sold **29,000 pounds** of loose flower each month. In March and April, flower sales contributed as much as **55 percent** of sales, but by October that proportion had declined to **50 percent** as the growth in concentrates and edibles dominated. Flower prices declined from a high of **\$9.63 per gram** (pre-tax) in March to an average retail price of **\$9.03 per gram** (pre-tax). Despite the continued decline, flower prices remain higher in California than in Colorado, Oregon, or Washington.

CONCENTRATE SALES BY SUB-CATEGORY



EDIBLES SALES BY SUB-CATEGORY

AVERAGE PRICE PER GRAM



IN AUGUST 2017, BDS Analytics, a leading provider of market intelligence to the cannabis industry, became the first to report sales activity and market trends in California. BDS Analytics' retail sales reporting utilizes point-of-sale (POS) data from a representative and statistically significant sample of dispensaries throughout the state. Dispensary data is aggregated, cleansed, standardized at the product level, and projected up to represent all dispensaries and delivery services throughout California. Layered on top of the POS market tracking information, BDS Analytics' consumer insights provide an in-depth and trending understanding of the consumer and consumer-need states. BDSANALYTICS.COM



THE EXPERIENCE @ SEED & SMITH SHAKES UP THE DENVER MARKETPLACE

A craft-brewery-inspired tour gives dispensary visitors a look inside a seed-to-sale operation.

OUR COMPANY draws a lot of inspiration from the micro-brew movement of the mid-1990s,” said Truman Bradley, founder and chief executive officer for Seed & Smith. “That movement reshaped the way people look at beer. The microbreweries proved beers can be different, and with education, consumers will come to demand more variety and higher quality. We believe this is happening with cannabis and want to help carry the banner forward.”

Bradley is ecstatic about the launch of The Experience @ Seed & Smith, inspired by experiential tours at destinations like New Belgium Brewery, Celestial Seasonings, and Stranahan’s Colorado Whiskey. The company took over an old forklift manufacturing warehouse next to its retail shop and turned the space into a full-service grow, lab, and extraction facility that also offers an educational encounter for customers. “Whether you have never seen a cannabis grow and lab or whether you are an industry veteran, this is a place where you can come, bring your friends and family, and have fun learning about a wonderful plant that is gaining its rightful place in America,” said Bradley.

The Willie-Wonka-like tour reveals the entire lifecycle of the plant, from a bloom room full of seedlings to the lab where extraction occurs to trim rooms, packaging stations, and video screens flashing educational messages. There’s also a “Smelfie Station” where visitors can smell freshly extracted terpene blends. The tour ends at the retail shop, where visitors may buy what they’ve seen produced. The company plans to add a kitchen once it secures an edibles license.

Seed & Smith launched in 2014 as a response to what Bradley perceived as a surfeit of mass-produced, low-quality cannabis in Colorado. He felt if he could marry consistency and quality with a state-of-the-art retail shop, the business would be successful. Although he’s built a profitable and respected retail store, the idea of

showing customers “what we do and how we do it” was too much to pass up. He went on the prowl for investors, meeting with nearly thirty before he found one who understood the gravity of what he was trying to accomplish. “Unlike other cannabis facilities, here you can see the love and the craftsmanship that goes into making the products,” Bradley said.

In the two months since launch, the free tours have been a huge hit. Bradley said he has noticed a significant bump in sales, much of which he attributes to word of mouth. Tourists make up a significant portion of the operation’s customer base, as Seed & Smith is near the

not have been the best dancer on the floor at any given time, but I definitely was the most stubborn. That’s a good skill to have when you own your own business.”

When it came to design, Bradley and his cohorts did most of the heavy lifting. They gutted the old warehouse themselves “in order to build each room the way it should be built,” he said. The space literally is designed down to the square inch. For example, they put systems in place to provide the ideal climate for the cannabis plants to flourish. In Colorado, outside temperatures can range from the high 90s to zero degrees Fahrenheit, but cannabis plants enjoy 70

What I’ve Learned So Far

“I’VE HEARD IT SAID THAT owning your own business means you get to choose which eighty hours of the week you work,” Bradley said. “While I’d say the owners don’t work eighty hours, we definitely never feel we’ve accomplished everything we had hoped to do each day. Seed & Smith really touches all aspects of the plant from seed to sale, so there’s no shortage of things to do.

“The best part of my job is that every day is completely different,” he continued. “One moment I’ll be working on new packaging for an upcoming product, and the next I’ll be discussing a potential partnership with a license holder in another state. After that, I might be tackling [a human resources] issue or walking an inspector through our facility.

“There are obviously parts of my job that I like more than others, but for me the variety is what keeps it interesting,” he added. “In general, I try to get up early and then finish my day in time to either play a few games of volleyball or take my dog for a walk. If there are emails or other things I need to wrap up afterwards, then I can do those later that night.”



Denver airport. The company employs thirty-seven people across all departments—production, sales, logistics, extraction, tour, and retail—but plans to expand in 2018. “We are growing quickly and often promote from within,” noted Bradley.

From the beginning, Bradley put an emphasis on hiring budtenders who are not only knowledgeable and passionate, but also speak multiple languages. “Alongside our tour guides, Seed & Smith budtenders are the face of our company,” he pointed out. To create harmony among employees, Bradley follows a particular process: When new employees join the company, they introduce themselves to the team and tell one story about themselves that will help everyone get to know them. Bradley’s anecdote? In another life, he was a professional swing dancer. “The only individual competition I ever won was an endurance contest,” he said with a chuckle. “I may

degrees and sunny every day. Bradley reckons the facility keeps the plants happier and healthier.

“This isn’t like *Jurassic Park*, where you only see the [dinosaurs] that make it and the failures are on a different island,” he said. “We’re showing true production rooms. It takes a lot of guts to do that, and it takes a lot of money to design a facility that’s capable of producing this stuff, day in and day out, on a high-quality scale.”

When it comes to sales percentages, Seed & Smith is in line with most of the state’s dispensaries: 40 percent flower (Sunset Sherbert and Tango are favorites), 25 percent concentrates, 15 percent vapes, and the rest edibles and other items. However, Bradley noted, “One thing that makes us different is that because we have an extraction facility and a grow that harvests every five days on-site, we constantly have new products on the shelves.” —Rob Hill



Jesse Kloberdanz, president, and Viyda Schatz, co-founder of OG Spaces.

FROM FARM TO PHARMACY THE OG WAY

When it comes to turnkey industrial grow parks, OG Spaces Managing Director Viyda Schatz says look no farther than her company's compound outside Portland, Oregon.

FOR VIYDA SCHATZ, the day begins with an extra-large splash of coffee and a strong sativa. This gets her ready for a day full of meetings, phone calls, paperwork, coordinating with employees, and the occasional lunch. “I am involved in a couple of businesses and delegate time based on each of the roles I play,” Schatz, 28, said. “Management, support, or otherwise.” Whenever work gets overwhelming, Schatz reminds herself that in the startup world there are no days off: Daily lists are made, items crossed off, added to, and remade for the next day.

OG Spaces launched in 2016 as cannabis-friendly management for recreational production. Located in tiny Clackamas County, Oregon, a suburb of Portland, OG Spaces’s DNA is their community “why” idea: to provide tools to businesses instead of product to the marketplace while building communities that support communities. The thought behind the thought? When companies go about things right the first time, they are already ahead of those who chose to cut corners. “We built our model on surveys, steel, and engineered corners,” noted Schatz.

WHAT WAS YOUR PROFESSION BEFORE FOUNDING OG SPACES?

I was a teacher for a decade. In 2013, I took a sharp left turn into real estate. One day my father and I were discussing the underserved parts of the cannabis industry, and real estate services came up. I began to learn all the new and evolving regulations through the [Oregon Liquor Control Commission] and began going to industry events. Shortly after, I met my business partner, Jesse—on Craigslist!—and the rest is history. [Jesse Kloberdanz is president of OG Spaces.]

HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DO YOU HAVE?

The team consists of myself and the amazing team at Dewey Farms and Greenstone Solutions. Together, we cover everything from the ground up.

HOW DID DEWEY FARMS GET INVOLVED?

Dewey Farms and OG Spaces make up the founding partners—Dewey as landlord and OG as community management and support. Eventually, we aim to be able to provide jobs and food grows to areas

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Viyda up to her neck in cannabis.

where fresh, real food isn't available due to climate, funding, etc.

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HOW'S BUSINESS?

We have sold approximately 75 percent of our flagship production park outside Portland, and we are currently working with a few groups who plan to be at the industrial park for processing and wholesaling. We are also in the planning stages for a medium-scale hemp farm within the same county.

WHAT'S THE STATE OF FLOWER AND GROWS IN OREGON?

I predict flower sales always to maintain the lead here. They rise when new genetics come into market. Prices haven't really gone too crazy, as [they have in] other legal markets. My crystal ball thinks 2018 will come with tighter regulations on license renewals and additional steps to keep the product clean. That could mean additional testing regulations; more requirements inside facilities to keep elements out. Nobody knows except the regulatory agencies. But one thing is for sure: High-quality products will sell.

WHAT MAKES OG DIFFERENT FROM OTHER INDUSTRIAL GROW PARKS?

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TCDco which provides our tenants a legal and highly secure way to facilitate the harvest process and utilize the space set aside for drying, trimming, and packaging. Once finished, the product is available to browse either in person or online for licensed retailers and processors. The new shopping experience is not only great for our tenants who are building brands, but also for existing brands who understand the value in that extra flower canopy.

There are many upsides to going with OG. We have a great relationship with county agencies such as planning, engineering, fire and law enforcement because our approach from the beginning was honesty and safety first. We don't advertise our address anywhere. With regard to cleanliness, safety, and liability, we have standards within our lease that lay out what's expected to ensure everyone's space is respected.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIRECT BUILD AND PRE-BUILD?

With the direct model, the business owns the building, not the land; the land is leased from Dewey Farms for sixty months. In that sixty months, we provide a tenant improvement credit equal to the cost of their building shell. This brings rent down to about fifty cents per square foot per month. After sixty months, the lease transitions to a traditional three Ns with some predictable utilities, but the low price with low annual increases remains on the same schedule.

With the pre-build model, tenants lease a building from Dewey Farms. The tenant pays around \$2 per square foot per month for a completed, but still customizable, building.

HOW LONG DOES EACH PROJECT TAKE?

Our process from start to finish takes about nine weeks.

HOW FAR AWAY ARE YOU FROM BEING THE FIRST CANNABIS PARK TO OBTAIN A CARBON-NEUTRAL FOOTPRINT?

That's our goal between now and 2020. Eventually, we plan to be able to sell power back to the grid.

WHERE DO YOU SEE OG SPACES IN FIVE, TEN, FIFTEEN YEARS?

In five years we will be fully built out. In ten, we plan to get involved with whole-plant-medicine clinical trials. Fifteen years from now, I hope we have gone fully carbon-neutral at all facilities and companies within that are thriving. 🌿 —Rob Hill

📷 Photography by Simeon Schatz

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CALL OF DUTY

Amy Razi of Reseda Discount Caregivers on the saucy concentrates boom, the importance of shelf life, and how management training has made her a better budtender.

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, there has been a trend in patients asking for shatter,” said Amy Razi of RDC dispensary in Reseda, California. “But now many of our patients have been asking for concentrates in the consistency of ‘sugar’ or ‘sauce.’” Sales have been brisk for brands like Harvest Moon, Beezle, and CES Extracts. “They are literally flying off our shelves,” she said.

Razi has been around cannabis most of her adult life and knows the ins and outs of the plant. Working in retail has taught her how to keep up with the array of new products. She’s found following leaflink.com, Instagram, and a few cannabis publications lets her know what’s going on. She also encourages vendors to stop in and drop off samples along with a price sheet.

She’s also developed an eye for effective packaging and the importance of shelf life. “We want to know how long a product is good for on our shelves,” she said. “And packaging always distinguishes a winner from a loser.” Razi has been budtending for just over a

year and has learned some invaluable lessons, which she credits to RDC’s training program. The shop sees a whopping 300 to 450 customers a day, and that puts a lot of pressure on the budtenders. But Razi doesn’t get frazzled. The company’s management course taught her to spend as much time as necessary with each pa-

tient before moving on. The majority of her patients are first-timers with afflictions like cancer, epilepsy, depression, diabetes, and arthritis. Being able to focus on their questions is key to getting them the right products. “You want to listen to your patient the second they walk in the door,” she said.

Training also taught Razi how to greet patients effectively: with a wide smile and an amiable, “Hey, how’s it going? How can I help you today?” Then she

moves into active listener mode, trying to pinpoint each patient’s problems and direct them to the right products.

“Most times this approach works best for me,” she said. 

“You want to listen to your patient the second they walk in the door.”

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HOW TO SELL WEED AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

Cannabis Trainers teaches time-honored sales techniques and best practices to a new industry.

RULES AND GUIDELINES can be boring as dry toast, especially when you're accustomed to blazing your own trail as so many cannabis entrepreneurs have done. But with marijuana legalization rapidly expanding, there has never been a better time to become familiar with best practices, policies and standards, and rules and regulations.

So, where can trailblazers go to learn how to take the regulatory reins and better serve their customers? At Cannabis Trainers, the Sell-SMaRT Responsible Vendor Program covers the basics and not-so-basics, custom-tailored for the cannabis sales experience.

"About 50 to 60 percent of the core Sell-SMaRT Program is, I would say, appropriate in any state," Cannabis Trainers founder Maureen McNamara said. "Every state will have nuances and differences, because checking IDs in any state is a similar process but which IDs are acceptable will vary state by state.

"So, as we've customized this program for several states already, we're seeing the typical areas where customization is required," she continued. "Our program is so fluid [that] when a regulation changes, we can update our program within a day, so we always have the freshest data to share with our participants.

"It's our signature class, and we're really proud. It's designed to inspire people to embrace and play by the rules," said McNamara. "The time to embrace regulations is upon us, and the more people understand the nuances of the new rules, it will help this new frontier of regulation really roll out more smoothly."

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MEDICATE RESPONSIBLY



Best practices are not just about being compliant. McNamara is a compliance nerd and stickler for standards, as well as a disciple of Dale Carnegie, the public speaking icon who, in the 1930s, set the bar for professionalism, corporate training, and interpersonal skills. Excellence in customer service, said McNamara, ultimately empowers employees to feel confident and successful, and Carnegie's techniques still work today.

"Many participants have said that's their favorite part—learning to have a new capacity to be able to say things more professionally and with that standard of excellence," she said. "Far from the classic dry compliance class, it's really steeped in service excellence in every aspect that we touch, interacting with patients powerfully."

Since establishing the company in Colorado in 2014, McNamara and her training team have branched out to teach courses in Illinois, Nevada, and California. The team also works with cannabis companies in Washington state and Ohio, where Cannabis Trainers was brought in to create customized compliance and customer service training. In January, Cannabis Trainers's program will launch in Maryland.

Early in December, McNamara presented her ServSafe - Food Safety Certification program for the first time in Oakland, California, to cannabis edibles manufacturers. McNamara said the training was well-attended and enthusiastically received, and participants immediately were able to apply what they learned in class to after-class discussions.

"It's very interactive, and we are pulling on the wisdom of our participants often throughout the program. The five hours really fly by, because it's very interactive and engaging," she said. "We took a food safety class that I've been training for about twenty years, and we customized the conversation for the needs of the manufacturers. The producers we had in our class were really thrilled with the information. They took a ton of notes considering the changes they wanted to make to their operating procedures, to make sure their focus on food safety was prominent."

The edibles sector is widely regarded as unregulated with respect to labeling, dosage levels, and other important guidelines, but McNamara has enough health department and food industry experience to know that's all about to change.

"In California, the Department of Health certainly has a lot of rules around [food products]," she said. "The class we teach is based on the [Food and Drug Administration] food code. The [FDA] is not currently involved in the creation of infused products or cannabis edibles, but that wisdom of food safety is

so valuable universally.

"[The class is] really great information for the basics of food safety and for the cannabis industry and for the California Department of Public Health specifics around edibles, like how to assemble and package them," she explained. "For instance, we can't have things with additional caffeine or alcohol. So, bringing in some of the rules around what can be produced, in addition to the classic food safety, is what our food program is about."

In every industry, policies and standards are implemented to protect consumers. But they also protect business owners from penalties, fines, and prosecution by regulatory agencies. Like the Boy Scouts, business owners want to "be prepared."

"It's great to have policies, procedures and a facility that, you know, when a health inspector comes through a manufacturing facility, that they're pleased with what they see," McNamara said. "I hate to see a manufacturing facility get a critical violation for something really basic that could have been handled with some food safety wisdom."

Cannabis Trainers also offers consulting and custom-designed courses for employee and executive training.

McNamara expects to see "compliance director" become an increasingly crucial role at cannabis companies as the industry becomes more and more mainstream. Right now, the bulk of her clients are interested in improving their skill sets to gain entry to the industry.

"We absolutely see job seekers that want to have more insight and information as they look for jobs," she said. "We definitely have business owners, managers, and compliance directors, but the primary, most prevalent participant is the worker: the person selling cannabis in licensed dispensaries or, for states that permit it, delivery. With cannabis projected to continue its boom in 2018, McNamara will be putting the Sell-SMaRT Responsible Vendor Program and the ServSafe® - Food Safety Certification program online for students in far-flung locations where Cannabis Trainers can't be in person.

"One of our primary focuses for 2018 is the expansion of the Sell-SMaRT course into other states and to really flourish the course in California," she said. "Additionally, we'll be looking at creating compliance courses specifically for manufacturers, in addition to food safety and in addition to cultivators. Also, looking at the regulations and helping people to feel inspired to embrace those, as well."



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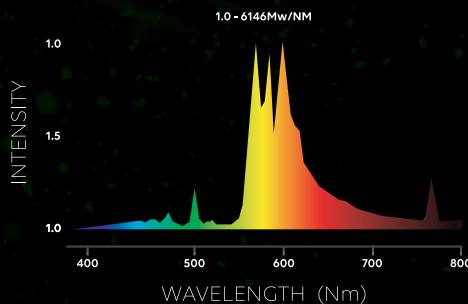
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SPEEDING FORWARD

A small loophole in the law and a roster of patient-centric drivers fueled ganjarunner's success.

SHORTLY AFTER CARLA BAUMGARTNER founded *ganjarunner* in 2015, she received a note from one of her first customers.

"The past year has been extremely difficult for me", the note read. "My chronic sciatic pain, post-cancer surgery, sleeplessness, depression, and the mass amount of opioids prescribed made life extremely challenging for me; then came *ganjarunner*....I wanted to take the time to express my gratitude and provide any support your organization may need. Cannabis has been a game-changer for me and has allowed me to live a much improved life. I am 73 and still have so much more to do."

The letter convinced Baumgartner *ganjarunner* was worth the business risks.


Baumgartner was introduced to cannabis as a young teenager, after she was diagnosed with anxiety and prescribed Xanax and Zoloft. She declined the drugs, instead turning to cannabis. A self-described micro-doser, she credits the plant with allowing her to have a successful career in real estate.

"I continued my cannabis research and education throughout," she said. "Everything from cultivating and working with indoor and outdoor growers, knowing one day I would make cannabis my next endeavor."

Much like the rest of the industry, the cannabis delivery business is fraught with problems, risks, and uncertainty. In the beginning, Baumgartner operated incognito. But she found a loophole in the law: The 1996 Compassionate Use Act, which allows *ganjarunner* to deliver to members of its virtual collective. Members may sign up at *ganjarunner.com* and must provide a current medical marijuana recommendation. "Our closed-loop method and other procedures have kept us safe thus far," she said. "However, new regulations and excessive fines are a new risk as we continue to work very hard obtaining all proper licensing through this transitional period."

ganjarunner employs twelve drivers who crisscross Los Angeles County from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, delivering most orders within sixty to ninety minutes. The company also offers next-business-day shipping to patients statewide. The drivers, many of whom are hired through word of mouth, comprise patient advocates, regional collective managers, and quality-control agents. "We have been fortunate to find employees who put service above all else," Baumgartner said.

Last year, *ganjarunner* averaged more than 1,200 deliveries a month. The average price per delivery, \$100, was higher than the average dispensary sale, but Baumgartner doesn't know how a new 15-percent excise tax, local taxes, sales tax, and additional fees that will be assessed beginning January 1 may affect 2018 figures. The company also bucks the dispensary trend when it comes to demographics and gender. Women compose 62 percent of *ganjarunner's* clients; men compose 38 percent. The majority of clients are middle-aged working professionals and the elderly. "Many older customers are recommended by their children to give cannabis a try," Baumgartner said.

How will *ganjarunner* stay in the fast lane with the recreational market and new laws to navigate in 2018? "Some areas of our business will change, since new ordinances have restricted how, when, and where cannabis can be delivered," she said. "We are in the process of developing solutions with new procedures and forming alliances."  — Rob Hill

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STEVE DEANGELO DIGS IN

The indefatigable activist/entrepreneur is determined to make Harborside Health Center as influential in the industry's next phase of growth as it has been in the run-up to legalization.

BY TOM HYMES

I'M ABOUT FIVE MINUTES LATE TO MY INTERVIEW WITH HARBORSIDE HEALTH CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEVE DEANGELO, WHO'S BEEN HOLED UP IN HIS SUITE AT THE ENCORE AT WYNN CONDUCTING NONSTOP MEETINGS WHILE THE MJBIZ VEGAS SHOW IS IN FULL SWING. I'D NEVER CONVERSED AT LENGTH WITH DEANGELO, A LEGENDARY CANNABIS ACTIVIST AND ENTREPRENEUR, BUT I'D HEARD HIM SPEAK MANY TIMES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS AND I'D REVIEWED HIS 2015 BOOK, *THE CANNABIS MANIFESTO: A NEW PARADIGM FOR WELLNESS*.

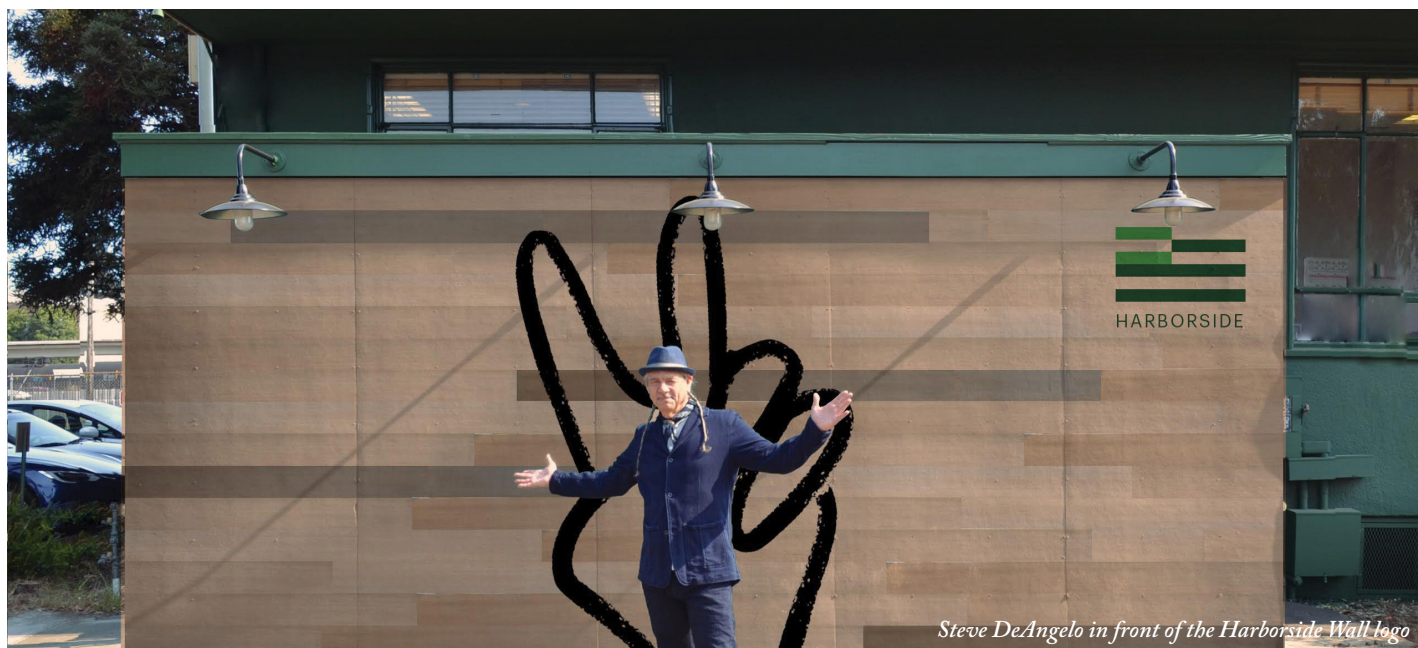
I knew the man was outspoken and ready to take on all comers, including those within the industry with whom he has profound disagreements. That dynamic is currently in play in the form of an ongoing public debate with California Growers Association Executive Director Hezekiah Allen over California's removal of grow size restrictions. DeAngelo supports and Allen opposes the controversial move the Department of Food and Agriculture had not yet announced when DeAngelo and I sat down in Vegas. Not surprisingly, however, the issues underlying his positions on grow sizes and other related subjects were very much on both our minds that day and formed the basis of our discussion.

DeAngelo is tall, handsome, and gracious, with a rich, sonorous voice and consummate command of his thoughts. A skilled public speaker, he is an engaging interview subject and a very good listener, making it a pleasure to converse with him. Despite having no agenda for our interview, the discussion quickly turned to the seminal question of the moment: What is going to happen after January 1, 2018, to the many cannabis businesses currently in the food chain, and especially to the traditional Emerald Triangle farmer? DeAngelo was eager to address the subject.

"We are looking in 2018 and 2019 at an extinction

event for 75 percent of the existing cannabis industry in California," he said, letting the number sink in. "Manufacturers and extractors are going to be hit first, and they're going to be hit the hardest. The basic reason for that is because, currently, there is not a fully regulated supply chain. Manufacturers and extractors universally source from the black, unregulated market, buying the trim and the smalls that are cut off 90 percent of the cannabis flowers that are shipped out of state. That entire source of supply is cut off when you go to a regulated supply chain. When extractors and manufacturers can only purchase from a licensed cultivator, their available pool of raw material is going to shrink by a factor of nine. They will have one-ninth of material to work with as they do today."

It gets worse. "Add to that the fact that many people who will be licensed cultivators will have a really hard time producing cannabis that meets the pesticide requirements of the state, which cuts the supply down a bit more," said DeAngelo. "Then we have to anticipate the same thing will happen in California that happened in Oregon, where there was insufficient lab capacity to test all of the tests that are required, which will be very substantial. In Oregon, some companies had to wait two or three months to get their product tested. For a small company that doesn't have the margins, that can



Steve DeAngelo in front of the Harborside Wall logo

be the difference between survival and going out of business.”

We’ve seen this movie before, said DeAngelo. “What happened in Oregon was that in the first month of adult use, sales shot up. But in the second, third, fourth months, sales trailed off—not because of a lack of demand, but because of a lack of supply in the legal system. And this will happen here in California, first to the manufacturers and extractors, but then there is going to be this chain effect. Dispensaries are going to be impacted, because they are not going to have the same range of products available at the same prices. So, prices are going to go up, and the amount of selection is going to go down. That’s not good for retailers. Add to that the tax burden that we’re going to have, and a lot of consumers are going to be driven out of the legal market entirely, and they’re going to go back underground.”

CALIFORNIA VERSUS THE WORLD

For DeAngelo, the answer is in immediate engagement with the market at a scale that addresses the demands of the market. “You talk to any cannabis consumer in a legal market and ask them what is the biggest problem they have with cannabis, and they will tell you price,” he said. “Here is the flip-side of creating regulations that do not allow for the development of large-scale cannabis agriculture, and Hezekiah and I fought over this, too.”

He uses the heirloom tomato example. “We have heirloom tomatoes and then we have tomatoes that are less expensive and not quite as juicy. What if someone tried to legislate that the only kind of tomatoes that could be sold were heirloom at \$6.99 a pound? People would be up in arms. Same thing with cannabis. If you do not allow large-scale cannabis agriculture, the only cannabis on the market will be artisan cannabis, which is great if you can afford to pay for a master gardener growing in a small plot in organic soil, hand-trimmed buds, and curing for two months.

“Here is where I think we should go optimally,” he added. “It

should not be a question of small growers versus large growers. It should be California growers versus the growers from other states. This is our heritage, and it is ours to claim. We made the cannabis thing happen in this country, sacrificed for it, and we have the ideal micro-climates necessary for growing cannabis, the best genetics, the best talent, existing big [agricultural] infrastructure, and a good political climate. There is no reason that California should not do with cannabis what it’s done with every other fruit and vegetable, which is claim half the national market when we have interstate commerce.

“Let’s play this out a little bit further,” he continued. “When we have an interstate market and cannabis can be freely traded throughout the states, it will be distributed by companies with a national footprint. These companies will never be interested in 300 pounds of weed, which will then not make it into the national market. And if all we have is small, artisan growers, then we will not access the national market.”

I note that many NorCal growers are actively organizing themselves in a variety of collective models designed specifically to scale up while branding the individual farms. “They have to do that,” he countered, “but there is a limit when you’re talking about a national footprint and building national brands, and the limit to the consistency and volume you can get from those sorts of cooperative arrangements.”

He continued, “So, you have business arrangements between small growers and large growers that allow this amazing artisan talent that we have in California to be scaled up to the point where we can take it out into the national marketplace and win with it. That’s how we should be thinking about this, because here’s how California growers really get hurt. Ninety percent of the growers today will not get into the legal system. We know that. They are dependent upon that national market. If we lose that national market to other companies that have the scale and ability to serve it in other states, we will not get it back.”



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Photography by Michael Snyder for Harborside

PEOPLE OF THE NORTH

The prospect of losing 90 percent of anything good is difficult to comprehend, but in this case, it is potentially catastrophic. “This is a place where I have some conflicting and mixed emotions,” DeAngelo said. “This is the culture I come out of. My entire life, I’ve been going up into those hills and pulling cannabis out of them, and I’ve been taking dollars to those communities. I know four generations of families in those hills. Collectively, they are among the people most responsible for bringing us to where we are today with the public acceptance of cannabis, and it was not easy. The people of the northern Emerald Triangle have made the most painful sacrifices people can make. They have been arrested, put on trial, had their houses, bank accounts, and children seized, had their loved ones locked up in cages, and in some cases, they have been killed.”

What is lost if they go away, I asked. “There is the loss of genetics, history, culture, growing techniques,” said DeAngelo. “There is a lot of loss, which is why I have urged my friends in the Emerald Triangle to get legal, because what they have is super valuable. But folks are challenged because a lot of them did not go to the Emerald Triangle to have a huge career and dominate mainstream society. They didn’t really like mainstream society. Now the idea of having to re-engage with society and have a lot of restrictions put on the way they grow cannabis and do things is anathema to the kind of lifestyle people were seeking.

“I get it,” he added, “but times change, and things move on. We, the cannabis culture, the counterculture, have had a profound influence on mainstream culture. I have seen it happen during my lifetime. We have moved it. Anyone who wants to go back to the land, God bless you, but our culture has gotten strong enough so that we can do what I think our hippie ancestors wanted to do in the beginning, which is change the world. We don’t do that by staying on our farms, but by taking our culture, embracing our beliefs and

perspective, and bringing it to the world. And that’s what we have now. We’ve been shackled by prohibition and couldn’t tell our stories because we would have been, and were, taken to prison.

“But now we can,” he continued. “So, my hope and plea are that the people who made the Emerald Triangle what it is today have enough confidence in the strength of that culture to go through the hassle it is going to take to become legal. We have a world to save. This plant needs to get into people’s hands. We need to do it.”

Besides, he added, “Anyone who wants to be in the cannabis space ten years from now needs to get legal today. That’s not the outcome I want. I just think it’s the reality.”

HARBORSIDE FARMS

I asked DeAngelo about Harborside Farms—the forty-seven-acre cultivation site in Salinas that contains 360,000 square feet of greenhouse, with about 150,000 square feet currently developed—and whether his intent is for it to serve in that role as a scalable intermediary delivering NorCal cannabis to the world. He nodded. “We have always served the growers of the Emerald Triangle and we have always given them a market, and we intend to continue doing that,” he said. “Our mission will be to help artisan growers scale, and that serves our needs and their needs as well. I can’t tell you the groups I’m working with, because I’m still in negotiations with them, but we’re talking to several organizations in the Emerald Triangle that represent networks of growers. And the basic business deal that we are negotiating with them is that those growers, once they come up with a technique or a genetic that has real market value, can then bring that genetic or technique to us, and we will deploy it at larger scale at our Salinas cultivation facility, and they will get a defined share of that revenue.

“One of the great things about us growing at scale is that we are able to put in the kinds of systems—for security, monitoring, storage, and tracking—that will give growers a higher level of confidence in



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our ability to safeguard whatever it is of value that they have given to us to develop for them,” he added.

Will Harborside’s mission stay the same? “The mission changes constantly, as we make progress, as we push this thing forward,” he replied. “For example, we’ve always been very dedicated to legal reform. Now I’ve begun talking to people about how, in places like California, we’ve dealt with that part of the problem, but there’s still this horrible, horrible stigma that clings to cannabis. And that stigma is not as clean or as clear as the law to deal with. It resides in these unspoken gaps in conversations and long, lingering judgmental looks and ridiculous regulations and faceless sabotage by bureaucrats, documents that get lost, all that kind of shit. The stigmatization of cannabis predates its prohibition, and it will postdate its legalization. It will continue to harm us and punish us for as long as it is around.

“So, how do we get rid of stigma now that we’ve gotten rid of the law?” he continued. “What did the gay community do? Once the laws started dialing down, that’s when the movement to come out of the closet happened. We know that the best way to win someone over to the cause of cannabis reform is if they know someone personally that they trust, or preferably that they love, who has benefitted from the use of cannabis

“If every high-functioning, responsible, widely respected cannabis consumer came out of the closet tomorrow,” he added, “this thing would be done. It would be finished. It’s time for us to find our courage, claim our dignity, and come out of the fucking closet.

The goal is to build a respected place for this plant in every society, not just ours. We’ve got a long way to go. After we dismantle the stigma, we’re going to have to start building the kind of honor and appreciation this plant really deserves.”

The godfather of cannabis is just getting started. “My ambition is that Harborside be as influential in the cannabis industry in its next phase of growth as we have been in bringing it to the day it is now,” he said. “I think we have a unique perspective, and I think we have things to teach the world about cannabis.”

POSTSCRIPT

As we went to print, the debate continued between DeAngelo and Allen in the form of dueling editorials published on Leafly.com in late December. The latest drama represents a public outbreak of longstanding disagreements on issues that speak to the central concern about how California will manage the end of cannabis prohibition and the creation of a legal market without doing irreparable harm to the NorCal cultivation community and culture. But let’s not sugarcoat the situation. These are not minor disagreements, but fundamental breaks in strategy complete with accusations of malfeasance that question the other’s commitment to the small- to mid-sized grower. Conversely, each claims to be acting in the best interest of the future of the small farmer. Sadly, it feels like a battle for the soul of the NorCal cultivator, but at least it’s being framed in the language of the legal market, which is precisely where the industry needs to be. 🌿

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WISE

Beyond Her Years

Green Wise Consulting's Pamela Epstein has built her business and reputation on providing solutions to the biggest challenges facing the industry.

BY TOM HYMES

PAMELA EPSTEIN is omnipresent in the best way possible, and not just because the knowledgeable, energetic, engaging, and attractive cannabis lawyer and consultant is a frequent speaker on the trade show circuit. In addition to all that, she simply comes up a lot in random conversations among industry peeps. This was driven home again during a recent chat when her name was mentioned and my colleague exclaimed, "I keep hearing people talk about Pam Epstein!" I laughed. Why not? This is cannabis. The cream is supposed to rise to the top.

But Epstein is well-known also because, with a centeredness that seems to belie her youth, she is a mover and a shaker, a passionate and motivated straight-shooter who shies away from the "e" label when asked if she thinks of herself as an entrepreneur. "I don't think I would call myself entrepreneurial, but I think others, when they see how the business has evolved, would say that's entrepreneurial," she said with precise modesty. The business is Green Wise Consulting, the expanding full-service firm Epstein founded a few years ago as she was transitioning from a career in environmental and land-use law into the nascent cannabis industry. Like so many who have settled here, her pathway into the business was personal in origin.

"I had severely debilitating migraines that would send me to the hospital two to three times a month," said Epstein in early December. "I would bring my laptop [to the hospital] to try to work to meet my billable hours, but it was a very self-defeating situation. I was sick all the time. But I also was fortunate to be living not in Tennessee, or in New York even, but in San Francisco." Her neurologist happened to

be studying the endocannabinoid system, and after asking Epstein a series of probing questions about her medical history, suggested she try cannabis as a solution.

She visited Sparc and had a wonderful experience with a budtender who listened to her story and suggested some options as she figured out what worked for her. She began a regime of tinctures, and the migraines went away. "Cannabis saved my way of life as I knew it by allowing me to be an active participant in work," she said. It also changed the sort of work she wanted to do. "I left the firm I was at and went to Arizona," she said.

Arizona was just getting its cannabis program underway and didn't offer many options for patients. "This was around 2014, and I could not get what I needed," explained Epstein. "But if I did procure the tincture I needed across state lines, I would be a criminal, and I was an officer of the court. I thought, 'If I can't advocate for myself, and advocacy is what I went to law school for, who do you advocate for in life?' I started to do advocacy work in Arizona."

In 2015, Epstein returned to California and settled in Los Angeles, where she quickly realized her land-use degree would be very helpful in establishing credentials in the cannabis industry. "I understood the issue from a different lens than you do with an affirmative defense," she said. "It is very different to approach a city and ask them to participate in a land-use environmental conversation than it is to ask them to allow an affirmative defense solution."

Now she was consulting for clients in two states and decided it was time to make things official. "I started Green Wise Consulting in 2015, when I was in between Arizona and [Los Angeles]. My project manager and best friend let me set up in her apartment, so I had an apartment in Arizona and her place here." Business started to blossom when cannabis applications began in earnest. "I had a bunch of cities I was working with, and I had my clients. I was trying



MOST PEOPLE
WOULD BE
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READY,

to get everyone on board. It just grew from there.”

Epstein also became affiliated with the Hoban Law Group, which became an integral partner in her journey. “Green Wise is my future, though, and so my time with Hoban is naturally coming to an end. Green Wise is now a business with employees and divisions, a labor of love, and I would not have gotten there without the help and strategic support of a lot of people.”

One reason Green Wise is such a labor of love must be because it so closely mirrors Epstein’s priorities. “Green Wise specializes in a solutions-driven approach,” she explained. “We’re always driving a solution. We provide a Cheesecake Factory-like menu of solutions to cities along with a new ordinance, and we tell them, ‘We’re going to take the guesswork out of this. Here is a MAUCRSA-compliant ordinance that deals with testing, packaging, and labeling, everything. Now, what are your concerns? If you are going to dip your toe into cannabis, how would you want to do that? We have people who want to come in and talk to you about it, and residents who need a service.’ It’s a service-driven ask, which is much different than going into a city during public open comment period and saying, ‘I want to discuss something.’”

Epstein also is proud of her 99-percent success rate in getting clients’ applications submitted and deemed complete—a significant accomplishment considering the complexity and variability of the application requirements imposed by the 482 cities in California, each of which must carve out its own rules. And the work never ends. When we spoke in early December, Epstein was up to her eyeballs getting clients’ permit applications submitted on time as the cities’ differing deadlines loomed with sadistic urgency. The challenge was manifested in the fact most municipalities simply did not have their act together, including massive and essential markets like Los Angeles, whose final regulations would not be issued until the week after we spoke.

In the face of such uncertainty and chaos, what sort of companies could be interested in entering the space? “Big publicly traded companies want to come into the space, and then you’ve got the mom-and-pops spending their entire livelihood,” said Epstein. The opportunities, she added, were “across the board.”

THE “FIRST-TO-MARKET” CURSE?

The impending regulated market in California could hold unforeseen problems for companies with established brands, explained Epstein. Like many others, she sees choppy waters ahead for brands that, for one reason or another, are ill prepared. “Most people would be surprised that some of the brands they identify as critical parts of their cannabis rhetoric, that

they go to and trust, are not ready,” she said.

For some of these companies, the realities of regulation are only now starting to sink in, along with the commensurate panic. “It’s the cost of compliance being so high, and the failure of a lot of these business that capitalized on being first to market in California and built market share without building the infrastructure needed to compete in a highly regulated market,” she explained. “That is then associated with significant growing pains, because they have to get to market to service the market share they have, which makes them desirable acquisition targets.”

To what does she attribute such shortsightedness? “I attribute it, to some degree, to being too big for your britches and thinking you can’t fail,” she said. “I think people miscalculated how difficult it would be at the city level. Oakland wanted to make sure they would be online, and they’re not online. People there are in process, and they’re like, what do we do?”

DISTRIBUTION AS SAVIOR

A natural solver of problems, Epstein talks a lot about distribution, and for good reason. It is the lifeblood of any industry with products that need to get to market and will play an essential role as the cannabis industry transitions from black and gray to white. Epstein insists people need to understand the difference between working with a true distributor, as she calls them, and deciding to self-distribute.

“A distributor does your fulfillment for raw materials, clears your product for [quality assurance] and [quality control], and then works with retailers to get your product on a shelf they have access to because they have a myriad of brands,” explained Epstein. “That’s a true distributor and a distinction between a lot of the approach that distribution has done until now.” California will allow operators to self-distribute, however, and a lot of brands appear to be looking at that option, if only because distribution is also the forgotten license.

“Distribution has been a neglected license type because cities have been dealing with storefront dispensaries, cultivation, and manufacturing,” said Epstein, who also worked at one point for Hollister as a special city attorney ushering through that city’s cannabis ordinance. “A distributor hasn’t been as central until now, and because there have not been many options, that’s where the road to self-distribution came about, because we didn’t have these conversations and cities didn’t understand the role of the supply chain.”

The situation will lead to unintended consequences, warned Epstein. “The transition period places a high



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That's just one potential drawback to self-distribution. The relationship with testing labs, another potential source of crippling bottleneck, also comes into play. "The distributor needs to contract with the testing labs, so think about it this way: A testing lab wants to contract with distributors with multiple brands versus self-distributors," said Epstein. "If you are a self-distributor and there are contracts with large distributors with multiple brands, you're always going to be second in line. So, is that 20 percent you have to pay to a distributor a good or bad thing when they have more shelf space in shops and clout with the labs? These are the things operators don't think about when they say they used to do it all themselves under the old collective model."

WHEELS TURNING

When you talk with Epstein, you literally can see the wheels turning in her brain as she works to resolve the unique challenges that confront her and her clients every single day. The stakes could not be higher, and the 80/20 rule is operative. "Eighty percent of the businesses around today won't make it, and only 20 percent of the businesses operating today that want to become licensed will get to the other side.

"It's like a cannabis *Thunderdome*," she continued. "California's experience will be more aggressive than other states, because everyone is not starting from the same playing field. Some people have more to lose than in other jurisdictions, and there are also so many protocols to plan for that they can't all get there unless they figure out how to work together."

One solution? "The shared manufacturing license, the Type S license, is going to be a gift to a lot of manufacturing companies because the cost of compliance is so high," she added. "It was very smart of the [Drug Policy Alliance] to look at Wonder Bread and the food industry and say, 'This is how food products are made.'"

The comparison is apt. "Before Wonder Bread was large enough to run their facilities 24/7, most bakeries and food providers in that space would share processing


facilities, so they could take the same equipment to make multiple brands while having protocols in place to ensure safety," explained Epstein. "It makes sense in this industry, because no one has the market share to run large processing facilities all day long."

That's just one solution to the challenges facing cultivators, retailers, and manufacturers in the cannabis space, but Epstein will be busy building a team looking for new solutions. "We'll have three divisions going forward," she explained. "A full law firm, Green Wise Legal, which has a corporate formation specialist, an [intellectual property] specialist, real estate attorneys, and myself and Damian Martin. I'm also bringing someone on from Northern California.

"Then there's the consulting/application firm, which does community engagement, and then we have a business development firm, which cultivates opportunities and sometimes capitalizes on those opportunities with operators, but is completely separate from the law firm, which can have a right of first refusal to work with any of those deals, or they can say 'we're too close.'"

Epstein is open to engaging in development, as well, which is why the law firm is segregated. When asked if there is a type of cannabis business that appeals to her, she was quick to reply.

"I would love to have a showcase dispensary of what is a compliant operation," she said. "I would love to be able to say that this is something Green Wise invested in because we did it right, and this is what it looks like when you do it right. To have some sort of proof of concept between saying to my operators why we invest so much in an employee handbook, why we vet so closely and play by the book. If you have a gold standard to show, sometimes it's easier to get clients to walk a difficult pathway of compliance. To that degree it would be fun, and it would be fun to curate a cultivation that has my dog's name. To have my brand on something."

That's the appeal and the reason why people like to talk about Pamela Epstein. Her heart and mind are in the right place. "What drives me is pulling myself up by my bootstraps," she said as we parted. "I've had to do that my whole life. I graduated when no one was hiring lawyers, had to make a job at the Sierra Club, and founded the first cannabis law and policy clinic in San Diego, tackling some of the largest issues there. I learned humility while doing that. Don't be too big for your britches. Be a team player. I also like to be challenged, and this space is nothing if not challenging. It's also creative. You wake up every day to new issues and new clients with new concerns and dramas. I've gotten to be a city attorney and never thought in my wildest dreams that I would ever get to do that." 

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QUEEN OF THE DESERT

Jennifer Dresbach leveraged her decades of high-end restaurant experience to help make Monarch Wellness Center Arizona's premiere medical shop.

JENNIFER DRESBACH glides into Monarch Wellness Center like a cool desert breeze, eager to begin a day full of meetings with growers, distributors, producers, and brand ambassadors. As Monarch Wellness Center's operations manager, she "gets to learn something new just about every single day," she said.

After working at a popular wine bar in Phoenix and managing a chef-owned, James-Beard-Award-winning restaurant, Dresbach applied twenty-plus years of retail and restaurant management experience to selling medical cannabis. "Every day brings about different and dynamic opportunities," she said. "There is a ton of vigor and excitement in this industry, and I see new product lines and business opportunities present themselves on a regular basis."

Being Monarch's operations manager means Dresbach gets to interface with all the passionate players that make up Arizona's blossoming medical marijuana community. The excitement and challenge of running one of the state's premiere medical dispensaries, it turned out, was something Dresbach unknowingly had been preparing for her whole life. Managing hectic restaurants taught her to thrive in high-performance, multi-faceted, and challenging environments without letting the stress affect her job performance.

Monarch employs only seventeen people, yet the staff sees 170 to 300 patients a day. Dresbach reminds her budtenders to maintain integrity and supportiveness, even when harried.

"Medical marijuana can provide benefits for a wide variety of ailments, so our budtenders' interactions with patients range from upbeat and optimistic to less enthusiastic, palliative care conversations," she said. "Leading in this type of environment requires a strong focus on remaining connected to, and supportive of, your team at every juncture."

She also preaches teamwork, especially when it comes to inventory. Keeping accurate inventory and being compliant requires an enormous amount of teamwork and accuracy, but Dresbach has trained her people well. "We have an amazing team of committed, talented, and intelligent people working here," she said. "At Monarch, every one of them plays a key role in the execution of our inventory control systems."

"I strive to inspire positive actions from our team by communicating in an accountable way," she said. "We pride ourselves in creating an environment in which the people working with us can excel, and if I recognize there's room for improvement, I act on it."

Monarch Wellness Center is renowned for its extensive menu



and clean, welcoming design, including its iconic butterfly emblem blithely splashed on the walls, video screens, and desks. Touches of green, orange, and yellow accentuate the white couches and wood floors to give the place a friendly, relaxed, earthy vibe. The shop's bountiful inventory fluctuates between 150 and 200 unique items every month. Fifty percent of sales are derived from flower, 33 percent from vape pens and concentrates, 15 percent from edibles, and the remaining 5 percent comprise topicals, tinctures, and accessories. When it comes to best-sellers, Dresbach has noticed a trend from day one: Huxton's Green Crack. The unique strain, descended from Skunk #1 and a potent Afghani strain, is sweet-smelling, fruity, and invigorating, and primarily bought by patients with depression, fatigue, or stress. "Month after month, year after year, it is always our number-one revenue generator," noted Dresbach.

Being the operations manager at the first medical dispensary in Scottsdale, Arizona, Dresbach has had the privilege of growing with the cannabis market. As a result, she's gained a keen eye for trusted and quality products. But things are a lot different now than they were four years ago. A swarm of swank new dispensaries and vendors have brought cutthroat competition tactics, from poaching budtenders to misleading advertising and price undercutting. However, thanks to a



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ON IT.

—Jennifer Dresbach,
operations manager,
Monarch Wellness Center

A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned

HOW DRESBACH SAVES TIME AND MONEY

DISCOUNTING. "We dedicate a good deal of time and energy to self-auditing and analyzing around here, especially when it comes to discounting pricing," Dresbach said.

INTEGRATION. "We encourage all of Monarch's vendors to integrate themselves into our culture by hosting regular educational and informative patient-appreciation-type promotions," said Dresbach.

STAFF. "The secret to our success is our team members," Dresbach said. "We have an amazing group of extremely knowledgeable people committed to providing the best possible experiences for our patients."






flourishing flower market, Dresbach believes there is room for everyone. “There’s truly something to fit every patient’s needs,” she said. She paused and looked around the shop, now buzzing: Nests of patients and budtenders are talking flower, dosing, and concentrates on the floor, while the waiting room is pollinated with new and existing patients.

“From the top down, our team cares about its people and its processes,” she said, after surveying the activity in the space. “This organization inspires me to dig deeper and go further every day and in every way. Being a part of a free-thinking movement, encompassed by equally driven and motivating pioneers, gives me a great deal of satisfaction.”

In other words, cannabis is just an extension of Dresbach’s years in the luxury restaurant business. But she still frets every now and again and has a sleepless night, usually provoked by one persistent dread.

“My inbox!” she said with a laugh.  —Rob Hill



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WHEN respected media theorist Marshall McLuhan said “the medium is the message,” he reasoned when a message is conveyed powerfully, medium and message become one. That’s especially true in America, where onscreen validation is often necessary before a product or personality can be marketed to the masses.

Right now, marijuana is the message, and 420TV wants to be the streaming media platform for that message whether on a widescreen, 4K-HDR LED smart TV in the living room or the smartphone in the palm of your hand.

“I’m glad to say I feel like we’re doing something different and telling the story just in the way people in the cannabis industry have been telling it for a long time—but amongst friends,” 420TV co-founder and partner Alex Nahai said. “We’re trying to proliferate that [message] and put that story out there in a larger way.

“I, along with my partners, basically felt there was a void in the marketplace for a channel that was going to give people insight into the industry that was a little bit different,” he continued.

PARTNERS

420TV partner Dan Goman’s expertise includes over-the-top (OTT) streaming, on-demand, and mobile networks and how to offer content on all of them.



“There’s a niche for people who really respect the industry and the culture, and I think there’s a real story to tell that the existing media out there is either telling in a derogatory way or in a tongue-in-cheek, stoner-type way. If there is positive observational stuff, it’s a lot of low-quality content out there that doesn’t really do the best job of telling the story.

“So, that’s what we’re doing.”

A ROBUST DISTRIBUTION PLATFORM

Nahai partnered with media movers Dan Goman and Nick Nelson. Goman is founder and chief executive officer of OWNZONES Media Network, with time spent at Microsoft and Nokia. His expertise includes over-the-top (OTT) streaming, on-demand, and mobile networks and how to offer content on all of them. Nelson is head of products and innovation at OWNZONES and formerly was head of product-creative at a little movie platform called Netflix, with which many cannabis consumers probably already are familiar.

Nahai has a considerable background in entertainment and law. After graduating with a law degree from the University of Southern California in 2013, he’s worked for United Talent Agency (UTA), William Morris, and Capitol Music Group, where he was vice president of A&R and business affairs.

Among other things, Goman and Nelson are dedicated to developing content that will appeal to both “the converted and the curious,” a phrase taken from the network’s tagline.

“‘The curious’ is the real opportunity,” Nelson said. “As cannabis becomes more mainstream, people don’t look at it through a negative lens and really understand that it’s beyond some of the stereotypes that have existed in the past. So, as it’s connected to things like content that has high production value, it makes [cannabis products and lifestyle] more ‘real’ and desensitizes people to it in a positive way.”

“In my opinion, I think it’s really high time something like this came along,” Goman added, pun fully intended. “Given the change in the whole discussion around this topic, and the change in attitude across the country—the top leadership of this country aside, I think most people are moving in a direction that’s a little bit more open and more honest.”

In fact, once 420TV is up and streaming, a lot of curious people who never saw cannabis-related content before suddenly will have that

POT PROGRAMMING

“It’s time for the first and only free network devoted to the wonderful and complex world of cannabis,” according to the 420TV website, which is only one of several media platforms that will support the cannabis channel’s content lineup. The shows are all-original and include entertainment, news, and lifestyle programs for pot people:



POT CAST – Daily news programming chronicling the advent of the legal marijuana industry. With a team of sixty journalists nationwide, *Pot Cast* will present short-form news segments about the political, business, financial, and cultural aspects surrounding the disruptive rise of this new industry.



MEDICAL MARIJUANA MIRACLES – “A provocative new program exploring the real stories of people who have benefited tremendously from the medicinal properties of cannabis. The ten-episode series will be shot entirely in 4K and produced for 420TV by L.A.-based production house Scratch Creative.”



CANNABIZ – Hosted by Quddus Philippe (host of MTV’s *Total Request Live*), who “will delve into the stories behind the canna-billionaires of tomorrow, taking a deeper look into the pioneers of the recreational and medical marijuana industry. Each of the series’ ten episodes is dedicated to a company that is making a unique mark on the surging cannabis business.”



TOP SHELF WITH DR. DINA – Hosted by Dr. Dina Browner, the show “will take viewers on the ultimate cannabis road trip, touring grows and dispensaries across America that claim to offer the nation’s best marijuana. Dr. Dina will visit growers, entrepreneurs, and dispensary tastemakers, candidly assessing their offerings and comparing cannabis cultures in the different regions.”



SUPER SLACKERS – The animated series follows “a group of friends who discover they have superpowers after their weed is switched with a new strain being used in a government experiment. When a Professor Xavier-type shows up to train them, they have no interest in saving the world.”



THE GATEWAY – “Arresting” visual imagery set to “beautiful music landscapes...to provide an ambient visual and audio backdrop that enhances any party, chill-out, or other activity of choice.”



opportunity. With a soft launch scheduled for the end of January and official launch at the end of February, 420TV will stream on a variety of devices. Programming will showcase all-original content, developed to present new perspectives on the pro-cannabis lifestyle and culture. Super-high production values will be captured in digital 4K high definition at various U.S. and global locations and offer a complete range of content, including news and entertainment.

“At launch, we’ll have our dotcom experience and app,” Goman said. “We’ll have iOS and Android experiences, with capability of Airplay and Chromecast for mobile experiences. And then we’ll be on Metrological, which is a box that’s fairly advanced. It’s in Europe, kind of similar to the Comcast X1 box. So, we’ll have penetration in Europe, as well as globally, on our iOS, Android, and dotcom. Then, the plan is to quickly roll out Roku, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, and all of these other complementary devices that continue to broaden accessibility.”

In the build-up to the January launch, 420TV announced the addition of original animated series *Super Slackers*, which will be helmed by longtime *The Simpsons* director David Silverman. The cartoon’s plot “follows a group of friends who discover they have superpowers after their weed is switched with a new strain being used in a government experiment.”

As an extra, added dose of appeal for online fans, *Super Slackers* characters will be voiced by social media influencers and personalities including hip-hop artist/actor Jerry Purpdrank; video/music producer and slap-cammer Max Jr.; martial artist, dancer, and comedian Dan Nampaikid; professional soccer player turned actor, director,



I THINK
IT’S REALLY
HIGH TIME
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS
CAME ALONG

—Dan Goman,
co-founder, 420TV

MEDICAL MARIJUANA MIRACLES

The provocative, ten-episode program will explore the real stories of people who have benefited from the medicinal properties of cannabis.

and content creator Jon Paul Piques; Smosh YouTube star Olivia Sui; stand-up comedian/writer Arantza Fahnbulleh; and traditional actor/comedian Mickey Gooch, who appeared in *How to Be Single*.

“From a creative standpoint, I think it’s a unique show,” Nelson said of the animated series. “It’s not only bold in the new area of cannabis, but we’ve also taken a unique view on casting by using social influencers as the voice actors, and we’re really hoping to create momentum by having people that are already well-known and outspoken on social media coming into a show that’s sort of a classic mix of different characters, all backed by the voice of one of the writers from *The Simpsons*. So, creatively, I’m just super-excited about the show. I think it has a lot of legs.”

The cast’s lack of concern about any negative connotations attached to cannabis is notable, Goman added, indicating younger demographics are ready for a new narrative. “There didn’t seem to be any reticence at all from these younger celebrities, if you will, about getting involved with something like this,” he said. “We were having discussions with the team that produced this even before the idea for 420TV came along. They came to us and we started talking about, ‘Here’s a cannabis idea that we have. One, can we make it happen? Two, what’s the right vehicle to distribute



Top Shelf Host Dr. Dina

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this?’ I think it was like a perfect set of events that all came together. About the same time, we started talking about 420TV. The subject fit perfectly, and everything just sort of gelled.”

ADVERTISING ACUMEN

With regard to advertisers from the cannabis industry and more traditional markets, is there reticence, still, about going public with support for medical and recreational marijuana? Nahai, Goman, and Nelson feel cannabis topics reached a tipping point quite some time ago. Now, increasing legalization has forced media to catch up with the Green Rush.

“We’ve reached a point where it’s like Pandora’s box has been opened. Just a few months ago, Constellation Brands [parent company of Corona Beer] announced they were buying a minority stake in a Canadian pot company,” Goman observed. “We were moving forward with this even before that, but I think things like that and the increasing acceptance overall and the awareness... Frankly, there’s more than one angle to cannabis.

“I think what you’ll see [with 420TV] is high-quality programming and different perspectives being brought to the forefront and discussed that, in some cases, haven’t been discussed before,” he continued. “So, given that context, we’ve been seeing a lot of major brand interest being generated and we are in discussions, though we haven’t agreed to anything yet. They are very much interested. Some are taking the approach ‘let’s just wait and see what happens.’ But I think increasingly we’re seeing people getting off the sidelines and moving forward with advertising on our network, so we’re very encouraged.”

After legal consideration, 420TV will launch with age-verification technology to keep underage users off the platform and provide advertisers with a safer online environment to promote their products. Still, as a first-time media venture, the trio of partners expect to encounter a few precedent-setting situations.

“To the advertising community at large, I think the message is ‘we have done all the things we can reasonably do,’” Goman said. “We’re compliant and not running afoul of any regulations. For instance, we’ve engaged law firms that have helped recommend things like an age gate and other mechanisms that we are putting in place to make sure it’s an environment that works and doesn’t run afoul of the law.

“Now, having said all that, keep in mind that this is all new and I look at ourselves as trailblazers,” he continued. “We may be, in some cases, the first ones to discover a number of things. We are, in fact, pioneers and I think it’s going to be an interesting ride. There’s an opportunity to jump on board and be part of this unique, historic opportunity.”

Nelson added, “We’re committed to building out that whole experience. “Advertisers are really going to be able to grow with us because we’re dedicated to building product into the actual experience itself and really being able to give advertisers more of a voice in a very subtle, seamless way—like product pages and placement of products correlated to the shows or within the shows.”

Another important aspect of placement for advertising partners is the network’s data-gathering abilities. If everything flows as planned, 420TV will offer vendors and marketers a chance to watch the behavior in cannabis-interested consumer niches.

“We’ve seen in [search engine optimization] trends that there’s just tons of people searching for questions that they want answered, like ‘How does

cannabis affect me?’ and ‘How do I cook with it?’ and ‘What’s CBD oil?’ There’s just so many questions out there that aren’t being answered very well,” Nelson said.

“We have a lot of data analytics going on from Day One,” he continued. “So, there’s going to be a really unique opportunity for advertisers to see how their products correlate to certain shows, which is really fundamental. You haven’t been able to correlate cannabis products with high-production-value shows and say, ‘Hey, people that like animation also tend to like my product.’”

STARS ARE BORN

By his own admission, Nahai is an entertainment guy with a strong legal bent. At UTA, he worked with recognizable names like Bob Seger, Celine Dion, Jeff Dunham, Jerry Seinfeld, Daryl Hall and John Oates, and Rick Springfield, among others. There’s no doubt the cannabis culture will yield a whole crop of new personalities, he said, and he, Goman, and Nelson hope to launch a few of them on 420TV.

“For example, Dr. Dina is someone who I’m a big fan of, and I first learned about her because her agent and I worked together at UTA. I was

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really interested in what she was doing because I looked at her as a thought leader,” Nahai said. Pioneering dispensary founder “Dr. Dina” Browner will host cannabis travel show *Top Shelf with Dr. Dina* for 420TV.

“So, when we decided to do this channel, I was like well, here’s somebody that has credibility within the industry, who’s well-respected within the industry. Let’s put her on the air,” Nahai said. “We want to put those types of people on the air, and we want to help to create stars through this channel.”

He continued, “One of the hosts we have for one of our shows, which hasn’t been announced yet—but stay tuned and you’ll see that announcement—is somebody who works at a cultivation facility. We just thought she was charismatic and had the right mix of confidence and personality for one of our shows.”

Nahai also hinted a major mainstream music celebrity is ready to reveal more about their pro-cannabis views on the new network. In fact, the list of people ready to “come out” for cannabis includes more than one celebrity, as well as other mainstream entertainment entities Nahai can’t talk about just yet. Of course, all this and more are bound to happen in this brave, new market.

Nahai, Goman, and Nelson are aware of the concerns of some in the industry, who fear authenticity and real roots will be lost or the real message of marijuana will be misunderstood once the cannabis lifestyle is exposed on a multi-level, mass-market, streaming-media platform.

“But then, the message is so much greater than that,” Nahai said. “We’re talking about, for example, medical applications of cannabis. So, people with illnesses, which are a lot of people, may be interested in how cannabis can help them. Entrepreneurs might be interested in seeing what kind of opportunities there are. Or people who are interested in politics—this is a big, big political issue. We’re going to relate to a lot of people.” —*Joanne Cachapero*



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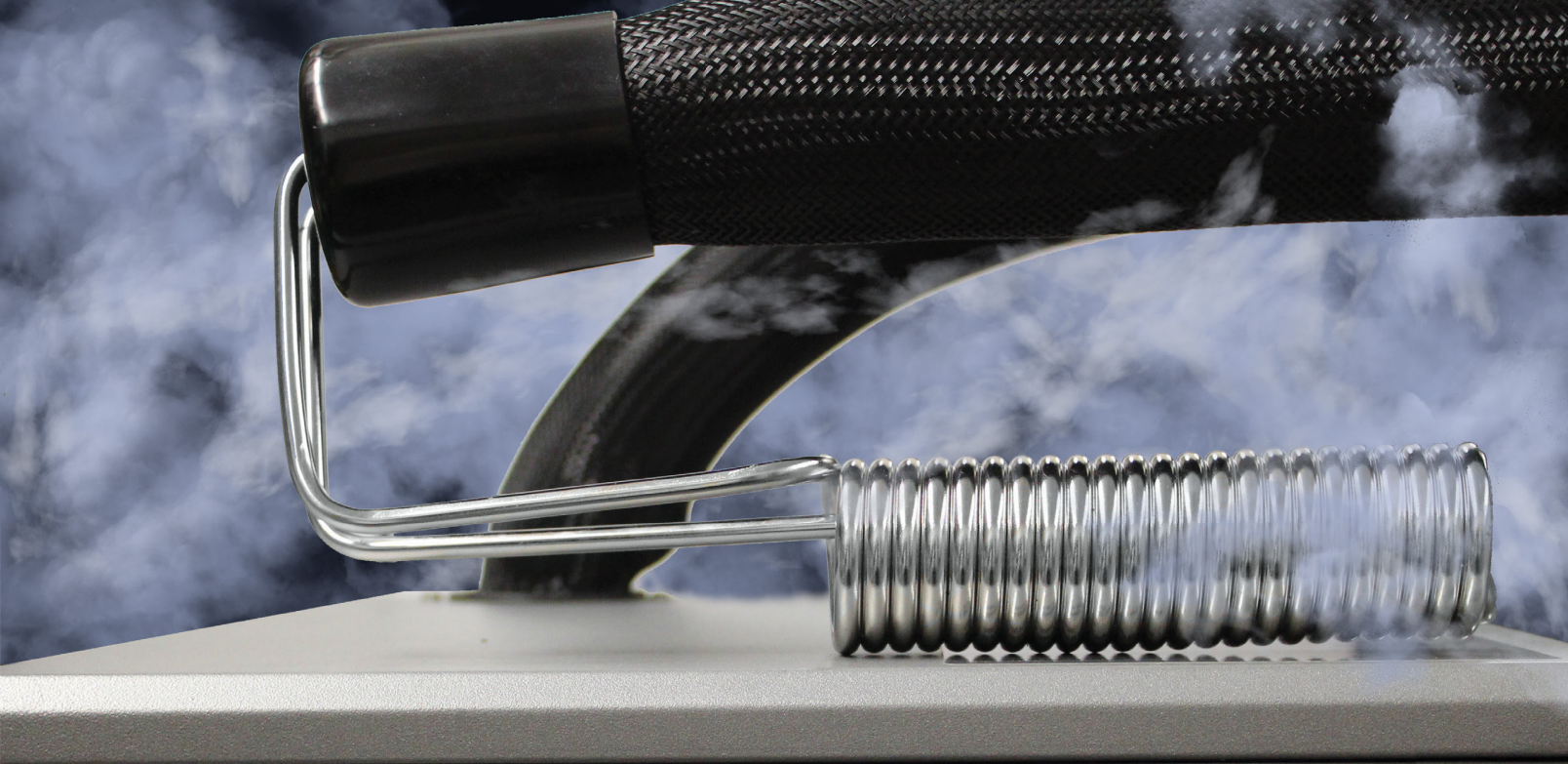
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STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS

BY JOHN ROZELLE, FRONTERA GROWTH

THIS PAST NOVEMBER 30, the California Democratic Party passed an unprecedented resolution titled “Oppose Bans and Call for the Implementation of Regulations as Permitted Under State Law which Allow for the Cultivation, Manufacture and Sales of Cannabis.” In this resolution, the party chastises municipalities that have not enacted regulations and both calls for municipalities to do so and citizens to “partner with local government officials” to effect the changes.

First: Yes, it's that bad. Out of 540 municipalities in California, fewer than 100 are providing permits, and only about 100 other municipalities are publicly discussing the process, which often leads only to language preventing regulations. Unfortunately, the regulations being adopted often support the illicit market as much as a regulated, compliant industry. In many ways, this problem has been caused by the politicking it took to get the state regulations passed. The state passed the buck to the municipalities in order to avoid their opposition, but the municipalities aren't set up to handle a situation like this.

Most municipal staff and elected officials are involved out of a sense of public service and making a positive difference. Handling all the issues and emotions on a range of interconnected topics is a challenging job. Further, local politics tend to be defensive, meant to keep problems away, versus proactively solving unaddressed issues. Elected officials often perform unpaid, part-time roles that don't allow building personal expertise on every topic before them. A part-time elected official may find it difficult to fight professional opinions on cannabis issues given by the city attorney, police chief, fire chief, city manager, etc. if the industry is not supporting the official with accurate information and examples of good policy.

So, the Democratic Party is certainly right: There is not enough public involvement in educating local officials about the realities of our industry.

We would argue, though, the scale of the problem goes beyond a lack of effective education. The real problem is twofold. Key local constituents have not been engaged in the process, and there has been no consequence for voting against the industry. There won't be a change in politics until we gain the support of key local voters and put forward and elect opposition candidates who support the industry. The reality is, there isn't a single California municipality that has gotten cannabis regulation completely right. Looking at what the municipalities with regulations are doing wrong, we see three common issues: scarcity, uncertainty, and placing the costs of fixing long-standing and often unrelated problems within those municipalities on licensees.

Most municipalities are afraid having a large number of cannabis businesses. Many local governments are barely fulfilling their existing regulatory enforcement responsibilities, so the additional requirements of supervising cannabis operations is daunting. Others fear increased lease rates will displace existing high-wage, politically supportive employers. Even greater problems arise when, instead of regulating and imposing safe operational practices based on existing precedent, governments choose to block cannabis businesses entirely. The will of the voters seems clear: California citizens have supported the industry at the ballot box and the cash register. You can't impose scarcity and then complain about high prices and a thriving illicit market.

Many application processes create uncertainty, thus driving away reasonable investment and reducing innovation. Municipal officials without an understanding of market fundamentals acting on behalf of anti-cannabis interests are creating an environment that can seem even worse than prohibition. Operating restrictions, inspections, zoning, and natural market forces will achieve the moderately sized market officials seek more efficiently with a better result for consumers and regulators—especially compared to awkward attempts at dictating how many licenses should be issued and to

whom through a complex point system, lottery, or scrum to be first in line at the licensing window.

Imagine if homebuilders had to deal with the same gauntlet. How many homes would be built if developers didn't find out whether they could build on a site until after buying the land? It wouldn't surprise anyone to see the price of homes spike with a simultaneous drop in quality. Who could expect any small businesses to survive in that environment or make any serious investment in growth?

Let's look at Los Angeles for an example of regulations that are driving up prices, stoking an illicit market, and dis-incentivizing both quality and innovation. City regulators started out applying the zoning code prudently and requiring supply-chain businesses locate in industrial and manufacturing zones—away from residents. Unfortunately, they reversed course and established illicit market incentives by imposing unconscionably low caps on the number of licenses based mainly on population figures. In effect, cannabis businesses are sent to an unpopulated area and then punished for the lack of population. There's perhaps no better analogy for the frustration and impressions of malfeasance many in the California industry have toward local governments.

L.A. officials know there are an estimated 7,000 cannabis businesses within the city, and they have limited licenses to fewer than 3,000. How can they fail to recognize this only serves to support an illicit marketplace?

But L.A. didn't stop there. Officials also applied a concentration review and neighborhood hearing to the approval process, and they set a first-come, first-considered application process. So, you may ask: Even if you are the first at City Hall the minute the application is available and you've put together a best-in-class application, you still aren't assured of getting a license? We won't know until we actually see some businesses go through the process—which, of course, will mean it's too late because all the license spots almost certainly will be filled. All of this leaves us wondering how a small business can survive, much less attract reasonable investment.


The most worrying theme, though, is the disingenuous social equity program. I am—we all should be—a passionate supporter of social justice, community empowerment, and improvement efforts in neighborhoods distressed by historic racial injustices and other bias.

It appears, however, social equity schemes are a red herring meant to create re-election talking points, not help affected communities. Yes, these communities should be able to participate in the potential success of an industry for which they've disproportionately been incarcerated, but reasonable public policy goals would be improving the job and educational prospects while increasing infrastructure investment in a neighborhood. Are a small number of successful entrepreneurs going to share their profits with the community and somehow make up for the municipality's continued neglect of job creation, education, infrastructure, prosecutorial abuses, and lack of voice in the civic discourse? The irony and audacity of saddling the very businesses the political system used to harm these communities with the cost of making an impotent attempt at reparations is truly impressive.

What you can do to make a difference

- 1. START WITH MAKING YOUR PRESENCE FELT.** If you can't afford to give to lobbying efforts, attend every meeting at every level of government and meaningfully contribute to a more informed dialogue.
- 2. COORDINATING CAPITAL EXPENDITURES** for skilled, professional lobbying through an industry association specific to your municipality is important. Analyze where energy is best spent, develop key policy objectives, identify important voters in problem districts, and fund supportive candidates.
- 3. MEETING WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE** at each level of government is critical, but communicate the right message in the right way. Representatives need to see professionalism and high standards for regulatory compliance.
- 4. UNDERSTAND OFFICIALS' CONCERNS** and help provide the information necessary for good policy decisions.
- 5. DETERMINE** who the key voters and campaign contributors are in the resistant representatives' districts. Conduct grassroots efforts to educate voters and gather signatures of support.
- 6. BE PATIENT AND POLITE** with the individuals with whom you speak, but be relentless. If you don't feel they have heard your concerns and are taking action to support your business, put all of your energy into a ballot initiative or electing a replacement that will support the industry.

Do anti-small-business and pro-illicit-market policies arise from a lack of practical business experience or the support of wealthy donors who like high-cost barriers to entry? Perhaps, but local government typically addresses only a few major issues: public safety, sanitation, and avoiding development that inconveniences residents with traffic. While we like to believe elected officials are acting only with the best of intentions, the fact remains that the vast majority of local public servants are ill equipped to handle large-scale economic transformation and social change.

The key takeaway: They need our help. 



JOHN ROZELLE is managing director of Frontera Growth, the growth strategy arm of the association of Frontera companies. The company helps cannabis businesses develop a municipal strategy and secure compliant real estate, as well as oversees applications for licensure. Rozelle, who frequently partners on commercial real estate investments for the industry, has spent twenty years executing strategic plans for both real estate developments and operating companies.

L'invasione ITALIANA

Two Italian companies are fashioning la dolce vita traditions in California's cannabis culture.

BY ROB HILL



Mammamia co-founders Luca Vincenzini, left, and Simone D'Antonio.

FORTY-FIVE MINUTES by boat from Naples and 129 miles from Rome, the island of Capri resembles a skyscraper of limestone cliffs rising from the Tyrrhenian Sea. Over the years, its crags, sapphire grottos, and pristine beaches have made the island a posh retreat for Italian barons and princes, jet-setting tourists, and celebrities including Clark Gable, Sofia Loren, and Jackie Onassis. It was here, too, in the 1920s, that one of Italy's enduring delectable treats was born. The torta caprese came to gastronomical fame as a slightly crisp, sugar-dusted chocolate cake that, bit by bit, gives way to a moist nucleus of finely ground almonds.

According to legend, the dessert resulted when either a local chef forgot to add flour to a traditional recipe or a vacationing Austrian princess missed her own country's chocolate cake so much she asked her Italian chef to emulate it. Nevertheless, the classic Italian goody has endured for almost a century. Now, the delicacy has been reinvented by two Italian foodies.

Based in Los Angeles, Mammamia Italian Edibles's signature product is Capri, a torta-caprese-like cake consisting of raw cacao, whole almonds, and 40mg THC/20mg CBD. The delicacy is presented inside a

cobalt blue tin with tangerine splashes.

Co-founder Simone D'Antonio is a successful chef. After graduating from ALMA, Italy's elite cooking academy, he followed in his father's footsteps and opened a restaurant in Bali. He sold the restaurant and worked at a few Michelin star establishments before returning to Italy and attending Gualtiero Marchesi's cooking school in Parma.

Three years ago, D'Antonio moved to Los Angeles and "accidentally" put a new twist on the 100-year-old chocolate treat he grew up eating. One night, while hosting a dinner party in the Hollywood Hills with Mammamia co-founder Luca Vincenzini, D'Antonio casually whipped up the first Capri cake "pretty much on memory." To the rest of the ingredients, he added some good herb.

"We shared it with our friends, and the response was great," said D'Antonio. "In fact, one of our friends tasted it and shouted, 'Mamma mia, that's good!' Right then, we decided to call our brand Mammamia."

Vincenzini comes from a television food show production background. He believes three things set Mammamia's Capri apart: quality ingredients, technique, and, well, D'Antonio's culinary prowess.

“Simone is a great chef,” Vincenzini said. “He can take something very simple and make it special.”

The duo get their main ingredients—cacao and whole almonds—straight from an old-school distributor in Italy. While D’Antonio agrees with his partner about history, technique, and knowledge, he said the most important thing is...love. “You *have* to love it,” he said, gesturing to the sky. “You have to respect the food, and I do. So we decided to recreate Torta Caprese but with a cannabis twist. It’s been hard work.”

Ironically, the co-founders have had very different experiences with cannabis. Even though Italy had strict cannabis laws when he was growing up, Vincenzini, 38, would sneak off to the Colosseum at midnight to smoke joints with his friends, gaze up at the stars, and dream. “It was beautiful,” he remarked. D’Antonio, on the other hand, had zero interest in cannabis. Lately, though, he’s developed a taste for it. “I’m so happy I did!” he said.

When it came to packaging and branding, they agreed Capri should invoke the gauzy, glamorous Italy of the 1960s: *bellissimo*, sunshine, sipping wine on the Amalfi Coast, and idle swims in the tepid sea.

“We used the colors and vibes of that magical era in Italy to guide us the whole way,” they said.

HASHING IT OUT

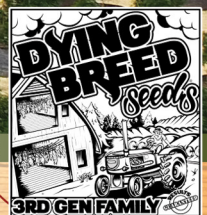
Luca Andrea Collins spent his childhood traveling from one war-torn country to another. His father worked in international human rights for non-governmental organizations and the United Nations. The family flitted from Palestine to Israel to Lebanon to Serbia to Bangladesh, where Collins first tasted cannabis. Weed was hard to find, but prices were dirt-cheap. Kief came in large plastic bags, tribes of seeds, trim, and stems all mixed together and mangled like a miniature toy jungle. He immediately became enamored with the tangy, sweet-smelling plumes. When later traveling in Cambodia, he tasted local “happy pizzas” and became an edibles believer; in Nepal, he learned local hash production and exotic pairings. He might not have known it then, but the two experiences would shape his professional life.

The vague idea to create an Italian cannabis brand hit Collins during his second year in university. He returned to Lebanon to visit friends, and on the trip back through the magical Bekaa Valley he daydreamed of a bespoke Italian hash brand.

Collins moved to Oakland in August 2016 and attended Oakland University. His time at the school was unlike anything he’d ever dreamed, even in Bekaa. Every day he was in a class learning about all things cannabis. “I was ecstatic,” he said with a big smile. “I



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got to travel to the farms in the Emerald Triangle, expos in Santa Rosa, and secret events in Oakland. This gave me a deep inside knowledge of the roots of the industry.”

After deciding to stay in Oakland, Collins launched Biscotti Brands with the mission of blending the Emerald Triangle’s cannabis quality with the precision of Italian design. He works eighteen-hour days, making sure every part of the company is compliant, classy, and clean. “We aim to demonstrate that Biscotti is the perfect mix of quality and design,” he said.

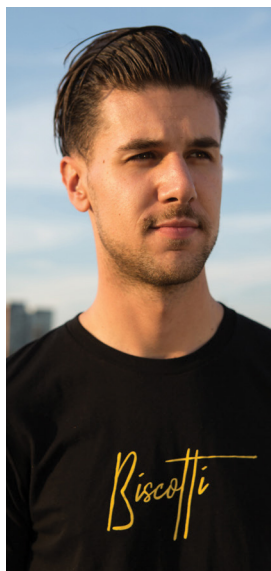
Collins is the first to admit his introduction to “perfect hash” was at the hands of Frenchy Cannoli, who was kind enough to put Collins in touch with the company that produced Cannoli’s handmade stainless steel washing machines. The company, Delta Separations, was surprised to hear Collins wanted to purchase two 25-gallon agitator machines. “We are now able to run the two machines with little to no effort and get top-notch quality,” Collins said. “Our process is unique, as our lab is likely to be the most high-tech hash lab in the world. We have purchased very expensive machinery that allows our water-cooling process to be simplified, our filtration is simplified, and our sieving has been optimized to reduce manual labor. We have put a lot of money and effort into making sure that every minute detail is of food-grade quality. Moreover, we obsess over cleanliness.”

Collins knew packaging and design were extremely important to convey his crystal-clear brand message. First, he simplified the process by naming the boxes with Roman numerals rather than common titles. He had always admired the packaging used by the perfume industry, so he took a road trip through Europe, scouting the continent’s perfumeries, taking photos and notes.

“After a few weeks, I began molding my ideas and forming the designs: all black with foiling and gloss.”

FROM COMPETITION, FRIENDSHIP

Due to Italy’s old, creaky, and murky history with cannabis, the founders of Biscotti Brands and Mammamia fretted over what their friends and family in *Italia* would think. Italian cannabis laws have been strict for quite some time, and although



THE CORE MISSION
OF BISCOTTI
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BLEND THE EMERALD
TRIANGLE’S
CANNABIS QUALITY
WITH FINE ITALIAN
DESIGN.

—Luca Andrea Collins,
founder, Biscotti Brands



there is constant buzz about change, very little has happened. The country’s beta medicinal program is very limited and extremely expensive. THC is sold in vials at prices surpassing U.S. \$500. Yet, new cannabis-themed stores open all the time.

“I honestly thought I would be receiving quite a lot of negativity from back home,” Collins said. “Instead, it seems like everyone is quite ecstatic. Italians know our laws contradict our history.”

The only two Italian cannabis brands in California have developed a friendship born of a common passion, respect, and love for the herb, which reminds them of home. Whenever the founders of one company are in the other company’s city, they have dinner. “We know what it means to deliver Italian products,” D’Antonio said. “It’s important to us that we carry on that tradition here.”


Collins went as far as to call them “brothers.” He revealed the camaraderie started on Instagram. “Both of us had cannabis Instagram accounts that claimed they were Italian,” he said. “Mammamia added Biscotti on Instagram first, then thirty seconds later we received a direct message from them asking, ‘*Sei veramente Italiano?*’ [Are you really Italian?] I responded, ‘Yes, I am from Pavia.’ Then, they asked for my phone number. Less than ten seconds later, my phone rings. It is Simone. He asks, ‘*Ma stai scherzando?*’ [Are you kidding?] The rest is history.”


LOOKING AHEAD

As word of Mammamia and Biscotti Brands inevitably spreads across the Mediterranean, more Italian and European-centric brands are sure to follow across the Atlantic. That’s fine with D’Antonio and Vincenzini. They are plodding away in their kitchen 24/7, trying to perfect the next great Italian edibles experience.

“We’re working on a different version of Capri, called Capri Limone,” D’Antonio said. “It’s made with white chocolate and lemon. It’s Capri, but with a twist. Torrone bianco from Sicily is something we want to do. Also Gianduiotti from Torino. We’re very excited to get going on those in the near future.”

Collins has plenty of ideas himself. He’s marrying Italy’s *other* great passion with cannabis. “We will be launching a high-end clothing line in mid-2018,” he said. “It will blend Italian fashion with cannabis innovation.”

La vita è un sogno. 

 Biscotti Photography by Lukas Zanolli



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- Sustainable Best Practices for Indoor Cannabis Cultivation
- The Impact of Genetics & Production Methodology on Product Consistency



INFUSED PRODUCTS
& EXTRACTS

- Controlling Terpenes and Cannabinoids in Flower and Extract
- Pesticide Screening of Cannabis Products
- CBD Product Development – Insights into Cultivating, Sourcing, and Processing



BUSINESS STRATEGIES
AND INNOVATION

- 10 Tips For Cannabis Entrepreneurs Launching Businesses & Raising Capital
- Cannabis Banking and Compliance: Lessons Learned from Adult-use Legalization
- Better Safe than Sued: Avoiding Product Liability Claims with Compliant Labeling and Packaging

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HARD GOODS



1

THE PROMETHEUS NANO

A chillum-style glass and metal one-hitter weighing in at only .130kg, Pypetek's Nano offers discreet portability. Also may be used as a bat. No screen needed. Available in five prismatic colors: black, blue, green, purple, and red.

PYPTEK.COM

2

THE GPM CARTRIDGE FILLER 2.0

Gentile Packaging Machinery's filler can handle 12 to 20 cartridges per minute and works with all types of cartridges. A computerized interface allows the operator to control three separate heaters (product hopper, valve block, flexible hose) to keep even the thickest oils running smoothly.

GENTLEMACHINERY.COM

3

FILLING SET

This forty-piece set contains everything you need to easily fill up to forty dosing capsules with herbs. Includes filling device, plunger, herb mill XL, a magazine (with eight capsules), digital scale, and forty dosing capsules. From the makers of the legendary Volcano tabletop vaporizer.

STORZ-BICKEL.COM

4

PORTABLE SMOKING KIT

Designed in the USA, this compact kit is about the size of a Zippo. Includes an aluminum-alloy pipe that holds up to five hits, a copper poker/dabber, a stainless-steel grinder card, and a silicone container, all inside a reusable magnetic box with a matte rubber finish.

SMOKITS.COM

5

PRIMO COMBI MULTI-HEAD WEIGHER 0.5L

This compact, complete weighing solution designed for high-performance applications and tight accuracy requirements offers easy integration with a container- or bag-filling machine. The Windows 360 operating system interfaces with any ERP/MRP software, allowing for complete operational overview, remote control of functionality, and total traceability.

PAXIOM.COM





www.storz-bickel.com

FILLING SET

Fill up to 40 Dosing Capsules at once.



THE SET INCLUDES

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- Plunger
- Herb Mill XL
- Magazine (incl. 8 Capsules)
- Digital Scale
- Dosing Capsules (40 Pcs.)



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HORTICULTURE & GROWING



1

BEACON POTENCY PROFILER

A desktop unit with an integrated touchscreen, the Beacon is perfect for those with limited space or in need of a point-of-sale companion inside dispensary environments. Lightweight, portable, and user-friendly, the Beacon offers real-time, laboratory-grade potency data to any sector within the cannabis ecosystem.

SAGEANALYTICS.COM



2

GREEN CLEANER

Green Cleaner kills spider mites and their eggs, predatory mites, aphids, white flies, broad mites, and russet mites on contact. The all-natural, 100% concentrate can be used as a solution to dip tender new cuttings, prevent garden contamination when outsourcing plant starts, and as a treatment from start through harvest.

CENTRALCOASTGARDEN.COM

3

LIGHTRAIL 3.5 INTELLIDRIVE

Made in the U.S.A. by Gualala Robotics, LightRail 3.5 is a scalable indoor system that simultaneously moves up to three grow lamps of different sizes and weights at a rate of four feet per minute. The kit includes a 10rpm motor, a two-piece rail measuring 6'6", and installation hardware. The motor and associated installation hardware also may be purchased separately.

LIGHTRAIL3.COM

4

JUNGLE CONTROL FEROCIOUS PREMIUM PLANT OPTIMIZER

A plant-optimizing additive that delivers concentrated forms of hydrogen and oxygen, Ferocious allows plants to produce more energy and vigor, become larger and stronger, and create greater yields. The product is believed to be an effective nutrient enhancer with the ability to break nutrients into smaller particles that are easier for plants to metabolize. Add the liquid concentrate to existing nutrient-water mixture.

JUNGLECONTROL.IT

5

ANAHEIM SCIENTIFIC P771 PH METER WITH ATC

The P771 is an accurate, pocket-sized pH meter for measuring the pH balance of liquids in field environments and applications. Cased in a rugged, waterproof housing with replaceable electrodes, the meter offers easy two-point calibration with included pH 4 and pH 7 buffer solutions. Comes ready to go with two long-life three-volt lithium batteries.

ANAHEIMSCIENTIFIC.COM



A woman with long, wavy blonde hair stands against a dark background. She is wearing a long, form-fitting dress that is entirely covered in a dense arrangement of colorful flowers, including roses, daisies, and hydrangeas in shades of red, yellow, orange, and purple. The flowers appear to be growing out of her dress, with some petals falling onto the floor at her feet. She holds a vintage-style metal watering can in her left hand, tilted as if watering. A bright, ethereal light emanates from the midsection of her dress, creating a glowing effect. The overall mood is magical and transformative.

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PSYCHOACTIVE



1

AGUA DE FLOR FRESA

Inspired by aguas frescas and the desire to present an elegant product with a brilliant taste, Agua De Flor, or “Water of the flower,” is made with high-quality distillates to ensure taste is not compromised for potency. A two-serving bottle of the strawberry (“fresa”) flavor contains 110mg THC. Made by Product of Los Angeles.

HERBANMEDI.COM



2

GENESIS AQUA DROPS

Aqua Drops from ebbu™ are a patent-pending innovation in the edibles space. The drops are pre-measured, micro-dosed, and 100-percent dissolvable in practically any liquid. Ideal for turning almost any beverage (coffee, tea, water, mock-tails, non-alcoholic beers, soft drinks) into a “canna-bev” or for use in everyday cooking and baking.

EBBU.COM

3

APOTHECARY LABS INFUSED HONEY

Combining honey, cinnamon, and cannabis creates a true superfood. Honey is the only food source that contains all the vital enzymes, vitamins, minerals, and water that sustain life. Antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties make honey excellent for pain relief, wound care, treating coughs, and boosting memory. The 2oz. jar contains 86mg THC; the 4oz. jar contains 144mg THC. Recommended for daily use.

APOTHECARYLABS.COM



4

ZASP INFUSED SOUR GUMMIES

Packaged in bottles containing fifteen pieces at a dose of 20mg THC apiece, Zasp Sour Gummies come in sativa, indica, hybrid, and CBD infusions. Tropical punch, black cherry, strawberry lemonade, and tangerine flavors match the Zasp line of infused drinks.

ZASPCO.COM

5

UPSIDE EDIBLES FRUIT BITES

All-natural, organic, no-sugar-added fruit hand-dipped in Belgian chocolate? Count us in. Blood orange bits and cherries are robed in rich dark chocolate; strawberries are swaddled in milk chocolate. Available in packages containing 120mg or 300mg doses spread across eighteen pieces.

UPSIDEEDIBLES.COM



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NON PSYCHOACTIVE



1

HORA SKIN CARE SUPER SERUM + CBD

Hydrate, protect, and regenerate with ingredients including marine collagen, rosehip oil, argan oil, vitamin A, vitamin B3, hyaluronic acid, vitamin C, and CBD. Manipulation of the endocannabinoid system can help regulate the life cycle of cells for more radiant, youthful skin. CBD as an antioxidant is even more powerful than Vitamin C, E, A, or omega 3 fatty acids. In 1- and .5-ounce sizes.

HORASKINCARE.COM

2

QUIM ROCK INTIMATE OIL

Quim Rock's Intimate Oil is specifically designed to intensify climax, enhance sensation, increase libido, and serve as a vaginal health supplement. Combining the ancient aphrodisiac power of cannabis with a hint of tea tree for its antiseptic properties creates a balanced formula that's both sensual and therapeutic. In Sensitive or Curious formulations.

QUIMROCK.COM



3

KUSHY PUNCH CBD BLISS PEN

Sleek and compact, this disposable vape produces smooth, flavorful and potent clouds with a note of green apple. The addition of 100mg of CBD enhances the flavor by adding subtle earthy tones for an intellectually satisfying taste. Main Terpenes include humulene, terpineol, terpinolene, and ocimene.

KUSHYPUNCH.COM

4

STRÄVA CRAFT WHOLE-BEAN CBD BLEND COFFEE

A specialty coffee experience with all the benefits of hemp and cannabidiol (CBD) using full-spectrum oils sourced from European and Colorado growers; independently lab-tested for quality. All bags contain twelve ounces of whole-bean, fresh-roasted specialty-grade coffee. CBD-infused blends include Focus, Restore, Elevate, and Escape.

STRAVACRAFTCOFFEE.COM



5

SACRED NATURAL HEMP ACAI BERRY SALT SOAK

Acai berry's real significance lies in its rich natural vitamin E content, which is necessary for tissue rejuvenation. Acai berry oil returns moisture to skin, making it younger-looking. Natural hemp oil, jojoba oil, avocado oil, and acai berry-infused salts help reduce cellulite, decrease water retention, and boost energy. 6oz. jar.

HEMPSACRED.COM





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DAMIEN PAYNE,

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EDIBLE

"A couple of my favorites are **Viola** (ViolaExtracts.com) and **House of Dankness** (HouseOfDankness.com). Really impressed with their products and how my body feels on them. With edibles, taste is pretty important—and they have some great options."

VAPE

"**Dipstick Vapes** (DipStickVapes.com) are by far my favorite. Their product is not only sexy, but [also] works well with all kinds of concentrates. Plus, I can take it anywhere."

CBD

"**Steve's Goods** (StevesGoods.com) out of Boulder, Colorado, is a small business with great craft. Their organic CBD comes from hemp grown for medicinal purposes."

HEMP

"I really love 100% **Hemp Koozies from The Hemp Seed** (TheHempSeed.com). They are great for bottles and cans."

TREND


"All the new people coming into the cannabis space that are not from cannabis. It is a really interesting time, because many of the new investors, companies, and technologies have little experience in cannabis and it is interesting to see what they are bringing to the table."

BRAND

"**Whoopi & Maya** (WhoopiAndMaya.com) is great. For a guy who has a lot of pain from playing sports all my life, I find their Rub and Savor work very well. I can feel blood flow with the Rub when applied. Savor, made from raw cacao, is tasty and can be put on almost anything, including ice cream."

FIRE SALE is an app and website that help consumers find the best prices on cannabis nearby. It's easy to use: just sort by distance, potency, and strain, and go.

GETTHATFIRE.COM

 Photography by Guy Kowarsh

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