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Zack Darling



***Zack Darling** is chief eternal optimist (CEO) at The Hybrid Creative, a creative agency focused on cannabis, hemp, CBD, and hydroponics ventures. THC's primary focuses are brand strategy, design, product packaging, web development, and marketing solutions. Aside from his award-winning professional career, Darling has been a lifelong environmentalist, community activist, and event organizer. TheHybridCreative.com*

Randall Huft



***Randall Huft** is president and creative director at the Innovation Agency, an advertising, branding, and public relations firm specializing in the cannabis industry. While working with blue-chip companies including AT&T, United Airlines, IBM, Walgreen's, American Express, Toyota, and Disney, he discovered what works what doesn't, and how to gain market share. Inov8.us*

Amanda Ostrowitz



***Amanda Ostrowitz** is founder and chief executive officer at CannaRegs, a web-based subscription service that provides cannabis-related rules and regulations from state, county, municipal, and federal sources. Previously, she was a regulatory attorney specializing in cannabis regulations and banking law. CannaRegs.com*

Joaquin Rodriguez



***Joaquin Rodriguez** is chief operating officer at Gen X Biosciences. He comes from a mixed background of engineering, business, and economics. For the past six years, he and Gen X co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Shea Alderete have worked with a talented, experienced team to develop cannabis extraction technology. GenXBiosciences.com*

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Best Companies to Work for in Cannabis

DO YOU WORK FOR, own, or manage a great place to work? If so, rush over to mgRetailer.com and nominate the company for *mg Magazine's* second annual Best Companies to Work for in Cannabis awards. The deadline for nominations is September 3, so by the time this issue hits the street you'll have only a few days to complete the nomination form. As long as your company began operating before July 1, 2018, employs at least ten full-time workers, and maintains a headquarters (corporate, regional, or divisional) in the United States, it's eligible for consideration.

Please don't assume your company already is on the list. Last year, we sometimes heard "I thought someone else filled out the form." Play it safe. Trust me, we'd much rather receive multiple nominations for a company than overlook anyone.

In addition, please don't be confused. This year, another business-to-business publication plans to recognize employers under a program with a remarkably similar name. (Yes, we did find that a bit tacky, but we believe excellence cannot be recognized too often and wish them well.)

What constitutes an exceptional environment for employees? We consider aspects like corporate culture, benefits (health insurance, education reimbursement, paid time off, etc.), environmental and social responsibility, diversity, and team-building activities. Companies don't fit into neat little niches, though, so just tell us what makes yours exceptional. Why do employees enjoy their jobs? What makes your organization a place where people are proud to work? Why do they stick with you instead of seeking opportunities elsewhere?

Cannabis is a remarkable industry filled with remarkable people, products, and professional environments. For the second consecutive year, *mg Magazine* will recognize the latter with a plaque and in an expanded December print issue. We'd love to see your company among the honorees.

Please note: mg never charges for editorial coverage or recognition.

Kathee Brewer



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 Incunabulum Publishing

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Canadian Authorities Investigate CannTrust

PELLHAM, Ontario — The Joint Serious Offences Team, an enforcement partnership between the Ontario Securities Commission, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Financial Crimes Unit, and the Ontario Provincial Police Anti-Rackets Branch, is investigating CannTrust Holdings, a Canadian cannabis company listed on the New York and Toronto stock exchanges, for potential financial fraud and regulatory crimes related to unlicensed cultivation and capital raising.

The news dug a deeper hole for CannTrust's market capitalization, which has been on a downhill slide from a TSX high of C\$1.9 billion in November 2018 to an August 5, 2019, close of C\$423.7 million—a loss of nearly C\$1.5 billion in nine months.

The company fell under scrutiny in early July, when Health Canada, which regulates cannabis in the country, issued a non-compliance order and impounded 5,200 kg of dried cannabis the agency said was grown in

unlicensed facilities. CannTrust put a voluntary hold on an additional 7,500 kg of inventory destined for domestic and international sale. The company also admitted employees provided inaccurate information to regulators.

After a Danish company revealed it had purchased unlicensed stock from CannTrust shortly before the regulatory enforcement action, CannTrust halted all domestic and international sales.

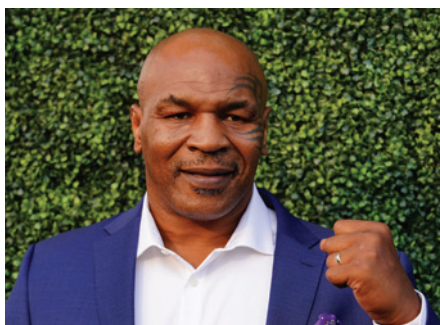
The board of directors subsequently fired Chief Executive Officer Peter Aceto and forced the resignation of co-founder and Chairman Eric Paul after the Globe and Mail published internal email indicating both men were aware of the illegal cultivation seven months before Health Canada uncovered regulatory irregularities.

The board placed the company up for sale in late July, days before investors filed a class-action lawsuit alleging CannTrust gave them “materially false and misleading” information about its operations and prospects.



LONG ARM OF THE LAW

The sheriff's department in Santa Barbara County, which hosts one third of California's licensed grows, is using residents' odor complaints to target raids as part of a moderately effective effort to eradicate illegal operations.



HEAVYWEIGHT'S HEAVY USE

In August, Tyson Ranch Chief Executive Officer Mike Tyson claimed he and the staff at his cannabis business smoke "tons of weed" with a market value of about \$40,000 per month. The former world champion heavyweight boxer also said the company's sales total roughly \$500,000 monthly. [TysonRanch.com](https://tysonranch.com)



UTAH SHRINKS NUMBER OF LICENSES

Utah's Department of Agriculture and Food awarded only eight of ten available medicinal grow licenses, stating granting all ten would have "saturated" the market. Six prospective licensees plan to appeal the decision in court.



Bern One

Saying "marijuana ain't heroin," U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, a contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, vowed to legalize cannabis by executive order if elected. In August, the gentleman from Vermont was polling third behind former Vice President Joe Biden and Senator Elizabeth Warren. Among college students, Sanders led polls by a significant margin.

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ILoveGreenGorilla.com



Billionaire Launches Bank, Cryptocurrency

GSTAAD, Switzerland — Cypriot billionaire and Swissx owner Alkiviades “Alki” David has launched the Swissx Bank of Cannabis in order to facilitate global banking transactions for the legal cannabis industry. The bank will be based in Gstaad, Switzerland, and headquartered at a to-be-announced Caribbean location.

Swissx Bank plans to launch a cryptocurrency, SWX Coin, which will be “backed by a bank of proprietary hemp strain seeds worth \$750 million and \$250 million in Swiss francs pegged to global price of hemp.” In addition, the financial institution will operate the Swissx Global Hemp Exchange, a forum for trade that initially will handle Swissx's surplus crop.

Swissx is primarily known as a producer of CBD products. The company recently announced the development phase for a “massive international cooperative farming operation, with acres already planted in California and Puerto Rico, and 5,000 more acres under contract across the Caribbean.”

St. Kitts-Nevis Prime Minister Denzil Douglas has joined the bank's board.



PAX, JETTY EXTRACTS EMBRACE COMPASSION

Jetty Extracts and PAX Labs partnered to provide relief for victims of last year's devastating California wildfires. Charitable organization California Fire Foundation will receive 100 percent of proceeds from sales of Fire Relief PAX pod filled by Jetty.

JettyExtracts.com; PAX.com

90%

of medical cannabis patients cite chronic or severe pain as the main reason for use.

(Source: New Frontier Data)

80%

of the monthly average of 14,400 customers per adult-use shop make a purchase.

(Source: Flowhub)

\$1B+

Total revenue taken in by the State of Colorado over the past 5 years.

(Source: Colorado Department of Revenue)

9,068

Number of jobs Florida added during 2018, the most in the U.S., representing a 703% increase.

(Source: Leafly's "Cannabis Jobs Count" report 2019)

Harris, Nadler Introduce Federal Decriminalization Bills

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) and Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.) in July presented bicameral legislation that would remove cannabis from the Controlled Substances Act, thereby decriminalizing most sales, use, and cultivation at the federal level. In addition, the bills would expunge previous convictions and prevent current prosecutions from proceeding.

Those convicted of or currently being prosecuted for selling cannabis to minors would not be eligible for protection under the legislation.

The Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act also would allow states to regulate the substance, prohibit discrimination by landlords and others who accept federal funds, and prevent immigration authorities from using cannabis charges or convictions as justification for deportation. In addition, the bills propose a 5-percent federal excise tax; Congress would be able to apportion half the resulting revenue to support communities negatively impacted by the war on drugs, invest in small and minority-owned businesses in the cannabis industry, and make licensing easier.

The legislation also would direct the U.S. Department of Justice to establish a “cannabis justice office” to assist people with expungement, provide job training and societal reentry programs, and mentor youth.

Harris, who opposed cannabis legalization while she was California’s attorney general, is a 2020 presidential candidate and Nadler is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Although the House bill is expected to receive consideration on the floor, the Senate version’s future is unclear. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) last year said he did not plan to support cannabis decriminalization.



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‘Costco of Cannabis’ Begins Operation

California delivery service Flower Co. used part of a \$2.8 million investment to deploy a \$119-a-year membership program offering up to 40 percent off products, bypassing dispensaries in hopes of luring consumers from the black market. The company derives revenue only from membership sales, not the products themselves. **FlowerCompany.com**



Florida to Challenge Appeals Court’s Vertical Integration Ruling

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and the state’s department of health have asked for an *en banc* hearing of the First District Court, which in July ruled the state’s vertical integration law unconstitutional. The three-judge panel said the model violates the state’s Amendment 2, approved by voters in 2016.

If the district court declines the hearing, the state plans to appeal to the Florida Supreme Court.

Currently, Florida requires cannabis businesses to operate all aspects of the supply chain from seed to sale. Observers say if the district court’s ruling stands, the state may have to issue licenses by sector, which would open competition to smaller and sector-specific operators. The case is *Fla Dep’t of Health v. Florigrown, LLC*.

REPUBLICANS SKIP SAFE HEARING

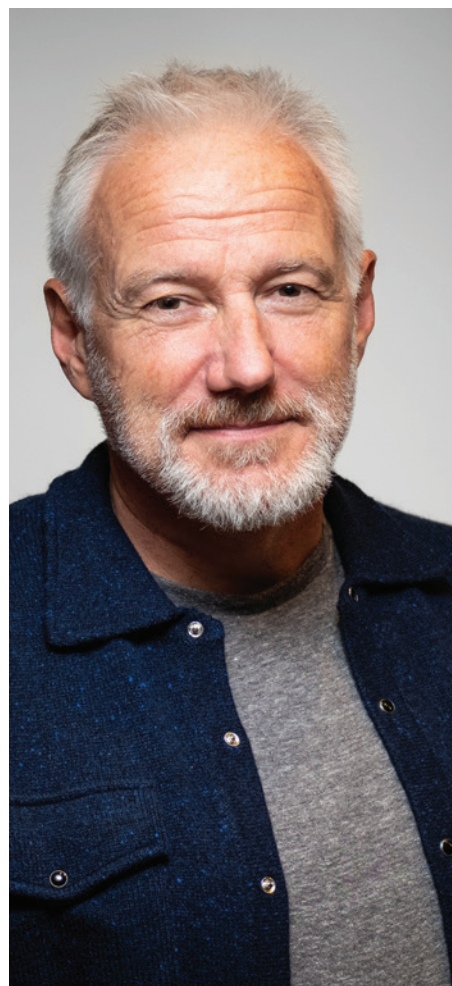
Except for senators Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Cory Gardner (R-Colo.), Republicans were no-shows for a Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs hearing about the Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act.



GGB BUYS CANADIAN EXTRACTOR

Green Growth Brands formed a Canadian limited partnership which acquired all GGBs operating companies as well as publicly traded Canadian extraction company MXY Holdings LLC and MXY-affiliated PurePenn LLC and Pure CA LLC. The all-equity transaction was valued at \$310 million.

GreenGrowthBrands.com





Hawaii, NY Decriminalize Possession

ALBANY, N.Y., and HONOLULU — In July, Hawaii and New York became the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh states to decriminalize cannabis. Democratic New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed his state's legislation into law; Hawaii's became law by default after Governor David Ige, also a Democrat, neither vetoed nor signed his state's legislation.

On August 27, possession of up to one ounce in New York state became a misdemeanor incurring a \$50 fine; possession of one to two ounces will cost violators \$200. Hawaii's law will take effect January 11, 2020, when the misdemeanor penalty for possessing fewer than three ounces of cannabis for personal use will become a \$130 fine. Previously, cannabis possession in the state incurred a \$1,000 fine and up to thirty days in jail.

New York's law also allows for expungement of convictions for low-level possession.

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JUST HOW BIG IS THE LEGAL CALIFORNIA CANNABIS MARKET?

JANUARY — MAY 2019 SALES

		CA	CO	OR	AZ
TOTAL DISPENSARY & DELIVERY SALES		\$1.2B	\$668.5M (56%)	\$305.0M (26%)	\$277.1M (23%)
FLOWER SALES		\$386.7M	\$259.9M (67%)	\$121.0M (31%)	\$113.1M (29%)
CONCENTRATES SALES		\$433.1M	\$232.0M (54%)	\$93.6M (22%)	\$110.8M (26%)
VAPE SALES		\$355.4M	\$114.5M (32%)	\$64.7M (18%)	\$82.1M (23%)
INGESTIBLES SALES		\$210.6M	\$110.4M (52%)	\$50.6M (24%)	\$34.7M (16%)
TOTAL UNITS SOLD		76.7M	89.5M (117%)	44.9M (59%)	27.4M (36%)
TOTAL UNIQUE RETAIL OUTLETS — MAY 2019		696	838 (120%)	649 (93%)	128 (18%)
2018 SPENDING PER CAPITA		\$63.05	\$260.30 (413%)	\$153.47 (243%)	\$81.71 (130%)

The nascent California market is primed to grow bigger no matter how “wild west” the regulatory landscape is in its current state, mainly because there are an estimated 4.6 million cannabis consumers. As new municipalities come on board, that number is only going to rise, fueling the current forecast of \$7.2B in legal sales in 2024.*



This infographic was created exclusively for *mg Magazine* readers

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*Source: Arcview Market Research / BDS Analytics

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Lowell Herb Co. to Open Cannabis Consumption Lounge and Restaurant

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — Lowell Herb Company expects to open the first cannabis consumption lounge and restaurant in North America in September. Lowell Café will be located in West Hollywood, California. The facility will offer rooftop dining, smoking, and vaping, along with pre-packaged edibles and non-infused food and drinks, but will not serve alcohol.

At least one area organization has been outspoken in opposing the project: Congregation Kol Ami Synagogue argued against the license because, according to a letter synagogue leaders sent to the city council, members believe they will have to “walk through clouds of marijuana”

smoke, which will limit the use of the congregation’s outdoor space due to second-hand smoke.

To address concerns, Lowell Café installed the same type of ventilation system used by Las Vegas casinos to eliminate smoke and odor. Fragrant plants also will help mitigate odors and provide privacy.

Other West Hollywood businesses approved for cannabis lounges and cafés include The Antidote, The Artist Tree, Door Number Six, Essence, Calma WeHo, Greenwolf West Hollywood, Flore West Hollywood, and PleasureMed.

LowellSmokes.com



BLUES BROS. PRE-ROLLS ROLL OUT

Belushi’s Farm, owned and operated by Jim Belushi, debuted Blues Bros. pre-rolls in Oregon in July. The actor, musician, and comedian plans to open grows in California and Nevada later this year and launch other products in the fall. Expansion negotiations are underway in other states. **BelushisFarm.com**



CALIFORNIA INCREASES PRESSURE ON ILLEGAL SHOPS

Governor Gavin Newsom in July raised the fines for businesses operating outside California’s regulatory framework to \$30,000 per day. Through June, authorities served nineteen search warrants on illegal shops, netting 2,500 pounds of product with an estimated retail value of \$16.5 million.

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EVENTS

September EVENTS

The following is a list of select industry events taking place this month.

CANNABIS SCIENCE CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 4-6

Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon

Focused on improving research and technology, semi-annual CSC expects to draw 3,000 international experts, instrument manufacturers, testing labs, research scientists, medical practitioners, policymakers, and interested novices for workshops covering all sectors of the industry. New pharmaceutical sessions have been added to parallel medical and scientific tracks.

CANNABISSCIENCECONFERENCE.COM

MBIZCON INT'L SEPTEMBER 4-6

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto

Eight tracks, more than forty sessions, and seventy-one speakers from sixteen countries will explore subjects including hemp and CBD, science and research, international business considerations, and raising capital. More than 150 exhibitors and targeted networking opportunities will be part of the mix.

MBIZCONFERENCE.COM

SOUTHERN HEMP EXPO SEPTEMBER 6-7

*Williamson County AG Expo Park,
Franklin, Tennessee*

Workshops, demonstrations, more than sixty expert speakers, and 140 vendors will fill two days focused exclusively on the industrial, nutritional, and therapeutic hemp industries as well as supporting ancillary businesses. The agenda includes sessions about banking, merchant processing, investment, finance, insurance, vertical integration, and lobbying. Industry day September 6; consumer day September 7.

SOUTHERNHEMPEXPO.COM

CANNABIZ LATINO HUB SEPTEMBER 12-13

Hotel Sheraton, Bogotá, Colombia

Cannabiz Latino HUB is a platform built to promote and explore investment opportunities in the fast-paced, growing Latin America market and network. Organized by The Cannabis Entrepreneurs Network, a non-profit organization committed to serving the Latino legal cannabis community, the event will include pre-seed-capital workshops, educational presentations, and networking events.

CANNABIZLATINOHUB.COM

FEMALES TO THE FRONT RETREAT SEPTEMBER 12-15

Ace Hotel, Palm Springs, California

A conference for female founders and funders, Females to the Front Retreat will mix hands-on workshops, pitch training, investment deck preparation, and business skills education with investor meetings, shared meals, yoga, connections, rest, and rejuvenation. Every workshop is built to directly engage attendees, not deliver PowerPoint presentations and panel discussions.

FEMALESTOTHEFRONT.COM

NEW JERSEY CANNABIS CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 14-15

*A.C. Convention Center, Atlantic City
New Jersey*

Cannabis professionals will gather to network, learn, promote their businesses, find jobs or careers, meet potential investors and discover investment opportunities, sell products, and engage directly with consumers. The educational program will address operation, innovation, medical and recreational retail markets, and how to navigate the New Jersey system.

NECANN.COM

INTERNATIONAL CANNABIS BUSINESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 15-16

Westin Bayshore Hotel, Vancouver, Canada

More than 1,500 executives and thought leaders from Canada and around the world are expected to attend ICBBC's third annual Vancouver business-to-business event. The agenda will include educational sessions about laws and regulation, mergers and acquisitions, investment, going public, importing and exporting, science, and technology.

INTERNATIONALCBC.COM



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Marketing Politics

There's a lesson for brands in dog-eat-dog political campaigns.

In her book *Consumer Democracy: The Marketing of Politics*, author Margaret Scammell makes the point politicians are marketed and sold to the public in much the same manner as consumer goods. Advertising is key to success, she wrote, although the analogy to consumer brands isn't perfect: Consumer goods are not usually marketed heavily for a short period of time during which everyone is forced to make a choice and award a multi-year contract to one product, as is the case with elections.

Today, political advertising has become an arms race, with each side trying to outspend the other. Research bears out this concept. A study published in *American Politics Research* found the vote share rose by about 0.5 percentage points for the candidate with the most television ads running in any given market over the course of an election.

"It's a small effect, but it could make a difference in a close election," the study concluded.

Furthermore, the style of the ad makes a big difference. A study in the *American Journal of Political Science* found campaign ads that make people feel fear—with ominous music and grainy images of drugs and violence—caused viewers to seek more information about a candidate, while ads that sparked feelings of enthusiasm in viewers—with upbeat music and images of flags and smiling children—reduced viewers' interest in learning more about candidates' positions but solidified their support.

"Fear ads heighten attentiveness and weaken people's reliance on partisan habits, while enthusiasm ads reassure you, and reaffirm the choice you've already made," the study's author said.

Negative "fear" ads are not new. One of the most infamous of all was the "Daisy" ad in 1964, when Democrat Lyndon Johnson's presidential campaign broadcast a spot featuring a little girl

picking petals off a flower until viewers saw a mushroom cloud in her eye, which implied hawkish Republican Barry Goldwater would push America into a nuclear war.

More recently, in the 2004 presidential race, an interest group supporting George W. Bush broadcast attack ads claiming Democratic candidate John Kerry had lied to obtain some of his medals while serving in the navy during the Vietnam War. Although the allegations were proved false, the commercials permanently damaged Kerry's reputation and electability.


The current U.S. president is no stranger to ads that make dubious claims. Republican Senator Jeff Flake called a 2018 Trump commercial "sickening" and "a new low in campaigning." The ad featured old courtroom footage of Luis Bracamontes, an illegal immigrant who was convicted of killing two Sacramento sheriff's deputies in 2014. The ad said, "Democrats let him into the country. Democrats let him stay."

Whether or not one believes this type of racially charged campaigning is moral, the facts in this case do not support the commercial's claims. The cop-killer featured in the incendiary video actually was released by infamous Republican Sheriff Joe Arpaio's office in 1998 and then re-entered the country during the George W. Bush administration.

Despite patently false claims, the ad's fear-mongering message worked. "Democrats are welcoming murderous immigrants into our country" was a cornerstone of Trump's presidential campaign and Republican midterm congressional campaigns. Expect to see the mantra resurrected during the current election cycle.

The sad fact is, today we live in a society that has reduced capacity for thoughtful exploration of issues. This "bumper-sticker" mentality—where people can be convinced by strong, short messages that evoke emotional responses—is especially fruitful for those who run political campaigns and can be utilized by those who manage brands in every other sphere of American business.

Does sharing a Coca-Cola really help you gain more friends? Does using Tide make you a better mother? Does wearing Nike shoes make you a better athlete?

Probably not. But truth matters less than emotional resonance. 



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greenlane

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Atrium: Targeting the Luxury Market

The dispensary's open concept sheds new light on high-end retail.

The first thing visitors notice upon entering Atrium in Woodland Hills, California, is the strange absence of the classic dank dispensary waft. With freshly brewed coffee hanging in the air, copies of local lifestyle magazines *Hidden Hills* and *Calabasas Style* strewn neatly across sofas, and budtenders wearing polo shirts and earpieces, the genial reception area is more akin to a health spa than the average pot shop.

"We wanted to create a dispensary that didn't feel like a dispensary," explained Chris Berman, chief operating officer for SoCal Building Ventures, the holding company behind the 5,250-square-foot dispensary and many other touchpoints along the cannabis supply chain. "There are some cannabis-specific elements, such as the check-in and a highly visible security presence, but other than that, we really wanted the feeling of shopping at Atrium to be like any other high-end retail experience."

Surrounded by drab strip malls deep in the San Fernando Valley, the Atrium building is a commanding presence. Built in 1972, the space most recently housed a boutique gym and sits at the busy intersection of Ventura and Topanga Canyon boulevards, crouched beneath the 101 freeway. Framed on its south and east sides by beautiful tall windows, its unassuming sign reads "Atrium: an elevated cannabis experience." Visitors quickly learn the tagline is, if anything, an understatement.







Each high-end brand is allowed free rein on product presentation.

“

Atrium is a high-end concept we will only repeat when we find the right mix of real estate and local demographics.

—Chris Berman, chief operating officer, SoCal Building Ventures

Inside, Atrium is a serene oasis. The chatter between staff and customers resonates lightly around the open space as abundant natural light pours into the room. The open-plan salesfloor is replete with modular glass cabinets with drawers that encourage consumers to explore and pick up the products, always accompanied by a budtender with an iPad.

“Every customer is matched with a sales associate before they enter the floor so we can guide them around and answer any questions they have,” said Berman. The strategy is imperative, as there is still a “substantial amount of [consumer] education that needs to be done.”

If some dispensaries are “a shrine to the plant,” as Green Growth Brands Chief Executive Officer Peter Horvath told *mg* in February, Atrium is an altar to the brand. Inside the cabinets, each company is given free rein to develop allotted real estate and present its products, with brands like CannDESCENT taking a whole cabinet to themselves. (One cannot help thinking that when CannDESCENT’s creative team envisioned a utopian retail context for their elegant, forward-looking packaging, they imagined something like Atrium.)

“The look, smell, taste, and touch are all such important parts of the experience,” Berman said. Many among Atrium’s clientele, he explained, are middle-aged and older, and many of them simply wouldn’t have ventured into the average

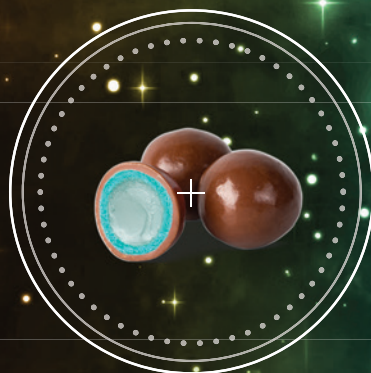
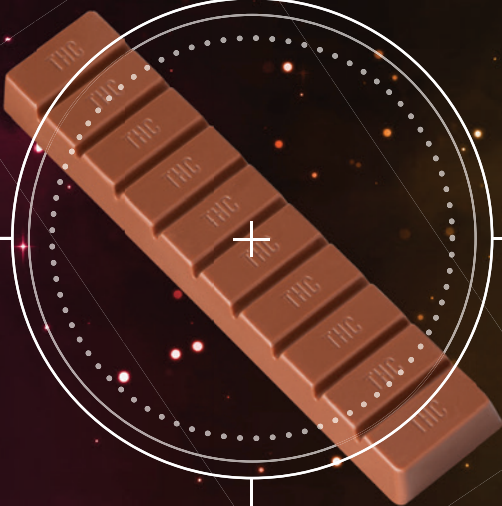


MOON

CANNABIS - INFUSED
- CHOCOLATE BARS AND BITES -

CHOCOLATE BARS

- ▶ BLASTED TOFFEE
- ▶ COSMIC CAPPUCCINO
- ▶ ROCKET FUDGE
- ▶ SPACEMAN MINT



HYBRID BITES

▶ BERRY BLASTERS



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Sales associates provide highly customized assistance.

dingy Los-Angeles-area dispensary. “For them, cannabis is still a bit of a taboo subject,” he added.

To disarm the lingering stigma and bring an “elevated cannabis experience” to life, SoCal tapped L.A.-based interior designer Julia Wong. Wong’s portfolio largely is composed of luxury residential properties and hotels. Despite Atrium being her first dispensary project, she was spurred by the prospect of rethinking the retail experience and “[challenging] the perception of cannabis through design.”

Inspired by opulent nineteenth-century Parisian apothecary Buly, Wong said she sought to develop a space with “authentic origins and roots, with modern lines, using natural materials.” The sleek, elegant interior focuses on amplifying products on the brand-specific shelves and in the wheeled glass display units inspired by luxury jeweler Tiffany’s.

“I focused on the high ceilings and controlled the light with motorized shades, allowing the space to be flooded with natural light, which is in such stark contrast to the traditional dispensaries in strip malls,” she said.

All the natural light plays to the aesthetic strengths of Atrium’s carefully selected stock. Significant space along the walls on the south side is allocated to marquee brands like Kurvana, Select, and Bloom, while heavyweights dosist and





Open shelves and drawers invite consumers to handle products.



We really wanted the feeling of shopping at Atrium to be like any other high-end retail experience.

—Chris Berman, chief operating officer, SoCal Building Ventures

Pax have deployed permanent brand ambassadors to stand by the door and scoop people as they enter, a testament to how much they covet Atrium's prized yet elusive demographic. The synergy of elevated, open design, compassionate customer service, and tightly curated product selection makes Atrium an appealing concept for the high-end community it serves.

When cannabis first unshackled the minds of America's youth in the 1960s, Topanga Canyon was known as a secluded hippie enclave, home to the likes of Neil Young and Charles Manson. Today, more than half the residents are 45 or older, and the median home value is \$1.3 million. "Woodland Hills is a reasonably affluent city, and there are a lot of super-affluent areas close by," Berman said. "We're the closest legal cannabis store to Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village, and Thousand Oaks, and we have a lot of customers come in from Malibu, as well."

With several millions of dollars invested in the buildout alone, the Atrium team was confident the concept would resonate with the surrounding community. "We want our customers to feel safe, and we want them to be comfortable in the store," he said. "The best way to do that is to create a space that feels familiar, like walking into a high-end department store."



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If some dispensaries are a shrine to the plant, Atrium is an altar to the brand.

According to Marketing Manager Melinda Gonzales, “On 4/20, we had three generations of the same family here: the grandmother, the mother, and the daughter. The grandmother just couldn’t believe this is where cannabis is today.”

The Atrium team is acutely cognizant of the store’s pan-generational demographic. By the time this *mg* issue hits the street, they expect to have launched a wellness area in the far corner of the shop floor. With specialized staff, a massage table, and an emphasis on CBD products, topicals, and education, Atrium is responding to an unmet need for in-depth product knowledge, science-backed recommendations, and wellness experiences consistent with the plant’s projected virtues.

SoCal Building Ventures owns several other active dispensaries, and many more are in various stages of development. In June, the group was one of only six successful applicants for a retail license in Pasadena, California. Assuming they find a property matching the “wow factor” the Topanga location commands, that shop will be the next iteration of the Atrium brand. “Atrium is a high-end concept we will only repeat when we find the right mix of real estate and local demographics,” Berman said.

With demographics closely mirroring the Topanga location and some of the most beautiful architecture in Southern California, Pasadena is a perfect fit for Atrium, the open, airy, sunlight-bathed concept which is defining the “right light” for cannabis retail. *mg*

5441 Topanga Canyon Blvd. | Woodland Hills, Calif.
AtriumTopanga.com

Photos: Atrium Topanga



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Debby Goldsberry, Executive Director, Magnolia Wellness



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Navigating the Cannabis Distillate Market Now and in the Future

Although cannabis flower remains a dominant form factor, current consumption trends in legalized markets show concentrates and oils are the underlying future of the cannabis industry. According to BDS Analytics and ArcView, concentrates are poised to continue rising in legalized markets while flower's share of sales steadily declines as consumers become more educated and increasingly look for more sophisticated, premium-quality products that meet their needs and desires.

For those interested in operating in the manufacturing space, certain key factors about the changing landscape must be taken into consideration as distillate consumption increases.

One of the biggest and most important factors for a successful operation is its biomass supply, as the quality and amount of distillate you eventually will produce is directly related to the biomass being processed in your facility. For example, you'll need to rely on maintaining a consistent supply in terms of quality. In California, we are primarily focused on sourcing premium biomass that passes the state's strict testing requirements.

In addition, relationships and knowledge of the industry really come into play when sourcing quality biomass, as finding cultivators who grow clean crops without harmful additives can be difficult. Developing and solidifying relationships is key to maintaining a good downstream production of the highest quality distillate.

When choosing a facility for production, knowing your desired output is important. Depending on how much distillate you aim to produce and the amount of space available to you, this will determine what type of equipment will be required to produce your distillate. Equipment is evolving at a fast pace, and equipment lead times can be a hinge point on projected facility start dates and projected revenue timelines for the business. Therefore, aligning the type of equipment you use with your overall business strategy and timeline for distillate production is crucial.

Testing labs also are key parts of the equation—especially knowing which testing labs in your area are reliable, as they provide the official approval needed in order to enter into the market. In our earliest experiences as a company, testing labs were unregulated and often misread test results because of improper training or a lack of cleaning and routine machine maintenance. This could result in major losses and jeopardize millions of dollars of product, not to mention the unnecessary costs associated with additional remediation that may need to be done.


Another little-known fact about the distillate testing process: Even biomass that meets all the testing requirements may be contaminated because, in certain instances, we may not know a product is contaminated until it has been refined and concentrated into distillate. As the industry continues to evolve in this category, it is another area clearly in need of improved testing mechanisms.

When it comes to regulatory requirements in this space, each city has very different laws and regulations for processing cannabis. In many cases, we've seen local officials don't always have a complete understanding about what they are dealing with when it comes to regulating the type of equipment and materials needed for a cannabis operation.

In addition, equipment technology is advancing much faster now than in previous years, giving way to safer processing and increased efficiency. In the past, there were very few equipment manufacturers researching how to process cannabis and developing safer, faster methods. As manufacturers in this industry, we have a responsibility to educate local officials and our communities about how technology has evolved to make our profession safer and more reliable. This is a common bottleneck area for distillate manufacturers, as prolonged red-tape battles can cost a lot of capital in order to stay afloat and continue forward with operations.

Color and potency also are significant factors for diversifying distillate. In this category, Gen X Biosciences created what is termed "molecular perfection," "water clear" distillate, a highly refined form with no color or smell and high potency. It literally looks like water. The boutique item was potent and pesticide-free when most of the industry wasn't. Currently, the majority of distillates come in various shades of gold and amber. The color depends on several factors within the supply chain and specific processes and equipment used in production. Color and potency aren't always related, but from what I've seen in my personal experience, a light-gold color is the most popular and most commonly purchased because of the longevity in the market of that color oil. To compare the trend to another market, white might be the most popular color for new car purchases, for example, even though the color doesn't affect performance or reliability. Popularity among consumers dictates the quantity of every product manufacturers produce.

As technology improves, we should see continued improvement in color consistency and availability. In addition, we may have a heavy influx of processors and biomass purchasers. According to my industry knowledge, out of the hundreds of manufacturing licenses issued, only a fraction actually are up and running. So, over the course of this year and into 2020, we should see a steady uptick in production and biomass consumption.

As the marketplace for distillates becomes increasingly competitive, the biggest factor I see evolving is branding. The distillates market will be heavily influenced by shelf space and investing in the market presence of brands, and less so by high-volume producers. Instead, the wholesale side of distillate will turn into a race to the bottom as brand awareness becomes the big play moving forward into 2020. 

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Gobbling Up the Market

Consumers increasingly seek ingestible products.

Consumers have spoken, and they want to consume cannabis. In rapidly growing numbers, both connoisseurs and the curious prefer cannabinoid-infused treats, snacks, drinks, and tinctures to combustible, vappable, and topical products. The reasons are many: 50 percent of consumers cite convenience as their number-one reason for choosing ingestibles over other forms. Many say they like the discretion of an odorless product that doesn't look like cannabis, consistent dosing, and the whole-body relief they can't find with topicals. Some confess to enjoying the wide variety of flavors and forms ingestibles present.

In its 2018 report "The Tasty Future of Cannabis Edibles," market research firm BDS Analytics asserted, "Legal cannabis markets in the United States, and soon Canada, will be the incubators of this nascent subcategory. Edibles spending topped \$1 billion in 2017 and is forecast to grow to more than \$4.1 billion by 2022." In 2019, BDS revised the spend down to \$3.4 billion—still a respectable sum.

Much of the growth will come from Canada, according to Jordan Sinclair, vice president of communications and media at Canadian multinational Canopy Growth Corporation. "In Canada, cannabis consumables are set to become federally legal in October," Sinclair said. "This will include categories such as edibles and beverages." Canopy, like most other manufacturers in the country, has developed a buffet of brands and forms just waiting to be put on the table.

Canadians may want to look to their south-of-the-border neighbors for clues about consumer preferences. In the U.S., flower remains king of the cannabis hill with \$768 million in 2019 sales through April, but edibles are mounting a *coup d'état*. Gummies, tinctures, and chocolate bars are leading the charge.

Gummies, which took over the category lead from chocolate in 2016, skyrocketed in popularity this year, with first-quarter sales expanding by 75 percent over 2018 levels. In polls, consumers have indicated they prefer gummies because they're portable, don't melt, and come in a wide variety of flavors. "During the first four months of 2019, seventeen of

the top twenty ingestible products in California, Colorado, and Oregon were gummies," BDS revealed, adding in California alone more than forty-five brands offer the form. "By comparison, gummies' top competitors—products like mints, tinctures, and even broad categories like chocolate (including both bars and pieces) and beverages (from single-serve shots to powdered teas to soda)—didn't see half the sales of gummies." Nationwide, gummies represented 39 percent of edibles sales through April.

Beverages are coming on strong, though. "With the rise of the cannabis beverage market, options abound: cold bottles of kombucha, tea bags, packaged shots of coffee, water-soluble powdered mixes, etc.," BDS noted on its list of top ten predictions for 2019. The firm added non-alcoholic, infused beers and wines are just now beginning to show an impact on subcategory sales. "There are countless ways to consume cannabis, arguably none easier—or more sociable and intriguing—than simply sipping."

Through November 2018, beverages composed 5 percent of the annual U.S. edibles spend, with sales topping \$30 million in 2018. By 2022, BDS expects sales to increase more than tenfold, to \$374 million—or roughly 10 percent of the overall edibles market.

Cannabis increasingly is considered "just another ingredient" in health-conscious, plant-based diets and alternative wellness lifestyles, at least in states with broad medical and/or recreational legalization. Lifting prohibition in the U.S. would represent a sea change for the restaurant and bar industries. Observers are looking to Lowell Café to provide the proof in the infused pudding when it opens in West Hollywood, California, in September. According to developer Lowell Herb Company and its partners, the first-of-its-kind venue will feature a menu of plates and beverages. Smoking and vaping will be allowed on the premises, but the café will not serve alcoholic drinks.

What products look like they'll become leaders with national potential as new markets open? We've put together a collection of contenders, from current consumer favorites to innovative new items to watch.

ALTAI DULCE DE LECHE BON BONS

CA

The filling for Altai's award-winning Dulce de Leche Bon Bons begins with condensed milk, caramelized slowly over four hours, then blended with oven-roasted white chocolate. The mixture is fused with cream, sugar, and Tahitian vanilla and cast in a silky 72-percent-cacao dark chocolate shell. Gluten-free; 10mg THC per treat.

AltaiBrands.com



1906 MIDNIGHT DARK MILK CHOCOLATE BAR

CO

1906's goal is to provide consumers with cannabis products that fit into their daily routine without overpowering them. Midnight contains a highly targeted blend of sleep-inducing plant medicines and relaxing cannabis to promote deeper and more restful sleep. Each bar contains 5mg CBD and 5mg THC; available in packs of three or six.

1906NewHighs.com



AUNT ZELDAS INFUSED OLIVE OIL

CA

Aunt Zeldas infuses organic olive oil with contaminant-free, strain-specific, full-spectrum cannabinoids, terpenes, and other beneficial compounds. Whole-plant extracts are produced using organic ethanol. Thirty milliliter bottles are available in both THC- and CBD-dominant versions in a variety of strengths, in addition to a 1:1 THC:CBD product that may appeal to patients new to cannabinoid medicine.

AuntZeldas.org



BAKED BROS POURABLE THC SYRUP

AZ, CA

Cherry, mango, grape, pineapple, strawberry-kiwi, and watermelon—Baked Bros offers those six fruity flavors in pourable, infused syrups, along with an unflavored blend. The syrups are diabetic-safe, vegan-friendly, and strain-specific; contain no artificial ingredients; and are made with real fruit extract. In fifteen-, thirty-, and sixty-dose bottles; 10mg THC per dose.

BakedBros.com



BHANG CHEWING GUM

CA, IL, MI, NM

Award-winning Bhang, long known for artisanal chocolates, has branched out in an unexpected direction: chewing gum. The gourmet gum comes in two varieties, both flavored with fresh mint: The CBD-infused product contains 25mg per piece blended with mango and lemongrass extracts; the THC product is infused with 25mg or 50mg per piece. Both are sweetened with stevia and xylitol.

BhangNation.com



Full Spectrum
CANNABIS

ROSETTE

High Quality
CBD STRAINS





CANNAMERICA FRUIT JUICE GUMMIES

CO, MA, MD, OK, NV

CannAmerica's fruit gummies come in sweet (orange sherbert, peach, strawberry banana) and sour (cherry, blue raspberry, Freedom Pop) varieties, as well as mixed packs containing some of each flavor. Ten pieces per pack; 10mg THC in each piece. The veteran-owned and -operated company uses a "clear oil" distillate instead of "food-grade" oil in its products.

CannAmericaBrands.com



CANNA STRIPE INFUSED GUMMIES

CA

Canna Stripe hand-crafts gummies and only gummies, which are offered in fruity flavors including cherry cotton candy, sour watermelon, strawberry, tangie pineapple, and very berry. Each brightly colored 2.2oz box contains ten gummies infused with 10mg THC. The company's name is a nod to Candy Strippers, a mid-twentieth-century group of young, female hospital volunteers who wore striped pinafores.

CannaStripe.com



CHARLOTTE'S WEB GUMMIES

NATIONWIDE

Charlotte's Web CBD gummies contain whole-plant extract and botanical blends to support sleep, calmness, and recovery. The plant-powered CBD gummies are flavored with natural juices from fruits and vegetables. Each jar contains sixty gummies infused with 10mg CBD in addition to extracts like melatonin, ginger, turmeric, lemon balm, and L-theanine.

CharlottesWeb.com



CHEEBA CHEWS INFUSED TAFFY

CA, CO, NV

Founded in 2009, award-winning Cheeba Chews, "the original cannabis-infused taffy," offers eight varieties of its seminal product. Each batch of high-grade oil used to create the products is tested at three critical stages to ensure consistent dosing. Taffy varieties include indica, sativa, hybrid, and CBD infusions in chocolate, caramel, and strawberry flavors. Each package includes ten 10mg chews.

CheebaChews.com



BLOOM FARMS TINCTURES

CA, NV

Bloom Farms' tinctures are made from full-spectrum CBD extracted from organically grown flower. The farm practices ecologically sound, biodynamic methods, and extraction is thermal, using no solvents. Balance, Relieve, and Recover formulations come in 1oz bottles containing 300mg, 600mg, and 1,200mg CBD, respectively. The company's 1-for-1 giving program provides one meal to a food-insecure family for each Bloom Farms purchase.

GetBloomFarms.com



CODA SIGNATURE CHOCOLATE BARS

CO

Coda's line of gourmet bars includes intriguing flavors like Snap & Spice, Caramel & Corn, Coffee & Doughnuts, Cream & Crumble, and Maple & Pecan. Each combination is blended into dark, white, or milk chocolate made from ethically sourced South American cacao. 2.3oz recreational bars contain twenty servings, each infused with 5mg THC; medical bars contain twenty servings of 10mg to 15mg THC.

CodaSignature.com



DR. NORM'S INFUSED COOKIES

CA

Crafted from a secret family recipe, Dr. Norm's bite-size treats are a flavorful way to medicate with precision or enjoy a discreet pick-me-up. Available in THC, CBD, or 1:1 in packages of one, ten, or twenty, each chocolate chip or vegan peanut butter chocolate cookie is infused with 5mg, 10mg, or 15mg medical-grade extract that imparts no cannabis taste.

DoctorNorms.com



DR. ROBB FARMS MOM'S FORMULA

CA

Robert Flannery, Ph.D., created these once-a-day, vitamin-like tablets to alleviate his mother's anxiety and stress following cancer treatment, when nothing else worked. The four scientifically measured formulas contain a combination of pesticide-free THC and CBD extractions in 1:1 or 5:1 (CBD:THC) ratios. All are precisely dosed to promote a sense of wellbeing and help alleviate inflammation.

DrRobbFarms.com



3LEAF FOODS QUINOA GRANOLA BITES

CA

3Leaf's vegan bites are packed with protein from quinoa and flax and infused with tasteless, odorless cannabis extract sourced from California's Humboldt region. Each child-proof package nourishes the body and mind with one all-natural, health-conscious treat containing 10mg THC.

3LeafEdibles.com

DIXIE LEMONADES

CA, CO, MD, MI, NV

Dixie's lemonade is a classic summer refresher...with a little something extra. Made with pure cane sugar, the beverages contain no artificial additives and elevate in about thirty minutes. The bottles are uniquely designed to preserve carbonation and resist children's curiosity. Available in 100mg or 200mg THC per bottle, with 6mg or 12mg per serving, respectively.

DixieElixirs.com



HIGH STYLE CANNA-BEER CA

High Style's social beverage comes with everything except the hangover. The original Pale Haze was developed in the heart of San Diego's craft brewing scene and, according to the company, looks and tastes like beer. Two other sparkling brews also are available: Grapefruit Haze and Blood Orange Haze. 10mg THC and fifty calories per bottle. HighStyleCa.com



EVERGREEN ORGANIX COCONUT OIL NV

The beneficial effects of coconut oil and cannabis merge in Evergreen Organix's Cannabis Coconut Oil. The 100-percent solvent-free product may be substituted for regular coconut oil in any application: added to food, eaten by the teaspoonful, or used topically. Dosed at 1,000mg THC per jar; medical patients only. EvergreenOrganix.com



FAIRWINDS SRIRACHA TINCTURE WA

Sriracha is on fire among mainstream foodies. With award-winning Fairwinds' "pho king hot" infused sriracha, a little goes a long way: The tincture measures 6,000 units on the Scoville heat scale (hotter than jalapeño peppers). Each 0.44oz bottle contains 100mg THC distributed across a suggested twenty-five servings. FairwindsCannabis.com



FLAV SWEET CREATIONS AZ, CA, CO, MI, NV, OR, WA

From the company formerly known as FlavRx, Sweet Creations are hard confections for those who prefer to savor their treats for a while. Flavors include root beer, tangerine, vanilla cream, green apple, blueberry, banana, and juicy pear. Each 1.76oz pouch contains ten treats infused with 10mg THC each. The company also offers, infused powdered drink mixes, chocolate bars, and gummies. FlavInc.com



INCREDIBLES PEANUT BUDDA BUDDHA BAR CO, IL, OR

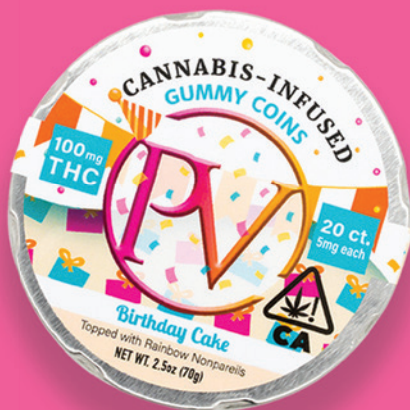
One of nineteen flavors on the incredible's chocolate bar menu, the Peanut Budda Buddha Bar is a study in contrasts: creamy white chocolate, salty peanut butter, and crunchy, gluten-free pretzels. All products are developed and produced in-house using sustainably sourced ingredients, and every batch is triple-tested for quality and consistency. In 100mg and 200mg THC; portioned for easy dosing. ILoveIncredibles.com



@PlatinumCaliPV | HouseofPlatinum.com | California & Michigan

LIFE IS BETTER IN PLATINUM

100 MG THC | 20 PIECES | 5 MG EACH



KIVA CHOCOLATE BARS

AZ, CA, NV

Kiva's award-winning chocolate bars debuted in 2010 and remain a best-seller in dispensaries. Each bar features easily breakable pieces for dose control. In a variety of potencies and eight milk chocolate and dark chocolate flavors, including ginger, tangerine, mint Irish cream, and vanilla chai.

KivaConfections.com

BLACKBERRY DARK CHOCOLATE

A HIGHER CHOCOLATE EXPERIENCE™

KIVA™

strength

180
MG THC

MEDICAL
CANNABIS

flavor

DARK CHOCOLATE

net wt.

50g (1.7oz)

WARNING:

THIS PRODUCT CONTAINS A
HIGH LEVEL OF THC. NOT A FOOD.
KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN.





JUNK WORLDWIDE MARSHMALLOW BON-BONS OR

Chocolate-covered vegan marshmallows topped with chocolate-infused salt, then infused with 3:2 CBD:THC extract and tucked inside a fun, whimsical package, make these nuggets something to behold. Imagine them in s'mores! Since their debut in 2017, the bite-sized gems have been a best-seller for parent company Leif Goods. Twelve servings to a box.

JunkWorldwide.com



KANEH COMPANY CHOCOLATE PALEO BITES CA

Kenah Co.'s menu of uncommon edibles grows all the time, but one product stands out: Paleo-friendly Chocolate Paleo Bites. The vegan, gluten-free, no-sugar-added, chocolate-nutty treats combine dates, cashews, almonds, cocoa powder, and other ingredients with clean cannabis extract to produce a gourmet experience. Each 5.1oz package contains ten bites, each infused with 10mg THC.

KanehCo.com



KEEF COLA INFUSED SODAS AZ, CA, CO, NV, PUERTO RICO

Founded in 2010 in Boulder, Colorado, Keef pioneered infused sodas. Today, the beverages are one of ten product lines in the company's catalog. Each bottle or can contains 10 mg THC for adult use and 100 mg THC for medical use. Flavors include Original Cola, Cherry Cola, Root Beer, Orange Kush, Blue Razz, Purple Passion, FLO Energy, and High Octane.

KeefBrands.com



LA VIDA VERDE SUPER COOKIES CA

This classic take on the original cannabis edible is a guilt-free option. Lightly baked to retain maximum nutrients, the cookies are available in THC and THC:CBD blends in a variety of flavors: brownie (sativa), lemon pie (indica or THC:CBD blend), raspberry (hybrid), and salted caramel (hybrid). Gluten-free and non-GMO. Ten cookies per 100mg bag.

LaVidaVerde.com

KUSHYPUNCH GUMMIES CA

KushyPunch uses a cannabinoid-rich, full-spectrum oil to craft its high-potency, low-calorie fruit gummies. The line includes Sativa (strawberry), Hybrid (tropical punch), Indica (plum), Private Reserve (pink lemonade), Recover (black and blue raspberry), Sugar Free (lychee), and KushyCBD (peach). Gluten-, dairy-, fat-, peanut-, and GMO-free and 100-percent organic. Ten gummies per box; various potencies.

KushyPunch.com





KIN SLIPS SUBLINGUAL STRIPS CA

Kin Slips' cannabinoids and terpenes travel into the bloodstream through oral membranes, taking effect in ten to fifteen minutes. The sublingual squares are available in four blends: Cloud Buster for energy and focus, Float On for balance and tranquility, Park Life for comfort and relief, and Shut Eye for serenity and sleep. Ten slips per box; THC, CBD, and combinations.

KinSlips.com



LOVE'S OVEN CHEDDAR CRACKERS CO

Who isn't a sucker for a good love story? Love's Oven offers a line of carefully crafted infused edibles like nothing found anywhere else. The Cheddar Crackers—made with real cheddar cheese, cannabutter, and fresh rosemary—are delicate and savory. Each package contains ten individually wrapped crackers infused with 10mg THC each.

ChooseTheLove.com



MAD HATTER URBAN MYTH COFFEE

AZ, CO, IL, NM, NV, OR, VT, WA

Made from organic, fair trade, shade-grown, Kosher ingredients, Mad Hatter's gluten- and sugar-free decaffeinated instant coffee blends 100-percent Arabica beans with spices for a crisp, mellow brew. Infused with indica, each packet contains 10mg THC. The company is devoted to ensuring suppliers provide safe social and economic environments for workers and are kind to the Earth.

MadHatterCoffeeAndTea.com



MELLOWS GOURMET MARSHMALLOWS

CA

Created by a former gourmet chef, these artisanal marshmallows are whipped, carved, and molded by hand using coconut oil infused with solventless hash made from single-origin Red Congolese sativa. Each bite-sized pillow is dusted with shortcake, pretzels, cookie crumbs, or rainbow sprinkles. Flavors include birthday cake, brown butter sage, orange dreamsicle, black sesame, and s'mores. 5mg THC per piece.

GetMellows.com



LEGAL SPARKLING TONICS

AZ, CA, CO, MA, OR, WA

Legal's beverages contain no alcohol or high-fructose corn syrup, but they do contain signature West Coast flavors: pomegranate (sativa), cranberry (balanced CBD:THC), lemon ginger (indica), Ranier cherry (hybrid), and espresso mocha (sativa). The all-natural bubbly brews are crafted with locally sourced ingredients and locally grown cannabis extract. Two servings per 11.5oz bottle.

MirthProvisions.com

Original Pot Co.

CANNABIS-INFUSED
COOKIES

ALWAYS
PERFECTLY
BAKED!

ENJOY OUR BITE-SIZED COOKIES IN 3 DELICIOUS FLAVORS
CHOCOLATE CHIP - DOUBLE FUDGE - WHITE CHOCOLATE MACADAMIA NUT



ORIGINALPOTCO.COM  ORIGINALPOTCO

NOT FOR SALE TO MINORS. LICENSEE: CYPRESS MANUFACTURING CO. # CDPH-10002196

PLATINUM GUMMY COINS

CA, MI

The latest addition to Platinum's line of premium edibles, Gummy Coins are infused disks in five fun flavors: Birthday Cake, Watermelon, Fruit Punch, Cocoa Banana Cream Pie, and Blue Raspberry, each topped with a complementary sprinkle of rainbow nonpareils, sparkling sugar, or chocolate cookie crumbs. Each 100mg tin contains twenty 5mg coins, none of which bear hints of cannabis taste.

HouseOfPlatinum.com



ORIGINAL POT CO. COOKIES

CA

Original Pot Co. offers a lot more than the standard fare when it comes to its infused cookies. The packaging is reminiscent of classic baked goods, and all batches are crafted by hand. Cookies are available in three varieties, including a white chocolate macadamia nut version. Each cookie contains 10mg THC; single servings or packages of ten.

OriginalPotCo.com



MOOD33 INFUSED SPARKLING TONIC

CA

With mood33, customers can choose Joy, Passion, Calm, and Peace—and who couldn't use a little more of all those? Joy is THC-only, while the other blends feature various THC:CBD ratios. Ingredients include natural botanical flavors and extracts, and none of the drinks exceeds thirty-three calories per bottle. 10mg THC per 12oz bottle, except Peace, which contains 20:2 CBD:THC per 12oz bottle.

mood33.com



MOON BERRY BLASTERS

CA

These milk chocolate spheroids with a chewy fruit center incorporate ingredients sourced from artisanal chocolatier Guittard Chocolate Company and flavorings from respected California manufacturer Amoretti. Each hybrid blaster is infused with 10mg THC. Ten pieces per 100mg package.

MoonMegadose.com



MR MOXEY'S MINTS

AZ, CA, CO, OR, WA

Mr. Moxey's tiny micro-dosed mints carry an outsize flavor payload of peppermint or cinnamon infused with indica or sativa and combined with "herbal allies" like poppy, ginkgo, chamomile, echinacea, ginseng, and gooseberry. Formulations vary from 1:1 to 5:0 THC:CBD, but all are gluten-free, vegan, and artisan-crafted in small batches. Twenty 5mg mints per tin.

MoxeysMints.com



PUNCH EDIBLES PUNCH BARS

CA

Award-winning Punch Bars come in five varieties (including sugar-free and CBD-only) and dozens of flavor combinations including dark chocolate raspberry, strawberry cheesecake, and milk chocolate cappuccino. Some are gluten-free; all reach peak effect in sixty to ninety minutes. Each 22g bar is cleanly divided into nine servings of 10mg THC.

PunchEdibles.com





OM EDIBLES EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

CA

For imaginative diners, Om's Extra Virgin Olive Oil offers a host of medicinal options: Bake, drizzle, sizzle, or rub the product into or onto everything from salads to treats to meats and veggies. The versatile, full-spectrum oil is infused with extract from cannabis flowers grown in full sun. Each 2oz bottle contains 200mg THC.

OmEdibles.org



ROSETTE BLENDED TINCTURES

CA

Rosette's award-winning tinctures—Wellness (designed for women and overall health), Balance (designed for men and active lifestyles), R.E.M. (for sleep), and LVL (for pain and stress)—combine specially formulated full-plant extract and Humboldt-grown flower with MCT oil. All contain high antioxidant levels and may be used both orally and topically. 10mg THC per milliliter.

RosetteWellness.com



SHOOGIES SWEETENERS

CA

This “sweetener with benefits” changes the game for cocktails, baked goods, table sugar, drinks... anything that needs a dash of sweetness. Shoogies contain only cannabis-infused, unbleached, USDA-certified organic cane sugar or EU-certified-biodynamic, organic agave nectar. At 5mg THC per serving, they're low-dose, easy to use, and discreet. Twenty single-serving packets per 5oz box.

Shoogies.com



SHREDIBLES VEGAN PROTEIN BARS

NATIONWIDE

Eight months in development, Shredibles' homemade recipe maximizes nutrition with organic, farm-sourced gluten-, soy-, and dairy-free ingredients including chocolate, peanut butter, nuts, pea protein, rolled oats, brown rice syrup, and dates. Each bar contains 280 calories, 11g fat, 15g protein and 20mg CBD. Dark Chocolate Blueberry, Peanut Butter Crunch, and White Chocolate Macadamia in boxes of thirty-six bars.

ShrediblesCBD.com



STONED GOURMET INFUSED PIZZA

NJ, NY

Weighing in at 320mg THC per pizza (40mg per slice), Stoned's gourmet option is a Netflix-and-chill-and-cannabis Friday night in a box. Chef Chris “The Pizza Pusha” Barrett uses only fresh, never-frozen, ingredients and makes each pie to order. The company also offers infused wings, cannoli, gelato, and cheesecake and is looking for franchisees and investors.

ThePizzaPusha.info



SUBLIME CANNA FREEZE

CA

Sublime Canna's ice pops are a childhood favorite all grown up. The classic frozen treats come in two throwback flavors: blue raspberry and fruit punch. Perfect for the beach, the pool, backyard barbecues, or just hanging out, each 2oz pop is infused with 10mg THC. Available in packs of two or ten.

SublimeCanna.com



SUNDERSTORM KANHA GUMMIES

CA

Sunderstorm utilizes nanomolecular technology to produce its award-winning Kahna gummies, which the company says deliver rapid effects, allowing consumers to dose more accurately. Flavors include Sublime Key Lime Hybrid, Passionfruit Paradise Indica, and Cran-Pomegranate Punch Sativa. Each gummy contains 5mg THC, 4g sugar, and 23 calories. Twenty pieces to a package.

Sunderstorm.com



TINLEY TONICS BEVERAGES

CA

Tinley Tonics' ready-to-drink beverages are non-alcoholic, single-serve versions of some of America's favorite mixed drinks. Margarita-inspired Stone Daisy Blue Agave Lime Tonic and Moscow-mule-inspired High Horse Spicy Ginger and Lime Tonic are crafted with natural flavors and spiked with a microdose of Pineapple Jack sativa. Each 12oz bottle contains only 30 calories and 6g or less of sugar.

DrinkTinley.com



TONIC FROST INFUSED POPSICLES

IL

Tonic Frost's new treat allows patients to "medicate and chill" with three flavors in packs of four ice pops: Red Envy (cherry lime; 25mg CBD, 25mg THC per pop), Pink Passion (strawberry pineapple; 25mg THC per pop), and Green Delight (watermelon lime; 75mg CBD, 25mg THC per pop).

PTSillinois.com



WANA BRANDS SOUR GUMMIES

AZ, CO, FL, IL, MI, NV, OR

Wana's product lines vary by state and category (recreational and medical), but the company's signature and perennially best-selling gummies are available in some form in all states in which Wana operates. Potencies, flavors, and ratios are wide ranging, as are flavors. Check the website for the most current catalog, new releases, and expansion into new states.

WanaBrands.com

TWO ROOTS CRAFT CANNABIER

CA, NV

Two Roots coined a new term for cannabis-infused malt beverages: cannabier. The product lineup consists of five brews: Sonder, a twist on blonde ale; RCG, inspired by Irish ale; Tropical Infamy and Enough Said, both reminiscent of Bavarian beverages; and New West. Each can contains 5mg THC, 70 to 110 calories, and 0.5 percent alcohol by volume.

TwoRootsBrewing.com





**WYLD
ENHANCED GUMMIES**
CA, NV, OR

WYLD's gummies bring to mind a summer basketful of natural flavors, in this case raspberry, huckleberry, marionberry, pomegranate, strawberry, and the latest, peach. The products contain real fruit juice but no artificial flavorings or colorings. Strawberry is infused with cannabis-derived CBD (no THC), but the others contain sativa, indica, or hybrid extracts in varying THC:CBD ratios.

WyldCanna.com



VERT COOKIE SQUARES

NV

In eight flavors (chocolate chip cookie, snickerdoodle, caramel brownie, chocolate chip brownie, strawberry shortcake, red velvet cake, espresso toffee, and cookies and cream), VERT's cookies evoke memories of homemade goodies from bake sales gone by. The 100mg squares contain all-natural ingredients with health benefits of their own, but they're a bit difficult to dose.

VertUnlimited.com

WILDFLOWER FOODS GRANOLA BITES

CA

Crafted to provide all-natural energy and promote wellness on the go, Wildflower's vegan, gluten-free, in-house-developed recipes combine oven-roasted rolled oats, chopped almonds, chopped medjool dates, peanut butter, agave syrup, and stevia-sweetened chocolate chips to provide all-natural energy. In ginger almond and peanut butter chocolate flavors, both infused with locally sourced cannabis extract. Packages contain four bites; 2.5mg or 10mg per piece.

WildflowerFoods.com



ATLAS EDIBLES GOURMET GRANOLA CLUSTERS

CA

Atlas's granola clusters address different experiences: Stratus (lemon, blueberry, and poppyseed) and Nimbus (dark chocolate, pecan, and hazelnut) promote balance, mindfulness, and playfulness; Ember (caramel, cashew, and cayenne) invokes positivity, functionality, and creativity; and Origin (Mexican chocolate and pepitas) supports relaxation, healing, and wellbeing. 10mg THC per serving; eight servings per package.

AtlasEdibles.com







PROPOSITION COCKTAILS NATIONWIDE

Bottled in 200ml glass flasks reminiscent of the Prohibition era, Proposition's cocktails contain a 15mg hit of CBD but no alcohol. In two flavors: Turmeric Ginger Mule (adaptogenic turmeric, ginger, and citrus) and Smokey Margarita (lime, mint, smoked chipotle chilis, and sea salt); packaged six bottles to a case. Serve over ice or use as a mixer. PropositionCocktail.co

CANNABELLA HONEY

NV

Known for its antibacterial properties, raw honey is an ancient remedy for inflammation, sore throats, and wounds. Used as a natural sweetener or flavoring or enjoyed by itself, Cannabella's is infused with 10mg THC per tablespoon, adding cannabis medicine's restorative and therapeutic properties.

CannabellaKitchen.com



ATHELAS SEASONING MIXES

CO

Handcrafted of all-natural spices and herbs and infused with solventless cannabis extract, Athelas mixes may be used as dips, dressings, and even taco seasoning. Season ground meat, mix with sour cream, mayo, milk, or a combination and dip veggies or chips or top almost anything. In French Onion, Creamy Ranch, and Southwestern flavors; 10mg THC per 0.5oz pouch.

ToLiveBeFree.com



DISTRICT EDIBLES GUMMIES

CA, CO, NM, NV

District Edibles are made from scratch in small batches, each infused with CO₂-extracted cannabis oil. Available in three flavors per species: indica in blue raspberry, lemon-lime, and orange; sativa in cherry cola, strawberry, and tropical punch; and hybrid in peach, sour apple, and watermelon. Gluten-free with fewer than 3g sugar and 10 calories per dose; 100mg THC per package.

DistrictEdibles.com



JADE & JANE CUPCAKES

CO

Packed in single servings and ready to eat, female-owned and -operated Jade & Jane's cupcakes target the gourmet edibles consumer. Vegan, dairy-free, and food-allergy-friendly, the pastries are available in chocolate, vanilla bean, and red velvet flavors. Infused with 10mg THC per serving.

JadeAndJane.com



KIKOKO INFUSED HERBAL TEAS

CA

Women-owned Kikoko combines medical-grade, CO₂-extracted cannabis oil, spices, and tea leaves to create all-organic herbal teas. Based on clinical research, each formula pairs cannabinoids, synergistic herbs, and herb terpenes to address a specific need: mood, libido, sleep, or pain. Each single-serving envelope contains 3mg to 20mg THC in varying ratios with CBD or CBN.

Kikoko.com

PEARL₂₀ FOOD AND BEVERAGE MIXER

CA, WA

Developed over a three-year period by food scientists, Pearl₂₀ is made from SōRSE, a proprietary, water-based cannabis emulsion that maintains full potency when cooked, chilled, or frozen. The mixer contains no calories, fat, cholesterol, or sugar, and is free of scent and flavor. Available in three strengths: 10mg, 50mg, and 100mg, each at a 1:1 ratio THC:CBD.

Pearl20.com



ZOOTBLAST ENERGY SHOTS

CO, WA

With *carpe diem* inscribed on each bottle, ZootBlasts are energy drinks for grownups. The base concoction, called ZootBlend, pairs proprietary THC Cypress Extract with natural enhancers including yerba mate, guarana, and lemon balm to promote a clear-headed high with an energizing kick. Each 1oz shot is infused with either 10mg THC or 30mg THC.

Zootology.com



GOODSHIP PEPPERMINT PATTIES

OR, WA

Infused mint fondant made with single-distilled pure, organic peppermint essential oil cloaked in organic dark chocolate creates a crisp, cooling, creamy experience. The high-grade CO₂-extracted cannabis oil leaves no “weedy” flavor but does provide a full-spectrum, balanced high. Available in packages of one, four, and twelve 5mg patties.

TheGoodship.com



POP-UP POTCORN

CA

Cleverly named and sized for snacking at 44.5g per single-serving mini-bag, this microwave popcorn comes in three sea-salted potencies: THC (10mg), CBD (10mg), or THC:CBD (5mg:5mg). Ingredients include organic popcorn, organic palm oil, and cannabinoid extract. No GMOs or artificial flavoring. 190 calories, 26g carbs, and 4g protein per serving.

PopUpPotcorn.com



MŪRU CANNAMIXERS

OR

Made with custom-blended, full-spectrum oils from East Fork Cultivars, Mūru’s mixers are water-soluble and may be added to any drink. Each 2oz container is infused with either 50mg THC or a 1:1 blend of 50mg THC and 50mg CBD. In blackberry lemon sativa, lemon mint indica, or grape hybrid.

MuruCollective.net



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Mile High Labs is setting the standards for cannabidiol (CBD) ingredient manufacturing. Our proprietary process yields some of the most scientifically advanced CBD available while supplying a considerable portion of the world's overall market. Mile High's industrial-scale laboratories and private labeling services are trusted by global partners who understand that compliance, consistency and quality are critical to success.

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Binske's Secret Ingredient

Rapidly expanding state by state, Binske is a study in artisanal craft.

Binske co-founder and Executive Vice President Alex Pasternack recently returned from the jungles of Peru, where he visited the out-of-the-ordinary farm from which his company sources the cacao beans used to make its chocolate bars. He wanted to bundle up the entire team and take them for a visit, too. He's that in love with the place.

According to Pasternack, seeing the plantation on an episode of the late Anthony Bourdain's *No Reservations* was a stroke of good luck. Purportedly, the farm is the only one in the world still harvesting the once-thought-extinct Pure Nacional species, considered the world's finest—and rarest—cacao. After roasting, the beans produce an intense chocolate aroma and mellow richness. Alex and his brother, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Jake Pasternack, signed an exclusive deal with the farm's owner, making Binske the only cannabis chocolatier in the world to use the hand-picked, organic, fair-trade chocolate.

"This was key to getting Binske off the ground and into shops," Alex said. "When we first presented [our products] to retail buyers before sourcing from [the cacao plantation's owner], we were told the chocolate market was saturated. After we started using the Pure Nacional cacao, that changed."

Since then, the award-winning brand has grown steadily. The brothers divvy up responsibilities: Jake oversees branding, financing, and genetics, and Alex handles business development and partnerships.

Like many others in the industry, the brothers' business grew from a personal connection with the plant: Both were diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. "We both found cannabis could help us, and that is something we share," Alex said, remarking that in most other respects they are polar opposites.

Jake is a flower gastronome—a sort of "cannabis sommelier." The brothers feel Jake's well-defined plant genetics alloyed

with carefully sourced ingredients are what set their products apart in the high-end retail space. They both understand the importance of the customer experience. "That's what really drives us," Alex said. Before any new undertaking, they ask themselves, "How is this improving the cannabis experience?" Hence the brand's tagline: "The highest standards didn't exist, so we created them."

Binske's packaging is unusual in the high-end market: vibrant, artistic, with hints of Grateful Dead imagery among mystical sunscapes, seascapes, and moonscapes populated with butterflies, octopi, and tigers. The level of detail is enchanting. Originally, the brothers planned to open a cannabis retail location in Aspen and wanted an eye-catching mural for the windows. They commissioned an artist from the United Kingdom to create a series of collages with earth, wind, fire, and water themes; those became packaging designs. "We had no idea what was going to take place," Alex said. "The iconic series transformed the brand. The packaging engages the eye, and the product engages the rest of the senses. It's multisensory and immersive. Every time I look at the packaging, I see something different."

The company's name owes a debt to whimsy. "Binske" evolved along a winding route of brotherly wordplay, from "doobie" to "dubinsky" to the shortened form "binsky" and finally to Binske, which is pronounced with a silent E. "When we decided to create a cannabis brand, we wanted to embody a sense of innocence and intimacy of shared moments," Alex said. "Today, the brand Binske aims to redefine cannabis through the plants and ingredients that are cherished throughout the entire process, because we know every moment deserves to be singularly savored."

The product line is uncommonly broad, boasting flower, tinctures, vape pens, pate de fruit, live resin, fruit leather, granola, olive oil, chocolate bars, massage oils, bath salts, salves, and honey. The latter is crafted by a heritage apiarist, exemplifying the brand's farm-to-table ethos and its determination to offer products made from artisanal ingredients from all over the world. "Binske represents a complexity of flavors and sensations with every bite, sip, or hit," Alex said. "In order to select optimum ingredients, it is essential to understand

where, how, and when such ingredients are harvested. At the end of the day, it's the quality of the raw ingredients that sets us apart. We were the pioneers that started using some of the finest raw ingredients in the world imbued with cannabis, and we want to keep it that way."

With that in mind, he and Jake have invested considerable time visiting their suppliers worldwide.

Vapes are the company's best seller, followed closely by pre-rolls and concentrates. "This is because people can immediately taste the difference in our plant

big prize is California, where they plan a September launch of the entire line. Despite the competition, they're bullish on the Golden State because edibles and vapes are a huge market segment. They believe consumers will embrace the original chocolate bars, in particular, in single-source flavors like Honduran Oro Maya with raspberries, Pure Nacional with hazelnuts, and Honduran Oro Maya with sea salt. A 2017 Leafly award for Edible Brand of the Year indicates their assumption may be accurate. "As our fan bases in Nevada and Colorado continue to become more passionate about the brand, we see

The packaging engages the eye, and the product engages the rest of the senses. It's multisensory and immersive.

—Alex Pasternack, co-founder, Binske



genetics," Alex said. Jake created the strains to be a multisensory experience: taste, aroma, and what he calls "oomph." "Time and again, people tell us once they have one of our flower or concentrate products, they don't want anything else," Alex said.

Binske's original grow, lab, and manufacturing facilities are in Colorado, but the three-year-old company is expanding to multiple states through a series of partnerships with local experts. "We like this model [instead of building from the ground up] because we can collaborate with some of the amazing operators that are out there instead of having to compete with them," he said. "We now have signed four licensing deals, and some of our operators are publicly traded."

Now on shelves in Nevada and Colorado, the company plans a Florida debut in the fall, led by Binske's 100-percent estate-produced olive oil, which Alex said will be the first edible product available in the state. For the Pasternack brothers, however, the

significant growth opportunities there, too," Alex said.

Though the licensing route is working well for them so far, the model is not without its challenges. Alex said Binske has been fortunate to find solid partners but had to turn down opportunities in 2018 because the brothers are self-admitted sticklers for detail. Alex said they consider partnership a marriage and undertake a lengthy courtship before signing on the dotted line. "We don't make our money until our partner makes their money," he said. "Our team is inextricably tied together with our partners. Our [chief marketing officer] talks to our partner CMOs weekly, our [chief financial officer] with theirs, sales team to sales team, etc. We will not see revenue until our partner has success with our brand, so finding the right partners is crucial." Binske aspires to wedded bliss in ten states by the end of the year, which would give the company one of the largest footprints in the United States. 🍀

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Robert Weakley's DOMAIN

Indus Holdings is in the middle of a period of growth and transformation, courtesy of the Willy Wonka of Weed.

Having raised \$46 million in a Series B round that ended last October and now trading on the Canadian Stock Exchange (CSE) under the symbol INDS, Indus Holdings Inc. generates big numbers on a daily basis. The revenues are fueling major expansion of the vertically integrated company's cultivation, extraction, manufacturing/processing, sales and marketing, and distribution divisions, all of which are scaling rapidly thanks to partnerships and acquisitions. At its core, though, Indus is all about the brands.

It's one thing to talk about large-scale cannabis cultivation in California and quite another to see it in action. Indus, with twenty-one provisional cultivation licenses held by its Cypress Manufacturing subsidiary, is in the final phase of building out 250,000 square feet of state-of-the-art, mixed-light cultivation and nursery facilities on ten acres just outside Salinas, California. Fifty years ago, the four 55,000-square-foot greenhouses were home to ivy grown for topiaries. Now, they're under renovation one at a time, transforming into weed-generating machines that will grow cannabis at scale with automated systems controlling every facet of the environment. Already, the facility harvests about 3,500 plants a week.

Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Robert Weakley walked the grounds of the facility early one July morning, energetically explaining every facet of an operation that distributes upwards of 10 million milligrams of cannabis product every month. A veteran restaurateur, Weakley founded Indus in 2014. In 2015, *Los Angeles Magazine* dubbed him the "Willy Wonka of Weed" based on the explosive success of the company's Altai chocolate bonbons.

"Everything starts here," he said. "My background is in culinary arts and hospitality. You can't start with a crappy piece of fish or meat and make it great. You've got to start with a great product, and that's what we've got to do here. We've got to make sure our manufacturing and operations teams have the best product to work with, [so] we broke [the greenhouses] down to the bare bones, down to the metal structure, and rebuilt them."

THE GREENHOUSES

A rich, dank, clean smell envelopes one expansive growing room filled with tables covered by thick green plants over which lights, fans, and other devices hang. Weakley pointed to a smallish box hanging from the top of the infrastructure.

“That’s the Argus sensor,” he said. “It’ll open the vent in the roof automatically if it feels the humidity is too high or the airflow is off, and it turns on and shuts off the lights based on where everything’s at. So, typically somewhere between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., depending on the day, the lights will shut off, and then we’ll use our natural resources until [the lights] click back on around four or five [o’clock p.m.]”

From cloning to harvest, the entire lifecycle of the plants takes place over about ten weeks. Each generation is arranged by height on massive pallets that move sideways so staff can tend to each plant. “We have about sixty different genetics in our portfolio,” said Weakley. “We’re taking all the clippings from the mom plants and then the clones go into what we call the Clone Dome, which can hold 60,000 clones at any one time. They will typically stay [under the dome] about two weeks” before graduating into larger and larger pots about every two weeks.

“This was all mom plants literally last week,” he said, pointing to an empty section of the massive greenhouse. “I walked in today, and I’m like, ‘Whoa, somebody robbed all our genetics.’ But they literally kill them every six months—literally kill all the moms because they can take only a certain number of clippings until they have to wipe them all out and start with all new ones. So, these [moms] are only two months old or so.”

He pointed to several LED grow lights hanging above a section of plants, a different brand (ALDGreen) from the Gavita Indus normally uses. “This is kind of interesting, what we’re doing here,” he said. “This company came to us and said, like every lighting company, ‘We’re going to increase your yield by 20 percent, and we’re going to increase your THC [content].’ I’m like, ‘Prove it. I’ll give you the space.’ So, we’ve got 120 of them in this room, and the room right next to it has the exact same genetics

planted on the same day, same everything, but with Gavita lights versus these. We’re going to compare them side by side. I said, ‘Listen, you increase my yield and my THC by 20 percent, [and] I’ll buy your lights for the entire operation.’”

Weakley estimated the market value of the test lights at about \$250,000. That’s the kind of clout Indus has earned.

The scale of the operation and the logistics required to run it are mind-boggling, but Weakley, who constantly exalts the individual contributions of team members, clearly is having the time of his life. “Right now, I have eight rooms in this building,” he said. “When fully renovated, we will have thirty-six of these rooms, producing about 250 pounds [of cannabis] every ten weeks.”

As impressive as that sounds, cultivation is but one part of a greater whole. “This is all great, but for us, we’re in the cultivation business—but not really,” he said. “For us, this is feedstock. This is creating the product to make sure we can control our destiny by creating our brands. I remember as I watched legalization get started in 2016, Dixie, a great brand, was off the shelves for six, eight, ten weeks because they couldn’t get clean feedstock trim, oil, whatever.

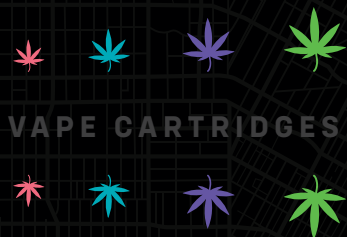
“Well, we wanted to make sure we never relied on anybody else to make sure that our brand stayed on shelves,” he continued. “That’s why we got into the cultivation business. We also wanted to make sure that every time you

“

Right now, we produce about 200 pounds of trim a week. We can do about 2,000 [vape] cartridges a shift, and we run multiple shifts depending on the days.



Photo: Indus Holdings



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What about the idea differing seasons result in harvests of varying quality, as with wine? "It's the same thing," said Weakley, who believes the Salinas area will develop its own appellation. "We believe Monterey County is going to be one of the great cannabis growing regions. Just like Napa Valley and Monterey County are known for wine, Humboldt, Big Sur, and Monterey are known for growing cannabis."

FEEDING THE BEAST

Big operations require copious resources no matter how efficient they are. To that end, Indus is meeting the challenge in traditional and innovative ways. "The two most expensive things for growing cannabis are water and electricity, but we also have our own well, so it's pretty great," said Weakley. "Our general



People don't realize distribution is the most complex area of [the cannabis] chain by far.



manager, Feliciano, has been on this property for over twenty years. He knows the Salinas Valley and has had multiple properties out here, and he'll tell you it's one of the best wells." The well water is tested every month, he added.

A concrete foundation in the ground outside one of the buildings sits ready to house a new, more powerful electrical system. "We're in the middle of a million-dollar power upgrade to 4,000 amps to run all the lighting," said Weakley. "We look at any way we can to save energy and resources. The team is even talking about capturing the rainwater and then recirculating it. Also, by August this entire property will be blacktop. It'll be gorgeous—brand-new blacktop right from the front, with a little entryway. The whole idea is to start to make this look like a winery in Napa, with all the cleanliness and sense of hospitality."

The company's focus on water is not limited to having a good well. Indus also utilizes an innovative irrigation system by RootsTalk. "We met them at an ag-tech summit, not even for cannabis," said Weakley. The system is "all about watering the roots. Typically, a cannabis company—and even us up until recently—will water the plants two or three times a day, soaking them. It's not the best way. What this system does is spritz the roots about eighty times a day. It gets the roots to grow and fight for pot space, which is going to get you a much more robust plant."

As with the lights, he gave RootsTalk a trial run to prove the system does what the company claims. It did. "We can control everything from my laptop anywhere in the world," Weakley said. "These guys can dial in from Israel and see the plant twelve rows in needs something. The system monitors all the rooms." The system also improved production. "I think it was improved by 16 or 17 percent," Weakley said.

Indus employs about 330 people, up from four employees four years ago. "[We're] a significant employer," Weakley said. "Nobody makes below minimum wage. Everybody has health benefits, vision, dental, the whole thing. And then when you think about all this subsidiary labor we use—all the electric,

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The surrounding community has noticed the economic impact, but Weakley seems almost awed by the realization Indus is a giant in an area dominated by produce growers. “I just got notified that next Saturday is the Monterey County Business Council’s economic awards for the year, and we got ag company of the year. This is the home of big ag. I mean, this is Driscoll Strawberry, and we just got ag company of the year. Two years ago, we won Small Business of the Year for all of Monterey County. Did you know you can fit two Rhode Islands into Monterey County? It’s a big area, and not just cannabis.”

DISTRIBUTION

In the heart of the small city of Salinas, Indus’s massive cavern of a warehouse is filled with ceiling-tall shelves awaiting goods. In June, the distribution arm resided in Los Angeles.

“Our trucks leave Los Angeles each day with any of the product that’s needed for NorCal,” said Weakley. “They come here, stage everything into the vehicles for Northern California, and then go out.”

Of course, cannabis comes with many unique requirements that add layers of logistical complexity to what otherwise would be straightforward tasks, including the rigorous job of applying post-testing labeling. Indus currently readies 10,000 products a day for shipment. That number surely will rise.

“People don’t realize distribution is the most complex area of this chain by far,” said Weakley. “In California, the distributor is responsible for all label compliance, even if it’s not our brand. So, if we ship somebody else’s brand to the dispensary and that package isn’t compliant, we’re the ones who get fined and tagged. We’re responsible for all lab testing, to make sure there are no pesticides and everything else passes. If a product fails, we’re responsible for destroying it on camera and reporting that to the [Bureau of Cannabis Control].”

“We’re also responsible for removal of waste, and for all tax collection for

cultivators and the excise tax for retailers, and then paying all the taxes to the state. So, distribution is very complex, and I think you’re going to see—just like in any other [consumer packaged goods] or any other industry—there are only going to be a few players that can handle the complexity and scale of distribution and what it takes to ramp up.”



We wanted to make sure we never relied on anybody else to make sure that our brand stayed on shelves. That’s why we got into the cultivation business.

Weakley clearly intends for Indus to be one of those distributors. To that end, he is building capacity in every conceivable way, including investing in robust enterprise-level software that will integrate with track-and-trace platform METRC as well as with every department within the company, including accounting. “MAX [a software solutions provider] is our major [enterprise resource planning] system,” he said. “Mark Ainsworth, my business partner, had it for his old company. He used

to produce for Whole Foods and Costco nationally. We can do a recall in eleven minutes.” That will be equally possible, he added, when they are up and running with thousands of SKUs.


“We’re already going to the stores,” said Weakley. “We have the trucks, and we already supply about 84 percent of the licensed dispensaries [in California].”

THE KITCHEN

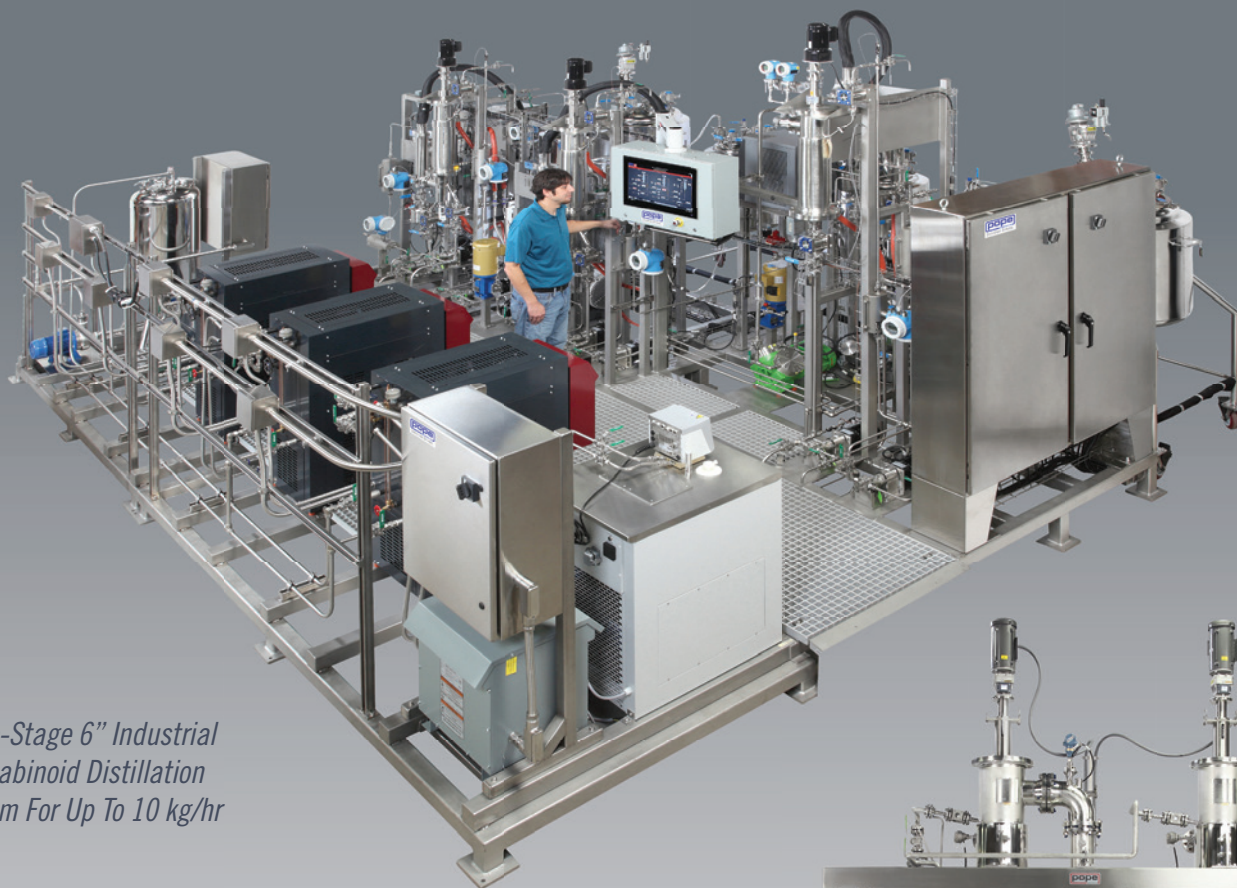
In many ways, Indus comes into existence in its manufacturing facility, located in a business park in Salinas where the company’s original offices are still used. This is where Weakley turns into Willie Wonka, where a busy extraction facility produces shatter and other concentrates by the bucketful, the kitchen makes pastilles by the pile, and a real chocolate room churns out high-quality delicacies. More than 100 different SKUs are manufactured in the space, representing a laundry list of brands, each with its own recipes.

“Our extraction facility is massive,” Weakley said of the six reinforced rooms licensed for Type 7 volatile extraction. Each produces 225 pounds of concentrates a day. “Right now, we produce about 200 pounds of trim a week out of one of those rooms, so a lot of this was created for biomass to be able to make shatter and other concentrates,” he added. “We can do about 2,000 [vape] cartridges a shift, and we run multiple shifts depending on the days. We have our own brands, and then we [manufacture for] a few other brands, as well.”

In the kitchen, Weakley pointed to one machine after another. “This is a single press that makes the Beboe pastilles. It just came in from Japan and can make 30,000 of them an hour,” he said. “This is a machine that makes just mints and pills—up to 9,000 a day. Over here are two 600-pound chocolate melting machines that can make over 30,000 chocolate bonbons in a day.”

The numbers seem insane, especially considering these products can be sold only in licensed California dispensaries, but Weakley and his team insist the market is there. “We can’t produce it fast enough,” he said. “We try to keep an inventory, but with the shortage of flower now, we can’t keep [product] on the shelves.” 

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A Taste of the High Life

From flower pairings to infused four-course meals, canna cuisine is on the rise.

Photo: The Mint Dispensary



It's been a long, exhausting day at the office. You're not in the mood to cook, so you decide to grab a bite at a local eatery. Is your first question "Do I want infused or non-infused?" Probably not.

But soon it could be. A lively cannabis cuisine scene is popping up in mature markets out west, where enthusiastic diners can reserve a seat at a private gathering and dose up to their heart's delight, enjoying multi-course dinners that often feature flower pairings and inspired adventures in weed-infused gastronomy.

While there has been some significant progress over the past five years and some groundbreaking developments, legislators and regulators probably won't become comfortable with the idea of freshly made, weed-infused foods at the corner diner for quite some time.

But don't tell that to The Mint Dispensary owner and Chief Operating Officer Raul Molina, who recently served a cheeseburger loaded with 3,000 milligrams of THC to a customer in Tempe, Arizona, and claims to have established the country's first—and so far only—full-service cannabis kitchen.

GROWING HUNGER FOR EDIBLES, INFUSED CUISINE

Although edibles compose one of the smallest market segments in most states, with around 10 percent to 15 percent of the total pie, the segment is one of the fastest-growing, according to a recent Arcview report. In 2017, consumers in the United States and Canada spent about \$1 billion on infused food and beverages, or about 11 percent of the \$9 billion in total cannabis spending. By 2022, the edibles category is expected to reach \$4 billion, making it an attractive subsector of the industry for both operators and investors.

Chefs around the country are trying to grab a bigger piece of action by spreading the gospel at infused brunches, dinners, workshops, and any other event that might entice intrepid diners to the table. However, as much as this niche industry has grown in the past few years, one thing has remained constant: Public eateries serving THC-infused foods remain verboten. The tide slowly is shifting, though, as city and state officials begin discussing how to regulate and license new ventures.

"When I started in this industry and was looking for an attorney, there was only one that wanted to help us get a license and was supportive in moving the agenda," said chef Andrea Drummer, a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu and co-owner of Elevation VIP Co-op, a Los Angeles-based company that caters high-end, intimate dinner parties. "Not many people thought this would be a thing, so we've come quite a long way and I'm proud to be a part of that."

When the first cannabis gastronomes began cropping up on the West Coast about ten years ago, the dining scene was very much an underground phenomenon with word-of-mouth promotion, hush-hush invites, and secret locations that hosted small groups of people. Now, Michelin-starred chefs are getting into the game, and numerous established groups host regularly scheduled private events. At the same time, restaurants and cafes are beginning to infuse everything from lattes to muffins with CBD, despite warnings from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration about that unregulated side of the industry.

BUT...OYSTERS?

One of the first canna cuisine sightings in the San Francisco Bay Area was the Cannaissance Series in 2015, when chef Coreen Carroll paired flower with food in an underground popup fashion for dinners, brunches, and other private events. Instead of offering full-on infusions,



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Not many people thought this would be a thing, so we've come quite a long way and I'm proud to be a part of that.

—Andrea Drummer,
chef and co-owner, Elevation VIP Co-op

Carroll eased newbies into the edibles scene by presenting low-dose infused hors d'oeuvres followed by a meal complimented by select flower. She partnered with brand sponsors, allowing guests to mingle with local artisan cannabis producers and leave with an herbalicious goodie bag.

In 2018, after three years of working in the traditional cooking scene and creating cannabis events on the side, Carroll was able to make the latter her full-time profession. “I’ve stuck to my guns and was working at other places doing recipe development on the side,” she said. The side hustle “slowly took more and more time, and now I’m totally focused on cannabis.”

Her wake-n-bake brunches and workshops have expanded the business, and constant experimentation and creativity keep her growing clientele on its toes. One of the common themes in the cannabis cuisine culture is the uninhibited, sometimes off-the-wall, exploration of food combinations, as chefs juxtapose a vast new palette of aromas, tastes, and effects, trying to mesh them with complementary qualities found in fruits, vegetables, proteins, and sweets. And, of course, bivalves.

“We did a pairing workshop where we tasted twelve varieties of oysters with an infused cocktail and mignonette sauces,” said Carroll. “I have a food scientist on staff who is an oyster specialist, so we do a comparison between oysters and cannabis terpene and cannabinoid profiles.”

Vegan chef Philip Gelb, another Bay Area culinary artist who has been hosting private cannabis dinners for several years, stumbled out of the gate with his first infused dinner. “It was a disaster,” he said. “Everyone got too stoned, including me and the sous chef.”

Undeterred, Gelb moved on to the next menu and event and has been boldly experimenting with new ideas and techniques in a quest to deliver the best possible food-plus-cannabis experience. Diners pay \$60 to \$70 per event and sit at a communal table just steps away from Gelb’s

kitchen. He likes to create intimate experiences and sometimes invites accomplished musicians to provide entertainment. He also works with a grower in Oakland who uses a Japanese no-till technique to produce a rotating variety of exotic flower to pair with his imaginative, farm-to-table fare.

This summer, one of his menus featured white gazpacho with peaches and radish sprouts, southern-fried tofu, creamed greens, and roasted root veggies. In some respects, Gelb’s first infusion dinner snafu was a happy accident, because his events since have been much smoother and more enjoyable for guests, who can titrate their way through dinner by passing around a vaporizer with a rotating variety of strains after each course.

“For a while we were being very meticulous about pairing the flowers, but now it’s more of a cannabis bar than a pairing,” he said. “We start with perky sativas and do the indicas toward the end.”

Using a vaporizer doesn’t interfere with the taste of the food, he said, because vapor doesn’t “kill” the taste buds, which is a problem when smoking a pipe or rolled herb. “On the exhale [from a vape], the terpenes really come out,” he explained. Even with the vape, he encourages guests to proceed low and slow, taking one to two hits at a time. “We don’t rush things,” he said. “All the food is handmade, so it takes some time to come out.”

When chef Unika Noiel began hosting LUVN Kitchn cannabis-infused dinners in the Seattle area in 2016, she said people couldn’t understand the concept. “So, I started posting pictures, and then more people started to understand what I was doing and gave me spaces to host dinners,” she said. She also had relationships with bars and hosted events featuring local alcohol-infused cuisine and drinks.

When she eventually embarked on monthly events, her dinners were a hit—but also attracted the attention of Seattle’s cannabis regulators.

Photo: Andrea Drummer

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Now she has to be more circumspect in her ventures and is restricted to hosting private events until there is enough political will to create a license for canna-entrepreneur chefs in Washington.

“We are working with groups on public-consumption bills so there is a path to the city creating a canna-business license,” she said. “They have no interest now, because they are making enough money without it. So, we’re hoping to get movement on that. [The current structure] doesn’t make any sense, so we may as well push it along.”

Hailing from the South, Noiel said fried chicken and gumbo are two of her most popular dishes, with a side of cornbread and caramel cake for dessert. All the dishes feature her somewhat unique approach to infusion: using flour as the delivery mechanism, a nuanced technique she developed over the years.

“It’s really the same as an herb or spice, so when you grind up [cannabis flower] and mix it in, the temperature becomes the most important thing,” she said. “If you decarb[oxy]late it at the right temperature and don’t overcook the terpenes or THC, there are limitless applications. If you think of it in the same way as using thyme or oregano, it doesn’t seem so strange.”

THE INFUSION REVOLUTION

When it opened in 2016, The Mint Dispensary was the second-largest dispensary in the U.S., with 12,000 square feet of operating space including a grow room and extraction area. The dispensary currently serves about seventy-five visitors per day and twice that number on weekends. And Saturday night? Well, that’s when the party buses roll into town.

“You wouldn’t believe how many people over 50 are coming in,” said Molina. “We have four different retirement communities that come here, and they bus in once a month. It’s part of their normal routine.” When he talked to one of the seniors about the activities at the retirement center where he lives, the man said, “on Saturday night, it’s bingo, casino, and dispensaries.”

The Mint’s commercial-grade kitchen offers patients options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as snacks and sodas, all freshly prepared on site with a customized dose of THC. Some of the most popular dishes are the same things diners would find at the local sports bar: pizza, chicken wings, and burgers. But patients also have healthier options, including a custom juice and smoothie bar, where a loaded drink costs about ten bucks. All in all, the kitchen accounts for roughly 10 percent of the dispensary’s sales, Molina said.

The Mint’s cooks not only are on the cutting edge of the cannabis food industry, but also deal with the often-complex nutritional needs of patients living with a wide range of illnesses.

“People that don’t want to smoke are turning to edibles, but a lot of them are sugary and not healthy for people with a medical need,” Molina explained. “So, we give them sugar-free, vegan, and other options that are presented in a healthy aspect that is more savory than sweet.”

Another big advantage of an in-house kitchen is the freshness factor. Whereas most edibles have a shelf-life of up to 180 days, Molina said the shelf life of The Mint’s baked goods and other treats is about five days. After that, the staff cooks up a new batch after destroying everything that hasn’t sold.

It may be hard to fathom a food scene that is more cutting-edge in Tempe than Los Angeles, but that’s the cannabis industry in a nutshell. L.A. won’t be sleeping for much longer, though. One of the first high-profile cannabis food venues in the country is poised to open in September in West Hollywood, California, when Lowell Café opens its doors. Andrea Drummer will be the in-house chef, drawing on her many years of experience with cannabis infusions and pairings.

“I’ve learned how to properly dose and how to be consistent with the product and how to navigate a crowd,” said Drummer. “That’s what’s important, and that’s what people are fearful of: having all these high people running around. It’s just new. If you are serving alcohol, you keep

an eye on people and cut them off, and it's the same for me when I'm doing a dinner and I see someone eating off a friend's plate."

Whereas most guests are happy with twenty to thirty milligrams over the course of the evening, she said tolerance levels for edibles are all over the map. "I was really into monitoring that at first but found a lot of my guests had a high tolerance and would ask me to amp it up on-site," she said.

When it opens, Lowell Café won't be licensed to serve infused dishes, but customers will be able to smoke, vape, and consume edibles on an outdoor patio while enjoying food and flower pairings. "With each course, we want to enhance the cannabis experience with bold food flavors to pair with strains we are serving," Drummer said. "I enjoy playing around with flavor profiles of buds and food. For instance, jerk lambchops pair well with more intense strains."

Several other cannabis consumption lounges are set to open in Los Angeles and West Hollywood this year, and the new California State Assembly Bill 1465 is designed to legitimize these businesses under state law. If passed, the legislation will create new regulations for smoking, vaping, and edibles consumption. A consumption cafe/lounge license would authorize licensees to sell cannabis products for on-site enjoyment subject to specified restrictions. Currently, state law prohibits smoking or ingesting cannabis or cannabis products in public places, with few exceptions.


In San Francisco, canna cuisinistas are lobbying city officials for local authorization but have seen little progress thus far. "We are trying to create a platform to present to legislators on how to lay this out," Carroll

said. "I would guess it will be two to three years before any kind of establishment will be able to do fresh infused foods. There is such a big pie in the cannabis world, and the more people who are in the scene, the better for all of us. It will legitimize [canna cuisine] more, destigmatize it more, so I'm stoked to have people with so much talent and passion behind it involved."

THE WRITING IS ON THE MENU

While cannabis chefs have made tremendous strides over the past few years, city and state regulators probably won't be able to wrap their heads around the idea of cannabis cafes and restaurants for a while yet. Until they do, chefs will continue to perfect their craft at private residences and events, pushing the boundaries one appetizer at a time.

"The demand is astronomical, and I can't keep up with requests," said Noiel. "Even people in cannabis tourism want to come here just to have a cannabis experience. I get some requests from big companies, and then they cancel because someone up the ladder told them to hold off. That's part of the frustration of it all. I can't seem to get a break in this industry and make a living at it."

Drummer is optimistic. "I don't think we are that far off, and the Lowell Café will be the test tube baby," she said. "The world is watching, and this is the first of its kind in the States. Someone recently called us 'Lost Amsterdam.' So, we'll see how this plays out, and I think it will influence what we see in the future." 



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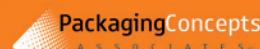
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Legendary cannabis industry pioneer Steve DeAngelo often says it's important we pay attention to the lessons the plant teaches us. In that spirit, the tide is turning toward sustainability.

The original sustainability efforts in the cannabis industry focused on farming practices: regenerative use of land, care for the ecosystem, and responsible use of resources. Today, the focus increasingly is about packaging, and that has proven to be particularly tricky. States that

have legalized cannabis consistently demand cannabis products be packaged in child-resistant containers, as pharmaceuticals long have been. But, unlike pharmaceuticals, cannabis packaging also must comply with specific rules and regulations that vary wildly from state to state, which makes it difficult to remain affordable and effective. The differing requirements add an extra layer of complexity to packaging and also affect affordability. The current solution has been an industry-wide dependence on imported fossil-fuel-based plastics with a significant carbon footprint. This provides us with an opportunity to face an ecological quandary that is ready to be solved.

Fact: Research consistently shows 90 percent of global consumers view brands that demonstrate support for environmental or social issues more positively than their competitors. Some 87 percent of American consumers also have more trust in and loyalty for companies perceived as environmentally sound.

This is a fundamental challenge for the cannabis industry. Today, several key players already have made significant strides in stepping up their environmental stewardship game.

For years, Sun Grown Packaging in Oakland, California, has been a beacon for sustainable, child-resistant box packaging. Additionally, JohnsByrne, another leading box producer, promotes environmental stewardship by earning virtually every green certification a commercial printer can receive. Both manufacturers have earned the loyalty of many of the biggest brands.

This year, Sana Packaging, one of the first green plastic cannabis packaging companies, announced it had removed four tons of plastic waste from the ocean with its first orders of reclaimed ocean plastic cannabis packaging, taking recycling to a new level.

In March 2019, cannabis ancillary leader KushCo Holdings made a massive shift toward sustainability when it announced a long-term partnership with eco-plastic pioneer IEKO to transition all of its plastic cannabis packaging to compostable plastics. Compostables are the holy grail of eco-plastics. Sure, biodegradables are great, but compostables are truly regenerative: They are beneficial to the soil in which they decompose.

The list goes on, from Canna Cycle, which launched a packaging-recycling program in

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dispensaries, to Galicia, which is recycling the waste produced by cultivation facilities. We can take some hope from the fact people are stepping up in a big way, but it's not nearly enough. The cannabis industry needs to do more to be on the right side of history when it comes to stewardship of our planet.

The good news is sustainable packaging designs are becoming more economical, so brands looking for ways to decrease their carbon footprint have options. Trade groups such as the Cannabis Alliance are working to educate the public about why eco-conscious packaging costs a bit more but is worth the expense.

For brands that want to become more sustainable, a significant first step is becoming approved by one of a variety of sustainability certification programs. For cultivators, one of the oldest programs, and a favorite of mine, is Clean Green Certification. In these early days when growers may not officially call their cannabis "organic," Clean Green has developed the industry gold-standard alternative. Other favorites include the ultimate regenerative and fair-trade model Sun + Earth Certified, founded by David Bronner (of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps), and One Planet Living, which has a beautiful ten-step program to place a business on track.

These programs allow brands to put their money where their mouths are so they can maintain authenticity. Legendary business-to-business brand strategist Bob Domenz calls this keeping your "Be. Do. Say." in order. *Be* the sustainable brand at heart, then *do* the things necessary to fulfill your values. Only after a company has completed those two steps should it *say* it is dedicated to environmental stewardship. Once a brand has received one of these stamps of approval, it has the right to promote the heck out of the certification. The brand can stand on a mountaintop, grab its marketing and social media megaphone, and proudly tell the world, "I'm a purpose-driven, sustainably minded, badass cannabis business!" Then watch the consumers gravitate to its products.

We're a new industry, one that's successfully emerged from the shadows. We're going to be one of the biggest powerhouses in the world. So, let's do it right. Let's challenge the status quo. As an industry, let's set higher standards for how we care for our consumers, our communities, and our planet. 



In survey after survey worldwide, consumers have said they prefer to buy brands that reflect their own values.



Photos: Sana Packaging, Willie's Reserve, Bison Extracts



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Five Things to Know Before Applying for a Cannabis License

Don't set yourself up for rejection by being ill-prepared.

If you follow news headlines, you may be familiar with the variety of articles currently analyzing cannabis stocks leading the “green revolution.” Legal cannabis is worth \$50 billion in the U.S. today and is expected to top \$80 billion by 2030. Excitement about the legalization of hemp, CBD, and other strains that contain THC is real as states loosen regulations to allow residents to purchase medical or recreational cannabis safely and legally.

The frenzy surrounding cannabis has inspired many to investigate how they can get a piece of the green pie. While it might be a headline-catching industry with potentially high return on investment, opening a business in the space requires precise compliance procedures that must adhere to ever-changing regulations. Each state's legal and regulatory structure contains nuances that can make applying for a cannabis license tricky if you don't have these five areas buttoned-up tight before submitting your application.

CAPITAL

States want to make sure you understand how seriously they take the application process, so they start with a wallop to your wallet. You must be flush to apply for a cannabis license, which alone can run north of \$100,000. You also must be able to demonstrate financial backing, revenue, and projections that meet the state's minimum threshold, which varies state by state. Though they may seem unduly onerous, these are good requirements, because the last thing anyone wants is a stain on the industry due to a few bad players. But expect delays receiving your permit, along with outside costs for consultants and industry experts to help grow your business. If you don't have much capital beyond the application fee, don't waste your time applying.

REAL ESTATE

It is imperative to have your location selected and written consent from the landlord, which is proof of their willingness to lease to a cannabis organization. In some states, cannabis businesses are required to have blueprints of the build-out and zoning already approved.

Without real estate confirmed, you have no business. Location details are 90 percent of the application process, so ensure the majority of your physical location plans are nailed down before applying.

APPLICATION TEAM


The application consulting team should have “branches” consisting of architects, structural engineers, and at least one researcher. Give careful consideration to the most ideal candidates for compiling your information, which may consist of an assembled team that is hand-selected, big multi-state operators or a consulting firm.

OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

A competent executive team is critical to securing an approved application. Make sure ownership is multidisciplinary. Consider notable experts like a medical director, business leader, and legal expert at a minimum. A cultivator who understands the specialized needs of the agricultural industry also may be needed if you plan to make your business stand out by using, as an example, locally sourced growers. Also think about adding a “chief educator” who will be your eyes and ears on the street, tasked with speaking to legislators and state officials about the industry—and your business, in particular. Make it a point to have team members who can help educate the community in which your business will be located. Proving how you will benefit the local area will help your application stand out from others.

REGULATORY STANDING

Everyone on the team should have knowledge of local regulations and understand business operations. If the collective group doesn't understand how your brand is different and what the competition offers, you are immediately behind on the first day of business. It's also a good idea to know the cannabis voting record in the area(s) in which you plan to develop. Understanding how the community got to where it is today regarding cannabis will help you tell your story as a business owner and appear more relatable on your application.

If you have the finances, plan methodically, surround yourself with the right people, and possess a willingness to adapt to an ever-changing cannabis environment, the reward could be financially and personally gratifying. 



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Consumers Demand Consumables

Edibles, beverages, tinctures, and sublinguals are taking a big bite out of the market.



WHAT ARE TODAY'S HOT AND COLD CATEGORIES?

Beverages are really hot right now, and within that category mocktails are killing it. Last year in June in California, Colorado,

Nevada, and Washington, mocktails accounted for less than \$10,000 in sales for the month. However, in June 2019 mocktails came in just under \$30,000: 300-percent growth. The biggest losers were brownies, blondies, and cereal bars. While there are some brands in that space that did well, the segment overall saw a 26-percent decline, from \$950,000 per month in 2018 to \$700,000 per month in June 2019.

As far as companies that are growing like, no pun intended, a weed, Dixie Elixirs and Sunderstorm/Kahna are pushing 50-percent-plus growth during the first half of 2019 thanks to their wide variety of gummies. Fireball, a new brand in the Nevada market, launched this year but has already seen sales of its cinnamon gummies blossom to nearly \$100,000 per month.

Consumables in general are growing quickly, especially in California, which is the largest market in the United States and relatively new with adult-use retail.

Year-to-date, the consumables category accounts for 11.3 percent of the market—a bit higher than we see in mature markets like Colorado and Washington. Within consumables, we see subcategories like gummies gaining significant market share with almost 100-percent growth year-to-date versus the same time last year.

Cy Scott, co-founder and CEO
Headset Inc. | Headset.io



WHAT MAKES A GUMMY GREAT?

A great gummy is the blend of delicious flavor, perfect consistency, a heady mix of sweet and sour, and fun, vibrant colors.

Consistency is a pivotal part of the experience. Gummies must be just right: not too soft, not too tough. Since they take little time to eat, the flavor

should be enjoyed longer. This is very difficult to achieve. A great cannabis gummy is all of this plus a consistent experience every time with potency and effect. Consumers want to know what to expect, not have any surprises. We get this with foods at the grocery store, and cannabis shouldn't be any different. Also, consumers want a rapid onset so they don't have to wait too long to feel the effects.

The gummy category is so hot right now because it offers something for everybody. We all grew up eating gummies as kids and remember that [experience]. They're always a reliable go-to, whether as a snack or a sweet treat. Moreover, they are one of the most highly consumed candies in [consumer packaged goods] because they appeal to us as a regular treat—unlike chocolate, which is perceived as more for special occasions.

Also, in recent years gummies have become a popular delivery system for vitamins and cold/flu treatments. This crossover helps consumers look at them as medicine for sleep or pain in the cannabis market, too.

Cameron Clarke, CEO
Sunderstorm | Sunderstorm.com



WHAT DO DISPENSARY BUYERS LOOK FOR IN CONSUMABLES?

Dispensary buyers are looking to diversify with new flavors and product types that will appeal to new cannabis consumers. As the recreational market continues to expand and evolve, we see buyers wanting to offer their customers a wider range of edibles options in more categories while supporting the trusted brands that are building relationships with consumers. Consumables are popular with new cannabis consumers, in particular, due to their approachability, so ensuring that they offer something for everyone is more important than ever, especially with dietary restrictions such as gluten-free, sugar-free, and vegan.

Based on trends, brands that are finding new

ways to improve their ingredients are doing well. We are seeing strong growth in the chocolate and beverage subcategories. Companies like Moon and Altai are in the top ten within the chocolate category in California.

Consumers want products that are on-trend, and companies looking for opportunities to go into those segments to help drive new consumer consumption will be successful if they keep that in mind.

Joe Bayern, president
Indus Holdings Inc. | IndusHoldingsInc.com




WHAT QUESTIONS ARE CONSUMERS ASKING?

In general, consumers are very curious about the category right now. It is like a modern-day gold rush. The closet stoners are starting to come out and try newer ways to consume. They want to know everything—literally, all the details. So, if a budtender is not knowledgeable, it could be a very uncomfortable situation.

First and foremost, consumers are looking for certainty the items they purchase will work the first time. I like to remind the public everyone has his or her own bio-individuality, and what works for the goose might not work for the gander. There are never guarantees in life. Cannabis is no different. Just because a particular item did not work for you does not mean it won't work for the next person. Consumers need to understand it will always be an experiment when selecting an item they have never tried before.

Also, nice packaging is very important to them—I'd say 70 percent of the selling process. A brand could have low-quality products, but if it is eye-catching and easy to get into it will sell faster than a quality item. Furthermore, if the brand looks appealing, is affordable, and is actually "worth its weight in weed," it easily becomes a top seller.

Jazzyynn West, assistant manager
Captain Jack's dispensary | Facebook: @CaptainJacks420 



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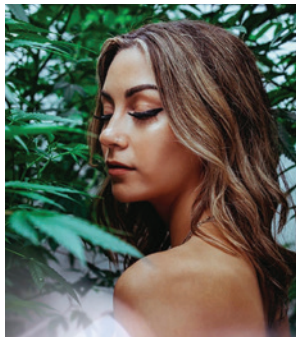
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“I stopped counting after 300 [brands I’ve worked with].”

—Trippy Treez



1

How did your career change come about?

I had a really great corporate job, and I was also doing trim work on the side. I would post photos as I was doing that. It was very illegal at the time. Everyone around me was like, “Congrats. Have fun in jail.” One of the biggest brands at the time was Spliffin, and they brought me in after I did just one post about their vape pen. That’s where I learned how to run a business in the cannabis industry the right way.

2

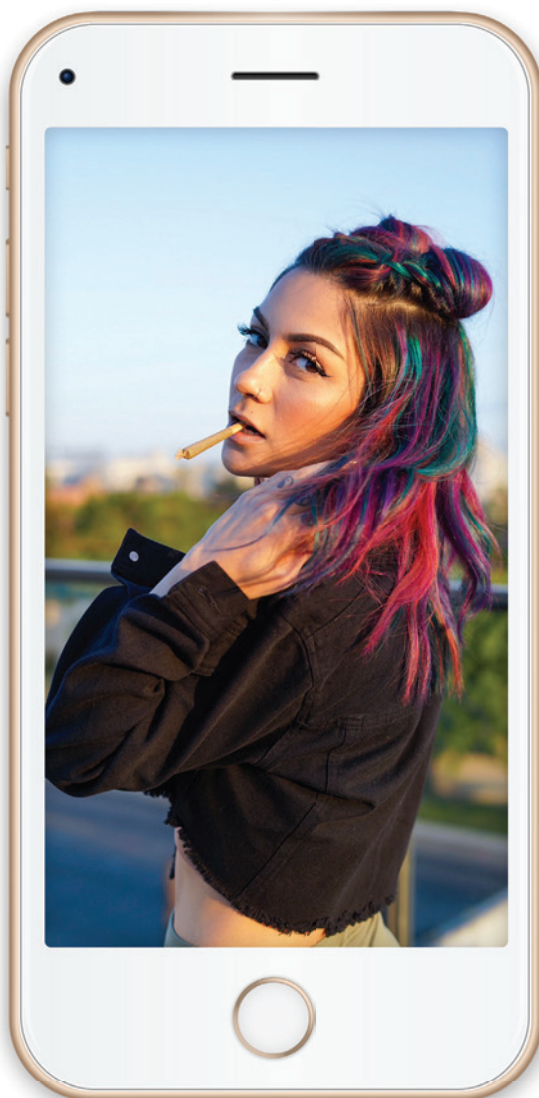
How do you help brands?

It could be anything, from working internally or at their booth to creating a post of their product or helping sell it. Sometimes I’ll do consulting, too. A client might say, “Hey, check out my Instagram. Help me out.” And I’ll tell them what they need to do. It’s kind of like brand polish.

The Bottom Line

Model and former accountant Trippy Treez has amassed an audience of almost 300,000 on Instagram and YouTube. “I wanted to elevate the lifestyle and take away the negative stigma of smoking weed,” she said.

@TRIPPY.TREEZ



3

What’s a big challenge?

I’m young. I’m a woman. So, people try to take advantage of me a lot of times from a business standpoint, like being on a panel or in a business meeting with multiple men that are twice your age trying to tell you what to do and how much they want to pay you. You have to stand up against them.

What’s a bigger challenge?

As far as influencer brand marketing, the biggest thing would just be the platforms we’re trying to advertise on. We don’t have any access to Google Ads or Google in general or Facebook, really. So, we’re limited to barely even Instagram or YouTube. Even then, we’re still getting deleted. We can’t do TV ads, so we’re just trying to figure it out and not get shut down at the end of the day, financially and physically.

NETWORK STATS

3

Years as a full-time influencer.

4.5

Million YouTube video views.

18,000

Likes on her July 4, 2019, post.

Photos: Trippy Treez

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