



Emerald

CANNABIS LIFESTYLE

The Harvest Issue

ADVERTORIAL

From Security Guard to CEO

In the rapidly evolving world of New York's cannabis industry, one company is redefining what it means to provide security services. **Majesty Security Service**, founded by the charismatic **Diesel Cummings**, is the first and only firm in the state that specializes exclusively in cannabis security. But what sets them apart isn't just their niche focus—it's their unique approach to security, embodied by their **"cannaguardz,"** and the personal story that drives Cummings' passion for the industry.

Story and photos by Philippe Marquis



THE CANNAGUARDZ ARE THERE TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR THE INDUSTRY'S EVOLUTION, TO THINK AHEAD AND PREVENT PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY START. WE'RE ALWAYS VIGILANT, BUT WE'RE ALSO ALWAYS WELCOMING. THAT'S WHAT SETS US APART, AND THAT'S WHAT'S GOING TO CHANGE THIS INDUSTRY FOR THE BETTER.

THE PERSONAL MISSION BEHIND MAJESTY SECURITY Cummings' journey into cannabis security began with tragedy. His oldest brother, Timothy, was murdered at the age of 24 due to gang violence related to cannabis in the BedStuy/ Bushwick area of New York. Cummings, one of eight siblings and only 7 years old at the time, grew up in the shadow of this loss. This experience led him to recognize the importance of social equity in the cannabis industry.

"My brother's death was a result of the criminalization of cannabis," Cummings explains. "Now that New York is legalizing it, they're giving priority to licensee applicants with previous cannabis-related convictions. That's social equity, and it needs to happen across states. I'm honoring Timothy's memory by bringing my skills to this industry and fighting for that change."

This personal mission led Cummings to start Majesty Security Service, with the goal of not only providing top-notch security but also changing the stigma surrounding the cannabis industry. And the key to this mission? The cannaguardz.

HOSPITALITY MEETS VIGILANCE: THE CANNAGUARDZ APPROACH

While Cummings knows that safety and vigilance are top priority, he also understands the importance of hospitality and a welcoming atmosphere. Majesty Security's cannaguardz embody this balance.

"What sets us apart is that extra touch of hospitality and empathy," he explains. "We want our cannaguardz to be able to adapt to any situation and make sound decisions, all while giving customers a great hosting experience."

This philosophy stems from Cummings' own experiences working security at Housing Works, the first licensed cannabis dispensary in New York City. There, he quickly realized that the role of security in this new industry was about more than just keeping the product and money safe.

"The cannaguardz are the first people everybody sees when they come through the door," he says. "So it's crucial that they embody that welcoming spirit while still being vigilant."

ABOVE AND BEYOND: TALES OF EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Cummings' approach to customer service is legendary. Stories abound of him promising to put people at the front of the line if they returned the next day. "The hosting experience is extremely important to me," Cummings emphasizes. "I want every customer to feel welcomed and respected, even if they're feeling anxious or unsure about this new industry."

But don't let the friendly demeanor fool you—Majesty Security's cannaguardz are highly trained professionals, handpicked by Cummings himself.

"The bar is set super high for safety reasons," he explains. "Even if someone's good at security, if they don't have that hosting mindset, they won't be a good fit."

FROM NYC TO BEYOND: HIGH DEMAND, HIGHER STANDARDS

This selective approach has paid off, with Majesty Security now providing services to over 20 stores in New York state and swiftly expanding to other states. But for Cummings, it's not just about growth—it's about promoting cannabis awareness and changing the way people think about the industry.

One of the key moments in Majesty Security's growth came when Cummings was introduced to Peter Beznos, the owner of Hi! Dispensary in Williamsburg.

"[Beznos] was opening up in a week, and my company was very new, but we scrambled and hustled to get them the right cannaguardz," Cummings recalls. "Luckily, we had been heavily recruiting."

BUILDING TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

The night Cummings went to meet Beznos, they recognized each other from their time at Housing Works—Beznos as a customer, Cummings as head of security. As they discussed the potential for Majesty Security to provide services for Hi! Dispensary, Beznos' trust in Cummings became evident.

"In the middle of our negotiations, he said, 'since you live close, can I call you anytime if something comes up?' I said absolutely, I'll be there anytime, day or night," Cummings recounts. "Ever since, his business has been super appreciative. Hi! has been a major reason for our success. Beznos has evangelized Majesty Security, and that's even how our services arrived at The Emerald Dispensary."

Cummings plans to continue expanding Majesty Security's services across New York State and to other states, growing alongside the evolving needs of the cannabis industry. This kind of strategic growth has been instrumental in Majesty Security's success.

THE FUTURE OF MAJESTY SECURITY

Despite this growth, Cummings never forgets the lessons his father taught him about flying straight in business. Sadly, Cummings lost his father just two months before starting at Housing Works. A month after his father passed away, one of his best friends, Tom, passed away as well.

"I share that story with the cannaguardz because I never let anything get to me, and

I maintain the hosting experience no matter what, even through grief," he says. "I pitch that and include it as part of my guards' training."

MISSION DRIVEN, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Through all this growth, Cummings' commitment to his original mission remains unwavering. "What we're trying to do is change the industry so we can change the way the stigma and security are perceived," he says. "The cannaguardz are there to maintain the hosting experience while keeping everyone and everything safe. It's my passion."

Majesty Security wants to stay humble and exceptional on all scales of the industry so that they can safely promote cannabis awareness not only in New York City, but across the state and the country.

CHANGING THE GAME

In the end, what drives Cummings and Majesty Security is a simple but powerful mission: to change the face of cannabis security, one cannaguard at a time. With their unique blend of hospitality, professionalism, and personal passion, they're not just securing the industry—they're helping to redefine it.

As Cummings puts it, "the cannaguardz are there to prepare ourselves for the industry's evolution, to think ahead and prevent problems before they start. We're always vigilant, but we're also always welcoming. That's what sets us apart, and that's what's going to change this industry for the better."

With Majesty Security leading the charge, the future of cannabis in New York looks brighter—and safer—than ever. And as they continue to expand, bringing their unique brand of security to new markets and new heights, one thing is clear: the cannaguardz are here to stay, and they're changing the game one welcoming smile at a time. •••

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CHRISTINA DE GIOVANNI PUBLISHER

Dear Reader:

As the leaves turn to gold and the air grows crisp, we at *The Emerald™ Magazine* invite you to embark on an autumnal journey through the captivating world of cannabis. In this special Harvest Issue, we've curated a collection of stories that celebrate the season's bounty and the rich tapestry of the cannabis industry.

Our cover story takes you inside the inspiring story of Nanticoke Farms, where two green-thumbed brothers, Peter and Chip Shafer, have evolved their garden center into a trailblazing force in New York's cannabis industry. Discover how their unwavering commitment to variety and quality has led them to offer an impressive array of cannabis strains, each meticulously cultivated and tested to ensure an exceptional experience.

We also get to know Colin Decker, the trailblazing founder of 7 SEAZ, as he navigates the transition from legacy operator to legal cannabis entrepreneur. We explore how the unique terroir of the Hudson Valley shapes the distinctive character of 7 SEAZ products and how Decker's commitment to quality and authenticity sets a new standard in the industry.

For those looking to elevate their BBQ game this fall, we've got you covered with an array of cannabis-infused sauces and marinades that'll send your taste buds on a wild adventure. Get ready to blaze up the grill and create some seriously flavorful moments.

In our exploration of the parallels

between cannabis and wine, we take a deep dive into the intricate world of harvesting. From the importance of geography to the meticulous process of selecting and processing the crop, we uncover the striking similarities and intriguing differences between these two iconic plants.

As the seasons change, so do our wellness needs. In this issue, we delve into how cannabis can be a powerful ally in helping you recalibrate and align with the unique energy of fall. Discover the potential benefits of cannabis for boosting mood, relieving stress, managing pain, and improving sleep. Learn how integrating cannabis into your mindfulness practice can deepen your connection with yourself and the world around you.

At *The Emerald™ Magazine*, we believe that the harvest season is a time for reflection, gratitude, and celebration. As you flip through the pages of this issue, we hope that you'll find inspiration, knowledge, and a renewed appreciation for the incredible plant that brings us all together. So sit back, relax, and let us be your guide on this autumnal journey through the world of cannabis.

Happy harvesting!

Sincerely,
Christina de Giovanni
Publisher

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The Harvest Issue

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Falling into Wellness:

How Cannabis Can Help You Recalibrate This Fall

As autumn's golden leaves begin to fall and the days grow shorter, the transition from summer's sun-soaked days to fall's crisp air and cozy evenings can have a profound impact on mood, routine, and overall well-being. With these shifts come new challenges and opportunities for adjustment. The changing season brings with it, though, a fresh chance to realign personal wellness.



By Rita Thompson

UNDERSTANDING THE FALL TRANSITION
As we say goodbye to summer's sun-drenched days and hello to fall's cool embrace, it's not uncommon to feel a bit of a slump as the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer. This phenomenon, often referred to as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), can bring on feelings of fatigue, melancholy, and even depression.

During this time, our circadian rhythms—our internal clocks regulating sleep, mood, and energy—can be disrupted. The reduction in natural sunlight can affect melatonin production, which in turn influences our sleep patterns and mood, according to the National Sleep Foundation. Additionally, the colder weather and shorter days might make it harder to stay active and engaged, further contributing to a sense of sluggishness or low spirits. It's like our internal gears are grinding a little slower, and we're struggling to keep up with the pace of the changing season.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Fall also offers a unique opportunity to embrace change and recalibrate. Think of it as nature's way of saying that it's time to slow down, reflect, and get cozy.

THE BENEFITS OF CANNABIS FOR WELLNESS

Cannabis can be a gentle yet effective ally in navigating these autumnal shifts. Here's how:

► Boosting Mood

Cannabis can lift one's spirits and help combat seasonal blues. According to studies released in *Nature*, THC, in particular, can stimulate the release of feel-good neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine—offering a natural uplift when it's most needed. It's like having a cozy, comforting hug in the form of a joint or edible.

► Stress Relief

The fall season can bring its pressures—deadlines, social commitments, and adjusting to the new routine. Cannabis can become a stress-busting ally, helping consumers unwind and relax. CBD is especially effective at calming the mind and reducing anxiety, helping to shake off those autumnal stressors. Integrating cannabis into a relaxation routine offers a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle.

► Pain Management

As the weather cools, some might feel the sting of chronic pain or inflammation more acutely. Cannabis has been used for centuries to manage pain, and its efficacy hasn't faded with time. The idea, according to Harvard Health, being that THC or CBD binds to specific receptors on the brain and nerve cells to slow pain impulses and ease discomfort. Whether it's a soothing topical or a relaxing edible, cannabis can be a powerful tool in any pain management arsenal.

► Sleep Improvement

Longer nights mean more time to cozy up and catch some Zs. If insomnia is preventing enjoyment of extra sleep, certain products might help facilitate quicker sleep onset or improve sleep quality by addressing issues such as anxiety and restlessness. So embrace that autumnal urge to hibernate—and give the snooze button all the love it deserves.

► Boosting Creativity and Reflection

Fall's reflective nature, focusing on change and transition, makes it ideal for introspection and creativity. Cannabis can help unlock new perspectives and ideas, making engaging in activities like journaling, artistic pursuits, or personal reflection easier. A thoughtful dose of cannabis can enhance the creative process and deepen understanding of oneself.

► Increased Mindfulness

The cooler temperatures and golden hues of autumn make it the perfect season to delve into mindfulness and meditation. Cannabis can enhance this practice by promoting relaxation and focus. In a 2023 study, participants self-administered cannabis twice, one week apart. During one session, they practiced yoga. During the other, they did whatever they'd normally do when high. The results found significant improvements in respondents' reported mindfulness when they practiced yoga with cannabis. Find a cozy spot, perhaps surrounded by the vibrant fall foliage, and let the gentle effects of cannabis induce a deeper state of relaxation.

► Embrace the outdoors

For those looking for a very easy way to incorporate cannabis into fall: get the hell outside! Research shows that spending time in nature can significantly reduce anxiety and the risk of serious diseases. To enhance this experience, consider integrating cannabis into daily routines. Cannabis heightens the senses, transforming a simple stroll into a multisensory adventure. Imagine being fully immersed in the earthy aroma of damp leaves, the tranquil sound of a flowing creek, and the mesmerizing sparkle of a starlit sky. Embracing a "green head space" before venturing into a natural retreat elevates the experience and makes it genuinely rejuvenating.

► Welcome Fall with a Recalibrated Wellness Routine

Fall is a time of transformation for the environment, personal routines, and emotional states. The cooler temperatures and reduced daylight can disrupt established habits, affecting everything from sleep patterns to mood. By understanding the seasonal shifts, we can better align with fall's unique energy and create a wellness routine that supports mood, relaxation, and overall well-being. Embrace the season's transformation with cannabis as an ally, helping us to feel balanced, uplifted, and connected throughout the fall. ♦♦♦

By Ryan Kamber

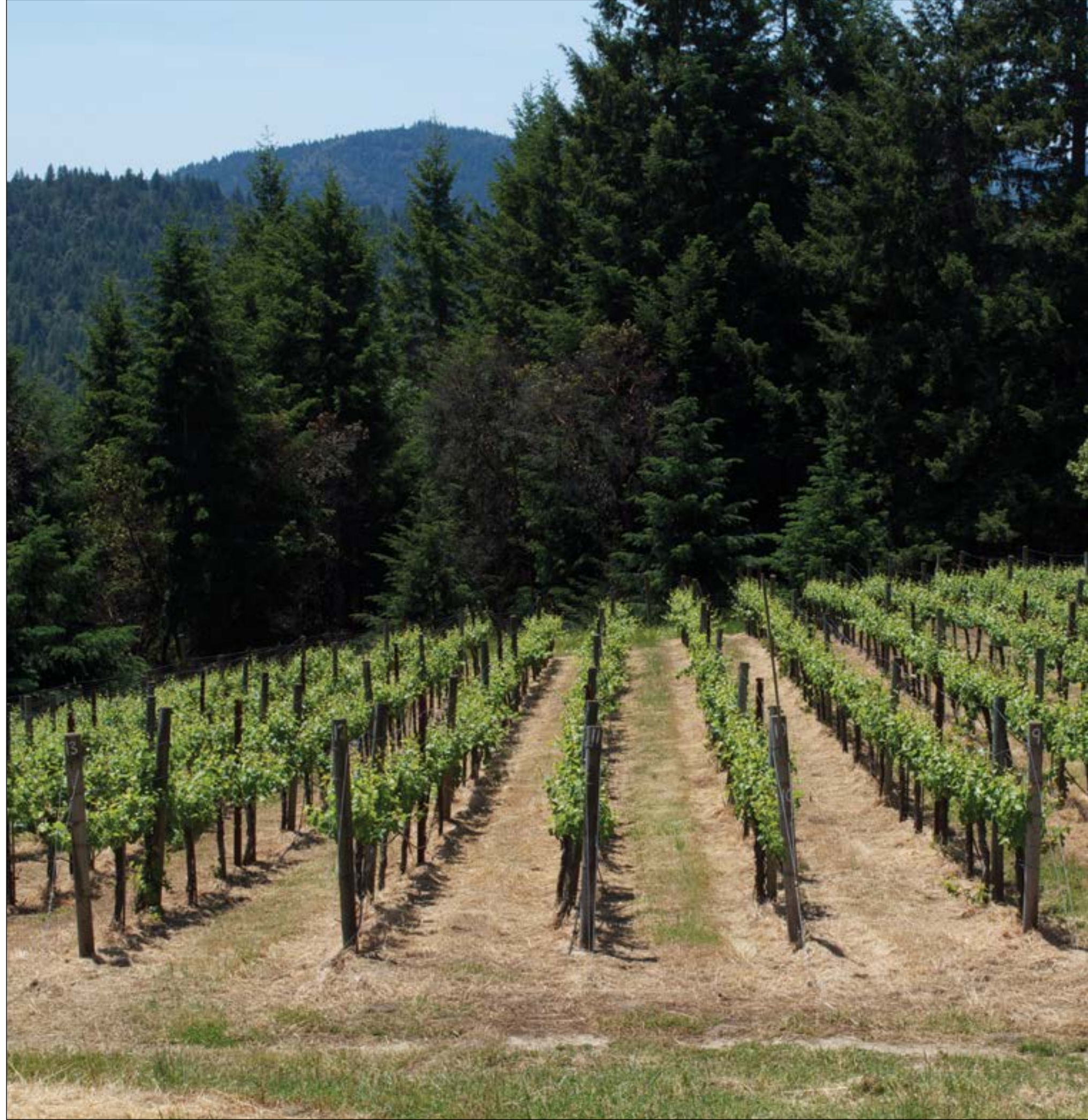


Weed vs. Wine: A Tale of Two Harvests

We're officially into autumn. For some, it means back to school, football, and pumpkin spice lattes. For growers of both cannabis and grapes, it means it's time to harvest.

By understanding the seasonal shifts, we can better align with fall's unique energy and create a wellness routine that supports mood, relaxation, and overall well-being.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE EMERALD MAGAZINE



WINE GRAPES GROWING AT ELK PRAIRIE VINEYARD IN SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT COUNTY IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

bold reds and whites.

Terroirs also exist in the field of cannabis cultivation.

Different cannabis strains are often the product of different terroirs. A strain like Acapulco Gold is best suited for the tropical climate of the Mexican city it's named after. The dry winters and rainy, snow-filled summers in the Hindu Kush mountain range produced the cannabis indica variety.

There's also a major push for cannabis appellation programs, especially in California. An appellation is a legally-defined designation that restricts the growing of a specific plant variety outside of its defined area of origin. Examples of this in the wine industry include Bordeaux wines, named after the region in France where they are grown.

For cannabis operators, the idea is to protect smaller farmers from the homogenization brought by corporate giants. Terroirs and landraces are deeply rooted in history. In many cultures, they represent heritage and shared experiences. Appellations help keep cultural diversity at the forefront of the industry.

TRUST THE PROCESS

When it comes time to harvest, options for vineyards are twofold: manual harvesting or mechanical harvesting, according to *The Grape Grower's Handbook*.

Manual harvesting prioritizes quality over quantity. This more traditional practice has cultivators hand-pick the grapes right off the vine, discarding any damaged or underripe clusters. While more time-consuming and taxing, hand-harvesting usually results in a higher-quality batch. For growers on steep hillsides and difficult landscapes, it's the only option they have.

Mechanical harvesting is the more commonly used method of the two. It enables growers to pick grapes in large quantities. It's not nearly as gentle as hand harvesting. The machine batters, shakes, and strips vines as grapes fall onto the conveyor belt. For many, this is a small price to pay for increased efficiency and cutting costs.

Harvesting cannabis also brings with it multiple methods. Wet trimming is when the cannabis plant is cut down and buds are removed from the branches. They are then trimmed—either by hand or by machine—and dried all at once. Trimming off the excess buds makes the product easier to ingest and creates a higher concentration of trichomes.

Dry trimming takes more patience. Once the plant is cut down, it's hung to dry for multiple days. Buds aren't bucked or trimmed until they're fully dried.

FINISHING TOUCHES

A growers work isn't done yet. Cannabis and wine each require a few extra steps before completing the harvesting process.

Once grapes are harvested they go through quality control. Designated sorters examine each grape, making sure they're ripe enough, disease free, and undamaged. Most wineries use conveyor belts to move things along. Many of these belts can detect and dispose of any grapes that aren't up to standard.

Up next is the crushing stage. While the traditional method usually involves foot stomping, wineries now have automated machines that crush and de-stem the grapes. These machines break the skin of a grape without crushing the seeds and stems which contain tannins. Similar to terpenes and trichomes in cannabis, tannins are the compounds in wine that produce its bitter flavor and mouth-coating sensation.

The fermenting process brings an end to the harvest. Before hitting the shelves, the product must undergo testing in order to ensure quality, consistency, and safety.

As for cannabis, once the buds are dried and trimmed, they are stored in airtight glass jars for two weeks to a month. This helps preserve the flavors and aromas while stopping the loss of moisture. This procedure, known as curing, is crucial for the flavor and quality of the smoke. Cannabis is also tested in a lab before being made available to consumers.

TOURISM TROUBLE

Tourism is a major opportunity for farmers to not only profit but educate. California's wine industry rakes in over \$8 billion annually from tourism, according to Wine America. Meanwhile, the cannabis industry faces a litany of legal obstacles.

Some regions in California, including Sonoma County—home to Napa Valley—limit tours on outdoor cannabis farms. Many view commercial cannabis as a threat to their quality of life. But indoor facilities are able to give tours, teaching visitors about the growing to harvesting processes.

The world of cannabis and hospitality are converging to create more unconventional experiences. For example, travelers in legal states can visit bud and breakfasts, which provide users with cannabis-friendly lodging and excursions in tourism hot spots. Others offer activities that combine weed with hobbies like yoga, arts and crafts, and cooking.

Despite so many similarities between the weed and wine industries, winegrowers are hesitant to collaborate with cannabis farms. Even in legal states, a federally-insured winery could lose its license for working with a weed farm.

Jared Giammona, founder of the Sonoma County Experience—which curates experiences around wine, cannabis, craft beer and more—broke down the wine industry's conflicting attitudes towards cannabis growers: "It's two fold. There's definitely a faction that sees it as a threat or a competitor," he told *The Emerald*. "There's also another faction that sees it as an ally because you have a new demographic that's not looking for just wine experiences."

The link between the cannabis and wine industries is here to stay. Whether the two sides grow together or apart is something only time will tell. ♦♦♦

AN OVERLAPPING HARVESTING SEASON IS just one of the many similarities between weed and wine. But where do these two plants differ? To answer that question, we're going to take a look at each plant's harvesting process.

SEASONAL CYCLES

Each fall, these plants bear fruits. Harvest is the end-stage for cannabis plants. That's because growers harvest the whole plant—not just its fruits—which means they must grow new plants each year. Grapes, however, are rooted so farmers pick them right off the vine. Since wine grape vines can produce fruit for decades, winegrowers don't need to replant after harvest.

Another big difference is figuring out when to harvest. For cannabis farmers, trichomes are key. According to Leafly, trichomes are the micro-sized appendages on buds that appear as a blanket of frost. These trichomes produce cannabinoids, terpenes, and flavonoids that help give a cannabis plant its potency.

Growers can tell a plant is ripe once its trichomes turn milky white. They also pay attention to the hairy looking strands attached to the bud, also known as stigmas. They turn from white to orange as the plant ripens. According to Weedmaps, cannabis plants can take anywhere from seven to 12 weeks to reach maturity.

According to Cult Wine Investment, winegrowers key in on a number of factors to decide when to harvest. After veraison, the transition from small hard berries into grapes, the ripening process can take anywhere from 30 to 70 days.

While the taste buds of a seasoned veteran are always helpful, many wineries use equipment like a refractometer—a handheld device that measures a grape's sugar levels—to test the ripeness of a given cluster. This is made possible by a small prism that shows how the grape's juice interacts with light. Not all vines are created equal. Sparkling winemakers aim for more acidity while dessert wines require much higher levels of sugar.

TERROIR SQUAD

Wine grapes are given their distinctive character by a combination of factors like soil, climate, and sunlight known as terroir. Not all grapes grow in the same terroir. Winegrape growers aiming for a lighter, fruit-flavored end product are best growing in cooler, drier climates. Vines grown in warmer climates result in bolder wines with a softer acidity.

Soil also impacts wine. Most are grown in soils like sand, clay, loam and limestone. Sandy soil produces pale, aromatic wines with low tannin levels. Grapes grown in clay-based soils are able to retain water, resulting in rich,

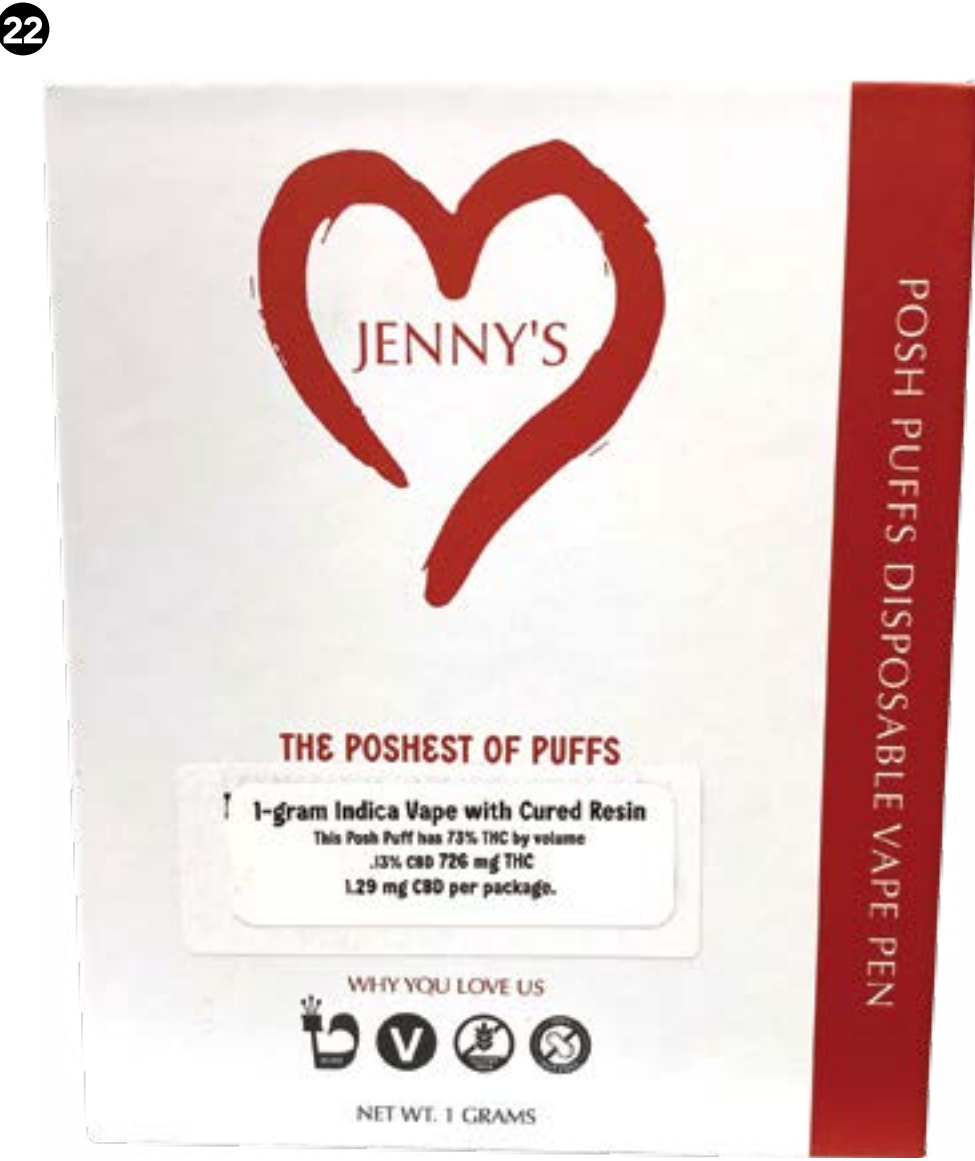
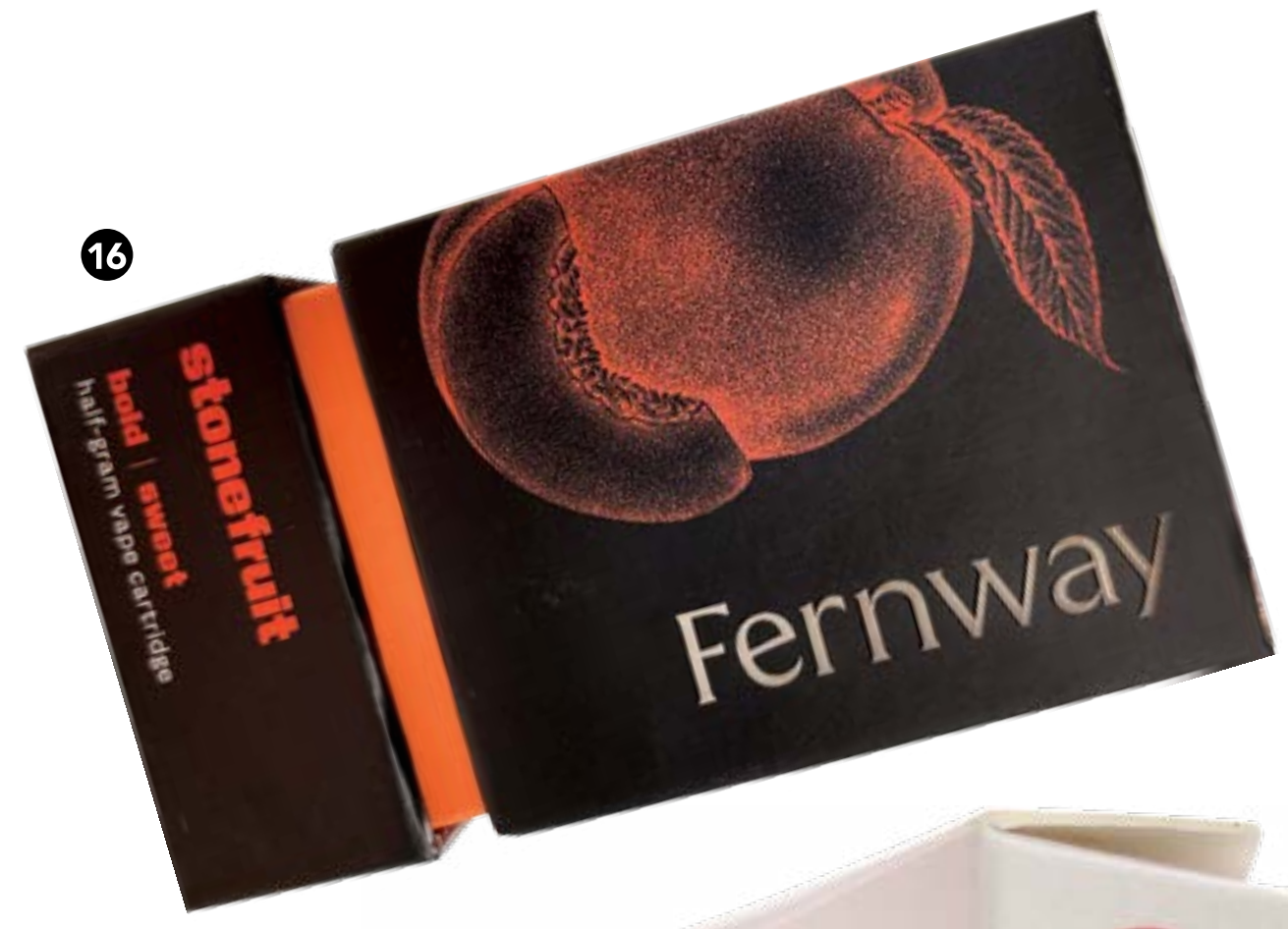
Terroirs also exist in the field of cannabis cultivation. Different cannabis strains are often the product of different terroirs.



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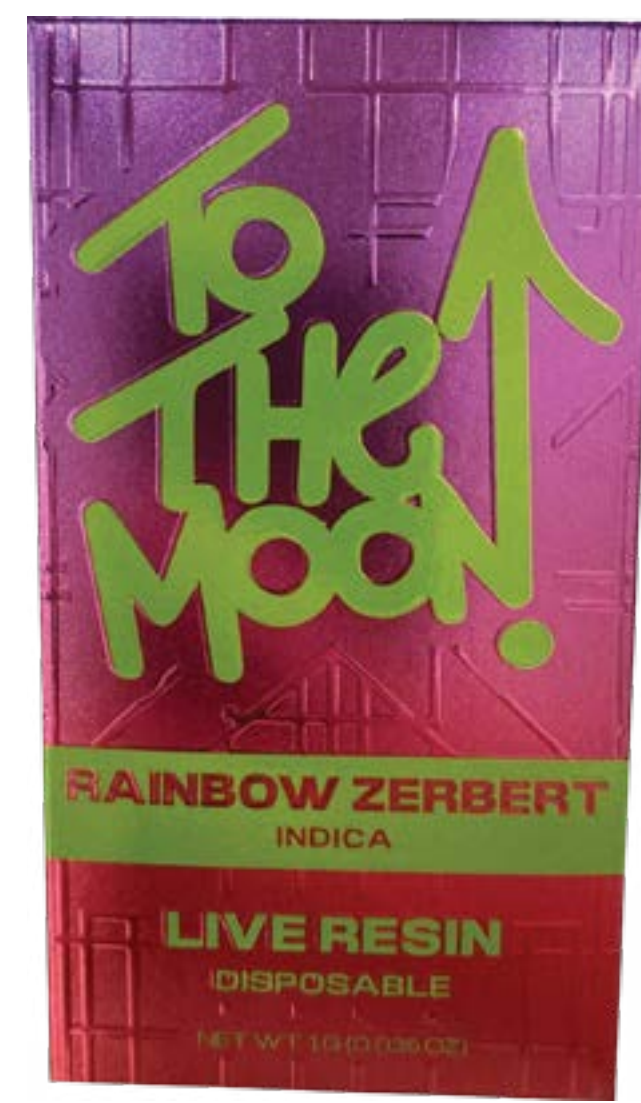
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Stoned to the Core: Crafting the ULTIMATE Cannabis Apple Pie

This guide dives into creating the ultimate cannabis-infused apple pie—a gooey, buttery, and perfectly spiced slice of heaven that packs a punch.

By Philippe Marquis and Brian Cherchiglia

First, it covers how to make potent cannabutter: using three foolproof methods the Ardent FX, sous vide, or oven. No more guesswork, just flavorful butter to take this pie to the next level. Next, it walks through the process of creating a flaky, THC-infused pie crust and filling, with tricks to ensure the perfect balance of sweet, spiced apples and delightful cannabutter. By the end, bakers will have the knowledge and skills needed to create an apple pie that's both delicious and seriously potent. Time to gather the ingredients and start the journey to becoming a cannabis baking badass!

PART 1: CRAFTING THE PERFECT CANNABUTTER

Before diving into the different decarboxylation methods, it's important to understand why this step is crucial. Decarboxylation (or decarbing) is the process of heating cannabis to activate the THC and other cannabinoids, converting them from their acid forms (THCA, CBDA) into their active forms (THC, CBD). Without decarbing, edibles won't have the desired psychoactive effects.

DECARBING METHODS: FROM BEST TO LAST RESORT

When it comes to decarbing, not all methods are created equal. Here's a rundown of the three most popular techniques, ranked from best to last resort:

THE ARDENT FX DECARBOXYLATOR: THE GOLD STANDARD

For serious cannabis cooking, the Ardent FX is the way to go. This all-in-one device takes the guesswork out of decarbing, ensuring perfect activation every time. Simply place ground cannabis in the device, select the "A1" setting for THC activation, and let it work its magic (which takes about 1-2 hours). The Ardent FX boasts a 97-100% activation rate, making it the most efficient method.

SOUS VIDE: THE PRECISION METHOD

For those without access to an Ardent FX, sous vide decarbing is the next best thing, offering precise temperature control and consistent results. To carb cannabis using sous vide:

Instructions:
▶ Seal ground cannabis in a vacuum-sealed bag.
▶ Place it in a sous vide water bath at 203°F for 1 hour,

monitoring the temperature with a sous vide precision cooker. This controlled method ensures even heat distribution and prevents overheating, which can degrade the cannabinoids. It does require more hands-on monitoring.

OVEN DECARBING: THE LAST RESORT

Oven decarbing is a last resort for those without access to an Ardent FX or sous vide setup. While it gets the job done, it's less precise. To decarb in the oven:

Instructions:
▶ Preheat the oven to 200-220°F.
▶ Spread ground cannabis on a baking sheet.
▶ Bake the cannabis for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally to ensure even heating.
▶ Remove the decarbed cannabis from the oven and let it cool.

CANNABUTTER

This cannabutter recipe works for any of the decarbing methods above.

Ingredients:
2 cups (4 sticks) unsalted butter
2 cups ground decarbed cannabis

Instructions:
▶ In a saucepan, melt the butter over low heat.
▶ Add the decarbed cannabis and stir well.
▶ Let the mixture simmer on low for 2-3 hours, stirring occasionally. Keep the temperature between 160-180°F and don't let it boil.
▶ Strain the butter through a cheesecloth-lined strainer into a jar, squeezing out all the butter.
▶ Refrigerate until solid, about



PHILIPPE MARQUIS

APPLE PIE FILLING
Ingredients:
6-8 apples (Honeycrisp, Granny Smith, or a mix), peeled and sliced
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 cup cannabutter, melted
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 egg white, beaten

Instructions:

- ▶ Preheat your oven to 425°F.
- ▶ In a large pot, combine the sliced apples, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, cornstarch, and lemon juice. Stir until the apples are evenly coated.
- ▶ Cook the apple mixture over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the apples reach an internal temperature of 160°F. Remove from heat.
- ▶ Drizzle in the melted cannabutter and mix until combined. Let the filling cool completely. This is crucial for a filling that sets up nicely and doesn't turn the pie into apple soup.
- ▶ Remove the chilled pie crusts from the refrigerator. Pour the cooled filling into the pie plate lined with dough. Top with the second crust, either as a lattice or a full top crust. Crimp the edges, brush with egg white, sprinkle with sugar, and cut a few slits for ventilation.
- ▶ Bake at 425°F for 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 375°F and continue baking for 40-50 minutes, until the crust is golden brown and the filling is bubbling.
- ▶ Wrap both portions in plastic and refrigerate at least 2 hours and up to overnight.

PART 3: BAKING THE ULTIMATE CANNABIS-INFUSED APPLE PIE

With the cannabutter and pie crust ready, it's time to create the ultimate cannabis-infused apple pie. This recipe takes the classic to new heights by par-cooking the apples before baking.

Cooking the apples to an internal temperature of 160°F sets the pectin, helping them hold their shape during baking. This results in a pie with distinct layers of tender apples, rather than mushiness. The cannabutter in the filling elevates this pie from a classic dessert to a truly special treat.

With its gooey filling, infused crust, and heavenly aroma, this cannabis apple pie is sure to be the star of any fall gathering. Whether using the precision of the Ardent FX, sous vide, or classic oven method, bakers will be on their way to an unforgettable dessert. It's time to roll up some sleeves, break out the rolling pin, and get baked in more ways than one. This ultimate guide will have its creator be the talk of the town and envy of every stoner-baker in the neighborhood. ♦♦♦

an hour.

PART 2: CRAFTING THE ULTIMATE FLAKY PIE CRUST

Now that the cannabutter is ready, it's time to create an exceptional pie crust. This recipe is designed for the flakiest, most delicious crust possible, with a unique twist that sets it apart. By incorporating both regular butter and cannabutter, the crust is infused with THC and boasts an unparalleled texture and flavor.

The key to this crust's success lies in the technique of smashing each cube of butter flat with fingertips. This creates thin, overlapping layers of butter within the dough, resulting in a supremely flaky crust. The combination of regular and cannabutter ensures the best of both worlds: delightful flakiness and a perfectly dosed cannabis experience.

PIE CRUST

Ingredients:
8 ounces (1 1/2 cups) low-protein all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1 tablespoon sugar
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal

Blaze & Glaze:

Elevate the BBQ Game with Cannabis-Infused Sauces and Marinades

Story and photos by Philippe Marquis

FALL IS HERE, BUT THERE'S STILL TIME TO FIRE UP THE grill for some seriously unforgettable BBQ sessions. So let's dive into the world of cannabis-infused BBQ sauces and marinades that'll send one's taste buds on a wild adventure. But first, let's break down the differences between these two flavorful enhancers.

Sauces are typically thick and flavorful liquids used to top off or accompany meats, while **marinades** are seasoned liquids used to infuse flavor and tenderize meats before cooking. With the basics covered, it's time to explore elevating the grill game with some seriously mouth-watering cannabis-infused creations.

MARVELOUS MARINATING

First up, let's talk about marinades. For juicy, tender meats that are packed with flavor, marinate them before grilling. The key to a kickass marinade is getting the basic components right. This means using an acid like vinegar or citrus juice to tenderize, an oil to moisturize, and a bunch of herbs and spices for flavor. ▶

KICKIN' CANNABIS BBQ SAUCES

Next up, let's talk about the backbone of any respectable BBQ: the sauce. We're talking about rich, thick, and sticky cannabis-infused BBQ sauces that make every bite worth savoring. Start with a go-to sauce recipe, then infuse it with some potent cannabis oil or butter.

▶HERE'S A PRO TIP

Timing is everything. Slather on that sauce during the last 10-15 minutes of grilling to prevent burning and ensure those sugars caramelize without turning bitter. To take the sauce game to the next level, try layering it on. Apply multiple thin layers, letting each one cook a bit before adding the next. This technique will create a depth of flavor that'll have guests begging for the secret recipe.

▶HERE'S A LITTLE-KNOWN SECRET

Sauces can be turned into glazes by reducing them over heat to thicken and concentrate those flavors. Add a little something sweet to achieve that shiny, glossy finish that makes a glaze so irresistible. When it comes to applying, timing is crucial. Slather on that glaze during the final moments of cooking to prevent burning and achieve a caramelized crust that'll have any dinner guests weak in the knees.

Remember to avoid over-salting any creations. Marinades and sauces can pack a lot of sodium, so taste and adjust accordingly. To really impress, layer on multiple coats of glaze, letting each one set before adding the next. It's a surefire way to achieve a deep, robust flavor and a finish that'll have guests talking about this BBQ for weeks to come.

It's time to stop settling for average BBQ and start infusing the grilling game with the most flavorful cannabis-infused sauces, marinades, and glazes out there. Experiment with dosages, pair a favorite strains with some favorite flavors, and get ready to blaze up the summer heat with some seriously next-level BBQ. Stay lifted, grill responsibly, and enjoy the ride. ♦♦♦



▶ Let the meats marinate for at least 30 minutes, but don't go overboard. Marinating for too long (more than 24 hours) can cause the acids to break down the proteins too much, leading to an unpleasant texture. And remember, don't reuse marinade that's been in contact with raw meat.



CANNABIS-INFUSED BBQ SAUCE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cannabis-infused olive oil or butter
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- Salt and black pepper to taste.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- ▶ In a medium saucepan, combine all ingredients and whisk until well combined.
- ▶ Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally.
- ▶ Reduce heat to low and let the sauce simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until it has thickened to the desired consistency.
- ▶ Taste and adjust seasoning as needed with salt, pepper, or additional cayenne for heat.
- ▶ Remove from heat and let cool before using or storing in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.



CLASSIC MARINADE RECIPE

SERVING SIZE

Enough marinade for 2-4 servings of meat

START-TO-FINISH TIME

10 minutes of prep, plus 30 minutes to 24 hours of marinating time.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

INSTRUCTIONS:

- ▶ In a bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, olive oil, honey, rice vinegar, garlic, ginger, sesame oil, and red pepper flakes.
- ▶ Place the meat of choice in a shallow dish or resealable plastic bag and pour the marinade over it, ensuring even coverage.
- ▶ Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes, but no longer than 24 hours.
- ▶ Remove the meat from the marinade and discard any remaining liquid that has come into contact with raw meat.
- ▶ Grill the marinated meat as desired, brushing with additional marinade (that hasn't touched raw meat) during cooking, if desired.

SERVING SIZE: Makes about 1 1/2 cups of sauce, enough for 6-8 servings

START-TO-FINISH TIME: 5 minutes of prep, plus 15-20 minutes of cooking time



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANTICOKE FARMS



From Horticulture to High Culture: The Evolution of Nanticoke Farms

By Philippe Marquis

In the heart of Endicott, New York, two green-thumbed brothers are cultivating something extraordinary.

Introducing brothers Peter and Chip Shafer, the duo behind Nanticoke Farms—a homegrown enterprise that has evolved from a garden center into a trailblazing force in New York's burgeoning cannabis industry.

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE

Their story takes root in 1999 when a young Chip, armed with a passion for plants and a degree in biology, began his journey at Nanticoke Gardens, a growing garden center in Endicott. From the simple tasks of mixing soil and filling pots to the responsibilities of managing production, Chip quickly rose through the ranks, honing his skills alongside the plants he nurtured in the bustling retail environment.

Meanwhile, in the concrete jungle of Brooklyn, Peter found himself yearning for change. After a decade in the city and an MBA in his name, the call of suburbia and an enticing opportunity beckoned. In 2011, the brothers joined forces, acquiring Nanticoke Gardens and embarking on a new adventure. Little did they know that this would mark the beginning of a journey that would lead them from petunias to pre-rolls.

WEATHERING THE STORM AND EMBRACING VARIETY

The path to success, however, was not without its challenges. Just months after taking the helm, Tropical Storm Lee unleashed its fury, flooding the garden center. Undeterred, Peter and Chip rolled up their sleeves, determined to not only rebuild but to expand. They saw opportunity in adversity and were ready to seize the moment.

In the Garden Center, Nanticoke Farms became renowned for its unparalleled commitment to variety. Their diverse selection catered to every taste and preference, offering a wide array of plants, flowers, and produce. From heirloom vegetables to exotic ornamentals, they took pride in providing something for everyone. As a testament to their dedication to variety, they boasted an impressive collection of over 50 tomato varieties and more than 30 distinct pepper types, just to name a few. This philosophy of embracing variety would

later become the cornerstone of their approach to cannabis cultivation.

By 2013, fueled by a vision of growth, the brothers secured a new property just a short distance from the garden center. Free from the limitations of the flood zone, they began constructing greenhouses, steadily transforming the landscape. Today, an impressive 85,000 square feet of thriving greenhouses stand as a testament to their determination. But this was just the beginning of their green revolution.

CULTIVATING DIVERSITY IN THE CANNABIS FRONTIER

As whispers of cannabis legalization began to echo through New York, Peter and Chip, who had been eagerly awaiting this moment, knew that their unique skill set and deep-rooted passion for plants could unlock a world of possibilities.

In 2017, when the state began issuing industrial hemp licenses, Nanticoke Farms was ready to embrace this new frontier. Securing the first CBD production license and the third overall hemp license in New York, the brothers carved out a distinctive niche. While others focused on outdoor cultivation, Nanticoke Farms leveraged the power of their greenhouses, establishing themselves as the go-to supplier of clones and cuttings.

Drawing inspiration from their garden center roots, Peter and Chip seamlessly translated their commitment to variety into their cannabis operation. Today, Nanticoke Farms proudly offers more than 20 different varieties, ensuring that there is something to satisfy every palate and preference.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CANNABIS PERFECTION

However, with great variety comes great responsibility. Introducing a new strain to the market is an endeavor that spans at least nine months. The process begins with sourcing seeds from four to five different suppliers, each offering a unique set of 25 seeds. These seeds are meticulously grown to the flowering stage, subjecting each plant to rigorous testing and evaluation.

Through meticulous selection process, the pool of potential strains narrowed down to a curated collection of 25. These chosen few are then sent for potency testing, as the market demands nothing less than the best. Simultaneously, the

brothers cultivate a separate set of mother plants, carefully selected for their exceptional performance and desirable traits. These mother plants serve as the foundation for propagating the next generation of cuttings, ensuring consistent quality and reliability.

THE FUTURE IS GREEN AND ALWAYS IMPROVING

As Nanticoke Farms navigates the dynamic landscape of New York's cannabis industry, challenges are inevitable. State regulations impose limitations on square footage, requiring the brothers to strategically allocate their resources and curate their offerings with care. Yet, these challenges drive innovation and adaptability.

Amidst the growing pains, a sense of optimism prevails. Peter and Chip remain steadfast in their pursuit of quality, constantly refining their craft and setting their sights on new heights. With each passing harvest, every crop showcases notable improvements in potency, flavor, and overall experience, a testament to the brothers' unwavering dedication and growing expertise.

But for Peter and Chip, this is just the beginning. They view each harvest not as a destination, but as a stepping stone in their ongoing journey to elevate the art and science of cannabis cultivation. They're always on the lookout for innovative ways to enhance the quality of their cannabis, ensuring that each generation of plants surpasses the last.

This commitment to continuous improvement is at the heart of Nanticoke Farms' ethos. As they look to the future, Peter and Chip are excited by the prospect of delivering ever-more exceptional products to their customers. With each harvest, Nanticoke Farms inches closer to this ideal, raising the bar for the entire industry along the way.

AN UNWAVERING LOVE FOR PLANTS

The story of Nanticoke Farms is one of resilience, innovation, and a deep-rooted passion for the green. From their humble beginnings in the garden center to their entry into the world of cannabis, Peter and Chip have nurtured not only plants but also a legacy that will continue to grow and inspire.

At the heart of their success lies Chip's unwavering love for plants and his degree in biology, which continue to drive the business and shape every harvest. His deep understanding of plant science, coupled with the brothers' dedication, has led to a cannabis operation that consistently delivers exceptional quality and variety. As they look to the future, Peter and Chip are excited by the prospect of pushing boundaries in the world of cannabis. With each harvest yielding better results than the last, they are confident that the best is yet to come.

The next time someone lights up a Nanticoke Farms creation, they can appreciate the journey that brought it to fruition. This tale of two brothers united by a shared dream and tireless commitment to crafting exceptional cannabis is one that will continue to inspire. As they set the standard for quality and innovation, Nanticoke Farms is poised to lead the green revolution, one harvest at a time. ♦♦♦

INSTAGRAM: @NANTICOKE.2

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF 7 SEAZ



COLIN DECKER, FOUNDER OF 7 SEAZ.

7 SEAZ PRODUCTS ARE PACKAGED WITH RECLAIMED OCEAN PLASTICS.

Founded by Colin Decker, a seasoned cannabis veteran with deep roots in the industry, 7 SEAZ transcends the typical brand standard. As New York's first legacy to legal brand, their story is one of passion and perseverance that melds the rich roots of the past with the opportunities of the modern cannabis scene.

Riding the Wave: Colin Decker's Journey with 7 SEAZ

By Rita Thompson ♦

FROM LEGACY ROOTS TO LEGAL TRIUMPH 7 SEAZ is deeply intertwined with Decker's personal history. Inspired by his mother, who introduced him to cannabis cultivation at the age of 13, Decker's journey in the cannabis world has been both a familial legacy and a personal quest. "My mother always instilled in me that anything in this world is possible if you believe in it and pursue your passions," he told *The Emerald*. "The seven oceans of the world

symbolize just that, endless possibility and exploration in this lifetime." This foundational belief, coupled with his extensive experience as a legacy operator and founder of New York's oldest cannabis consulting agency, Sensi Growth Consulting, paved the way for Decker to establish 7 SEAZ. Located in the Hudson Valley, often referred to as "the new Emerald Triangle," 7 SEAZ benefits from the region's rich cannabis cultivation history and diverse microclimates. Decker leverages this unique environment to produce top-tier cannabis despite the challenges of growing amid the area's humid conditions. The local terroir—environmental factors including the microclimates throughout the valley that affect plants—and the expertise of the Hudson Valley farmers contribute to the brand's distinctiveness as well. Factors like soil compositions, gulf stream air current, light exposure, hot days, and cool nights all play a role in the crops cultivated in the area. "Farming here has always had very interesting terroir to it along with so many different micro-climates that exist all throughout the valley," says Decker. "Outdoor cultivation in the valley has always been an exhaustive challenge, even growing in greenhouses with light-dep or mixed-light can prove to be a nightmare, especially in the humid summers [and] early fall seasons." Working closely with experienced farmers from the area, 7 SEAZ products combine the genetics library from their legacy past and their exclusive



DECKER (LEFT) AND HIS MOTHER (RIGHT), WHO INTRODUCED HIM TO CANNABIS CULTIVATION AT 13.

partnership with Ziplock Seeds, a multi-time award-winning breeder. Decker personally oversees the production of all 7 SEAZ products for quality assurance and control purposes—because when it comes to quality, he's not taking any chances.

"If you have lived with the plant for all these years and it has been your life, then it just becomes an extension of who you are, and it translates universally."

"I personally spent a lot of time researching and developing unique product formulations and manufacturing processes to create the perfect pre-rolls," he said. "Many checks and balances have been put in place to ensure that consumers get what they deserve every time—top-quality premium product." This quality is evident in the brand's unique offerings, such as the TSUNAMI Triple Infused Pre-Rolls and Triple Infused Tidal Waves Pre-Roll multi-packs, which have set a new standard in the market. "Consistency is the key to success in this great game," Decker added. "We only use mixed-light greenhouse flower in our products, and I work with the growers on the cultivation side to ensure that the flower going into our products is only fire flower every time."

STAYING TRUE TO ROOTS IN A CHANGING MARKET

Transitioning from a legacy operator to a legal cannabis entrepreneur was not free of challenges, though. Navigating the regulatory landscape of New York's recreational market required Decker to adapt quickly. "I had to figure out how to operate within the compliant and regulatory structures put in place by the [Office of Cannabis Management]. The rules are the rules, and compliance is everything when operating in the legal market," he says. Having pursued this dream since he was 13 years old, Decker's commitment remained steadfast despite skepticism and hurdles. "Navigating the legal constructs of the recreational cannabis market here in New York can be daunting for some, especially those transitioning from legacy to legal," Decker expressed. "It is an extreme amount of work but worth every bit of effort put into it." One of the hallmarks of 7 SEAZ is staying connected to its roots while adapting to the evolving legal market. Drawing on wisdom from veteran growers who taught him not only about the plant but also about the community and culture, Decker knows that "you can't fake the funk." "If you have lived with the plant for all these years and it has been your life, then it just becomes an extension of who you are, and it translates universally," he says. This deep, genuine connection to the plant and its culture is also reflected in the brand's community support through their NY Small Farmer Fund. A portion of 7 SEAZ sales go to this non-profit, which aids struggling small farmers by providing direct financial assistance. "I come from a small farming background and know what it is like to chase a dream and need a helping hand sometimes to make it over the hill," he added. Decker's experience from the legacy industry informs his approach to business and innovation. "The dedication you put into the plant, your brand, and your products day in and day out will show in every aspect," he noted. "No matter how much money you may have, you can't buy authenticity." Other core principles of 7 SEAZ include scaling slowly. Decker emphasizes that taking a measured approach to growth is crucial. "I have seen so many companies go into extreme debt because they have FOMO and believe they must be the largest operators and control the market share, when in fact those who scaled too quickly will probably be the first to go under because those who live off of debt have no real foundation to fall back on," he adds. "The bigger you are, the harder you fall." Naturally, the legalization of cannabis in New York impacted the company and the broader market dynamics. Decker says the market was turbulent initially, with many players prioritizing short-term gains over long-term sustainability. For 7 SEAZ, however, the focus is maintaining high standards and ethical practices. "We never cut corners," he noted. "We kept our values and morals intact and stood firm with a strong constitution that our products and our consumers are what we care about."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

7 SEAZ is stocked in over 100+ stores throughout New York and regularly sells out within a month of new product drops. "One day here, we will have 1,000 stores open, and they will be carrying 7 SEAZ products," Decker added. He is excited about the future, anticipating growth both locally and internationally. He aims to expand the brand's presence beyond New York, with plans to enter new markets like New Jersey and eventually go global. As 7 SEAZ continues to ride the waves of change, Decker's story is a testament to the power of perseverance, authenticity, and passion. With a firm foundation in legacy and a forward-looking approach to innovation, 7 SEAZ is poised to make a lasting impact on the industry. And for Decker, who's focused on honoring his roots, supporting the community, and pushing the boundaries of what's possible, the possibilities for the future are endless. "Stay tuned for what we have coming up next, and ride the wave," he says. ♦♦♦



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