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CANADIAN
CANNABIS
AWARDS
edition

Celebrating
**Canada's Top
Cannabis**
People
Plants
Products
and
Producers

Melissa Etheridge

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WINTER 2017/2018

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Oration



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Contents



.....
p.7 | EDITOR'S LETTER

p.8 | ABOUT THE CANADIAN CANNABIS AWARDS

p.9 | CANNABIS 101
Four easy ways to take your prescription cannabis oil.

p.12 | BOOK IT
Review of *CBD: A Patient's Guide to Medical Cannabis*.

p.39 | Best Buds
Canada's top strains.

FEATURES

p.13 | Improving Quality of Life for AIDS Patients
Canopy Growth Corporation and the Canadian AIDS Society are working to create clinical cannabis treatment guidelines for people living with HIV, AIDS and chronic pain. *By Andrea Kovarcsik*

p.17 | On This Farm She Found a Cause
Canadian Cannabis Award winner Melissa Etheridge turns her activist's gaze to greener pastures, dishing on cannabis, cancer and the right to be high. *By Ryan Porter*

p.21 | High Achiever: How One Doctor's Dedication Soothes the Pain of Thousands
Working through decades of prohibition, Dr. Mark Ware's persistence has outlasted most anti-cannabis laws. *Jane Langille* reports on the Lifetime Achievement award-winning researcher.

p.25 | Beyond Relief: Canada's Top Licensed Producer Sets the Bar
MedReleaf insiders and one grateful patient share what it takes to be the 2017 Canadian Cannabis Award winner for Top Licensed Producer. *By Colleen Fisher Tully*

p.27 | Smokin' Hot
Coleman Molnar explores the culture behind Tokyo Smoke's Brand of the Year win at the 2017 Canadian Cannabis Awards.

p.30 | FACE OF CANNABIS
Sharing is caring. Lift's Top Reviewer Michael Pasini on the rewards of a good review.

p.32 | DEAR CANNABOSS
Consistent advice for a changing cannabis world.

p.33 | GEAR GUIDE
The coolest in cannabis gadgets, gear and getups.

p.43 | COOKING WITH CANNABIS
Weekend brunch recipes for a healthy morning meal.

p.49 | WINNER'S CIRCLE
Selections from the 2017 Canadian Cannabis Awards winners list.



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EDITOR IN CHIEF

Devon Scoble

ART DIRECTOR

Nicole Orłowski

SENIOR DESIGNER

Daniel Lam

PROJECT MANAGER

Thea Mizuhara

SENIOR EDITOR

Mirella-Marie Katarina Radman

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Dessy Pavlova

COPY EDITOR

Andrea Kovarcsik

FACT CHECKERS

Joy Ferguson

Andrea Kovarcsik

CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Eng

Colleen Fisher Tully

Andrea Kovarcsik

Jane Langille

Daniel Lee

Tara McManus

Coleman Molnar

Michael Pasini

Ryan Porter

Dina Rock

Michael Verbora

SALES DIRECTOR

Peter Carscadden

ADVERTISING SALES

Leslie Best



DEVON SCOBLE, EDITOR IN CHIEF

From my first joint more than 20 years ago to the inflammation-calming CBD oil I took last night, I've always enjoyed how cannabis makes me feel. But until very recently, I rarely shared that enthusiasm publicly. I certainly never imagined I'd be celebrating cannabis as openly and exuberantly as I am here, within the first Canadian Cannabis Awards-themed issue of Lift magazine.

Thankfully, many of the people featured in these pages have taken a bolder approach, pushing the boundaries of research, advocacy and commerce to lead Canada towards its current legal medical program and upcoming legal recreational system.

For Dr. Mark Ware, this year's Lifetime Achievement award recipient, getting here has meant decades of challenging barriers to conduct clinical research on cannabis's pain-relieving properties (p.21). For rock star and cancer survivor Melissa Etheridge, this year's honorary Celebrity Advocate, it's meant promoting cannabis not only as a balm for physical pain but also as a tool for personal enlightenment (p.17). And for patient

and Top Lift Reviewer Michael Pasini, it's meant sharing his insights to help build a dedicated online community (p.30).

With legalization coming next summer, 2018 will be a big year for Canadian cannabis, one of many national firsts. But as monumental as this is for Canada, I suspect it's the personal firsts that many people will remember most fondly: the first exuberance of getting high, or paradoxically, the first realization that cannabis is only a party drug if you want it to be, that it is also powerful medicine.

The end of cannabis prohibition will also mean increasing openness for closet enthusiasts to finally admit their fondness, and for patients to share their healing journeys. My secret's out, and I'm happy. I'm even happier to be celebrating the Canadian Cannabis Awards, honouring the people, plants and products that make this new cannabis landscape so exciting.

Image credits and many thanks to Aurora, Canna Farms (Tom Ulanowski), MedReleaf, Organigram, Peace Naturals and Tilray for providing pictures of their respective brands' flower on pages 39-40. Broken Coast Lasqueti image by Daniel Lee. Melissa Etheridge cover image by John Tsiavis; feature images on page 17-19 by Myriam Santos.

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**CANADIAN
CANNABIS
AWARDS
2017**

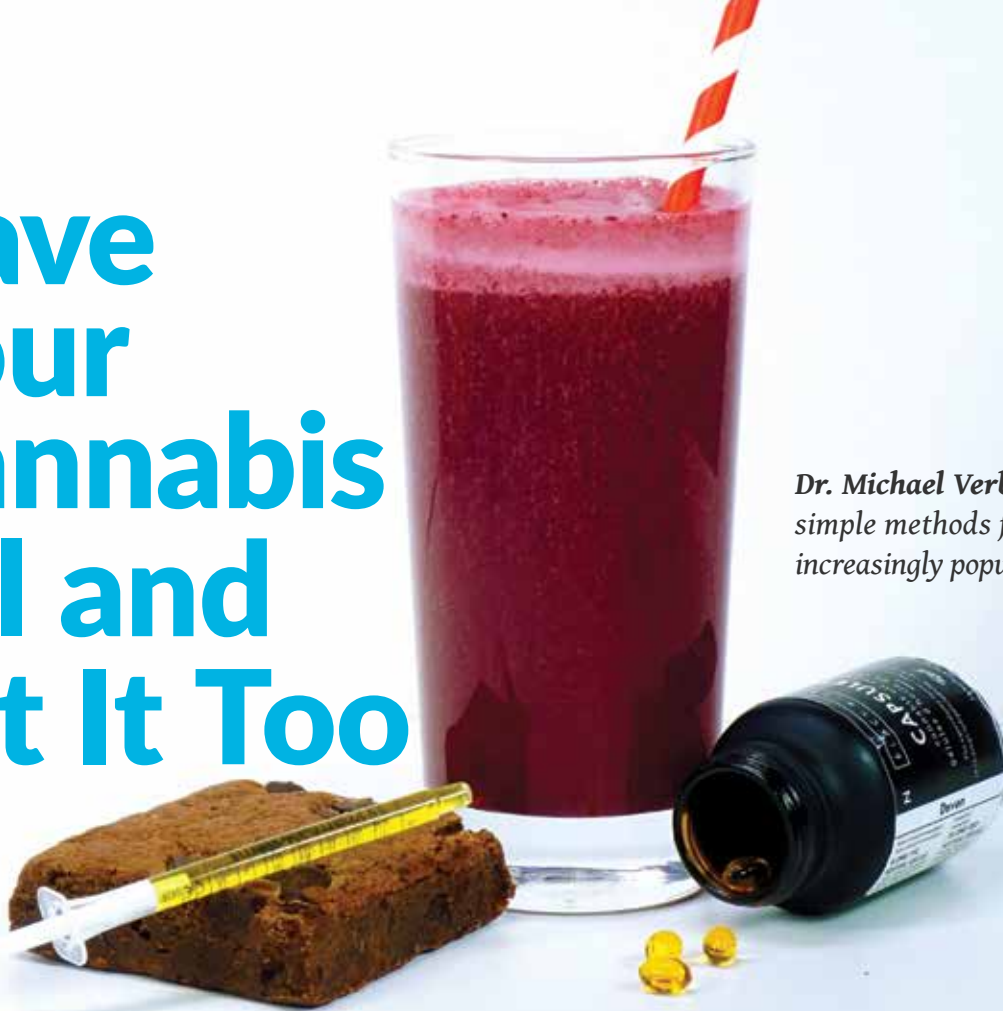
About the Canadian Cannabis Awards

In the world of legal cannabis, there's arguably nowhere more exciting than Canada right now. Medical cannabis is already available and recreational cannabis soon will be.

For patients and enthusiasts, this means less secrecy and more choice. By celebrating the best in Canadian cannabis, the annual Canadian Cannabis Awards (CCAs) set the standard, highlighting the wealth of top-notch products and producers on the market. The awards also honour the grit and creative efforts it took to build this promising new cannabis landscape.

Most CCA categories are voter-driven, and if you voted this year, thank you! For more information and to learn how to vote in the next CCAs, please visit canadiancannabisawards.com/vote.

Have Your Cannabis Oil and Eat It Too



Dr. Michael Verbora offers four simple methods for taking this increasingly popular medicine.

Prescription cannabis oil works just like other oral medicines. After entering the stomach, it's metabolized by the liver, then dispersed throughout the body's tissues, where it exerts its effects on body and mind. Many doctors, myself included, value it for its long-lasting impact and use it to treat a variety of conditions, from pain and inflammation to anxiety, seizures and more.

The most important advice I give my patients is to measure each dose. It's essential to know exactly how much cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) you're getting every time you medicate. Cannabis oil can be consumed on its own, but I recommend taking it with a snack or light meal to maximize blood flow to the gut and therefore uptake in the body.

There are many safe, easy and delicious ways to take your medicine. Here are a few I recommend to my patients:

DOWN IT

This is the simplest method. Just measure your dose and swallow.

EAT IT

Not everyone likes the taste of cannabis oil. I often recommend making a small cut-out in a brownie and placing the measured dose inside, or combining it with vinegar for a medicated salad dressing. You can also cook and bake with it, but keep in mind that the longer it's heated, the more the terpenes (and the associated therapeutic effects) evaporate.

DRINK IT

Many of my patients enjoy taking their oil with their morning smoothie or coffee, or in their evening tea. Give it a good stir and your drink should mask the oil's flavour.

POP IT

Some licensed producers are beginning to produce cannabis capsules, but the majority are still only producing oils. If you prefer your medicine in pill form, you can purchase empty capsules in health food stores or online that you can fill at home. This method is convenient for dosing but can get messy.

This Year's Top Prescription Oils

Top High THC Oil

1. Aurora THC Drops - Indica, Aurora
2. Elixir No. 1, Hydrophothecary
3. Champlain - Indica, Aphria

Top High CBD Oil

1. Avidekel, MedReleaf
2. Aurora CBD Drops, Aurora
3. Canna Oil 0|10, Canna Farms



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LEONARD LEINOW & JULIANA BIRNBAUM
Foreword by Michael H. Moskowitz, MD

CBD

A PATIENT'S GUIDE
TO MEDICINAL CANNABIS



HEALING WITHOUT THE HIGH



CBD: A Patient's Guide to Medicinal Cannabis

Healing without the high.

Unlike its famous cousin tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), cannabidiol (CBD) does not produce a cerebral high and is increasingly in demand for its healing qualities, such as proven anti-inflammatory, anti-nausea and anti-seizure properties. *CBD: A Patient's Guide to Medicinal Cannabis* seeks to answer patients' questions about this promising cannabinoid, or as its authors call it, the "get well" molecule.

An engineer by background, co-author Leonard Leinow is a cannabis influencer and consultant on cannabis strains, dosages and potency. Complimenting his work, Juliana Birnbaum brings her background as a cultural anthropologist and reporter to this collaborative work. In this spirit, the book merges scientific rigour with anthropological insight, synthesizing the research on how CBD may affect particular conditions and also telling the political, legal and cultivation history of CBD-rich strains.

Despite a poorly organized dosing chart and U.S.-centric narrative, *CBD: A Patient's Guide to Medicinal Cannabis* is a practical guide for Canadian patients wishing to match their symptoms and conditions to CBD's potential therapeutic properties. It is also an engaging read for anyone interested in cannabis cultivation history.

Find **CBD: A Patient's Guide to Medicinal Cannabis** at Amazon, Kobo and other book retailers for \$28.99, or follow Lift on Facebook at @liftcann for your chance to win a free copy.

Improving Quality of Life for AIDS Patients

*Clinical practice guidelines make for better treatments, but developing them isn't easy. **Andrea Kovarcsik** reports on how a Canopy Growth Corporation donation is helping the Canadian AIDS Society develop cannabis treatment guidelines for Canadian patients.*

Sick. Unwell. Nauseated. In pain. These are the words Shari Margolese uses to describe her condition prior to starting medical cannabis therapy 20 years ago. Margolese has suffered from chronic arthritis since she was a teenager, and, in 1993, was diagnosed with HIV. She'd always been sensitive to traditional pharmaceuticals, and her HIV medication was no different, causing side effects such as nausea and appetite loss. Today, Margolese credits the herb with her improved quality of life.

But the journey to accessing medical cannabis was not an easy one. When Margolese first approached her family doctor about using it to manage the side effects of her HIV medication, her doctor refused. "She just wasn't interested," says Margolese. "She didn't think it would help and there wasn't enough research." So Margolese visited her infectious disease specialist, who was also wary. Three years and countless standard medications later, Margolese's specialist finally gave in. "She said as long as I didn't sell it, she was okay with it. And she's been signing my medical papers for the last 20 years."

Today, individuals living with HIV still face barriers to accessing medical cannabis. Margolese jumped one main hurdle, medical

support, but still struggles with another, affordability. Medical cannabis has largely replaced her need for painkillers, anti-anxiety medication, antidepressants and appetite stimulants, but affording the three grams she needs daily is a challenge. At \$8 a gram, her monthly total would be \$720.

"Developing clinical practice guidelines is daunting, which is why they don't exist. But physicians and other health care professionals really need them to understand how to use cannabis in their practices."

- Hilary Black

These barriers are among the issues that Canopy Growth Corporation and the Canadian AIDS Society (CAS) hope to address with a research program announced this summer. A public cannabis company based in Smiths Falls, Ont., Canopy Growth has pledged \$200,000 over two years to CAS for the development of clinical practice guidelines. The guidelines will address how best to incorporate cannabis in symptom management, focusing on optimal wellness for people living with chronic pain related to HIV and other diseases.

No such guidelines exist yet, meaning the research program's task force is embarking on an unprecedented project.

"Developing clinical practice guidelines is daunting," says Hilary Black, director of patient advocacy at Canopy Growth, "which is why they don't exist. But physicians and other health care professionals really need them to understand how to use cannabis in their practices."





CANADIAN AIDS SOCIETY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GARY LACASSE WITH CANOPY GROWTH CORPORATION PRESIDENT MARK ZEKULIN.

Medical cannabis is markedly less one-size-fits-all than typical pharmaceuticals. We each metabolize cannabinoids at different rates, and experience different reactions depending on the strain and mode of ingestion. This calls for an intimate patient-doctor conversation regarding symptoms, strains, potency, dosage and quality of life, which is not yet happening in the Canadian mainstream.

“It’s a contentious issue,” says Dr. Lynne Belle-Isle, national programs manager at CAS and task force chair. “In a prohibition environment, much stigma has been attributed to cannabis use. Physicians tend not to ask about it, and patients are reluctant to bring it up.”

The first step in developing the guidelines will be a systematic review of the current literature and state of knowledge regarding the use of cannabis in the management of HIV and other chronic diseases. Based on the evidence of the review, the task force will then draft its guidelines. The final report will be published in a medical journal and disseminated via conferences, meetings, and, hopefully, webinars and workshops.

For their part, Canopy Growth is as excited about the program as CAS. “Every day we hear about the challenges people face and the results they’re having,” says Mark Zekulin, president of Canopy Growth, regarding medical cannabis use. “When someone says, ‘This has changed my life. I now have a quality of life I didn’t have before,’ that’s a big deal!” In terms of funding research, he says, there’s no better partner than CAS. “Well

before we were involved, CAS was one of the early advocates for medical cannabis. We’ve always admired what they’ve done, and at this moment the time seemed right.”

Though the task force’s road ahead is a long and painstaking one, the future is promising. With recreational legalization around the corner in Canada, hopefully the conversation will become more comfortable and normal, allowing more people living with HIV to access this medicine.

“Marijuana has been a multi-use medicine for me that has really improved my quality of life,” says Margolese. “That’s why we need these guidelines.”

This year’s Top Charitable Initiative award honours Canopy Growth for its \$200,000 commitment to the Canadian AIDS Society.



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On Thi

BY RYAN PORTER

Farm Sh

Found

Caus

She's helped change the conversation on everything from sexual diversity to the polar ice caps, yet Melissa Etheridge counts the decade she's spent as a cannabis advocate among the best years of her life. The face of Etheridge Farms and Celebrity Advocate award winner tells Lift about the future of her cannabis crusade.

If you're looking for Melissa Etheridge, you'll likely find her on the right side of history. The American rock star, 56, publicly declared herself out and proud in 1993 and won an Oscar for writing *An Inconvenient Truth's* climate change call-to-arms, "I Need To Wake Up," in 2007. Today she's the face of Etheridge Farms, her upcoming California-based cannabis brand.

As the world is catching up to the pro-medicinal marijuana mandate she's preached for over a decade, Etheridge has already moved on to her next battleground: the right to be high. "I believe it's a civil right," she says while speaking with Lift this past July over the phone from Ottawa, where she played the city's storied Bluesfest. "We laugh about how we sit around and get high and talk about the meaning of life, but it's actually a really good thing. It helps us evolve as people. It's a good thing for human beings to understand what euphoria and bliss is."

Etheridge herself was only an occasional cannabis consumer before she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2004 at the age of 43. She was appalled by the number of pills she was prescribed to manage the side effects of her chemotherapy. "They said, 'Here's your steroids, here's your pain pills, and you're going to get constipated from the pain pills, so here's this pill,'" she recalls. "It was literally five or six pills on

top of pouring poison chemotherapy into my body. I said, 'Are you crazy?'"

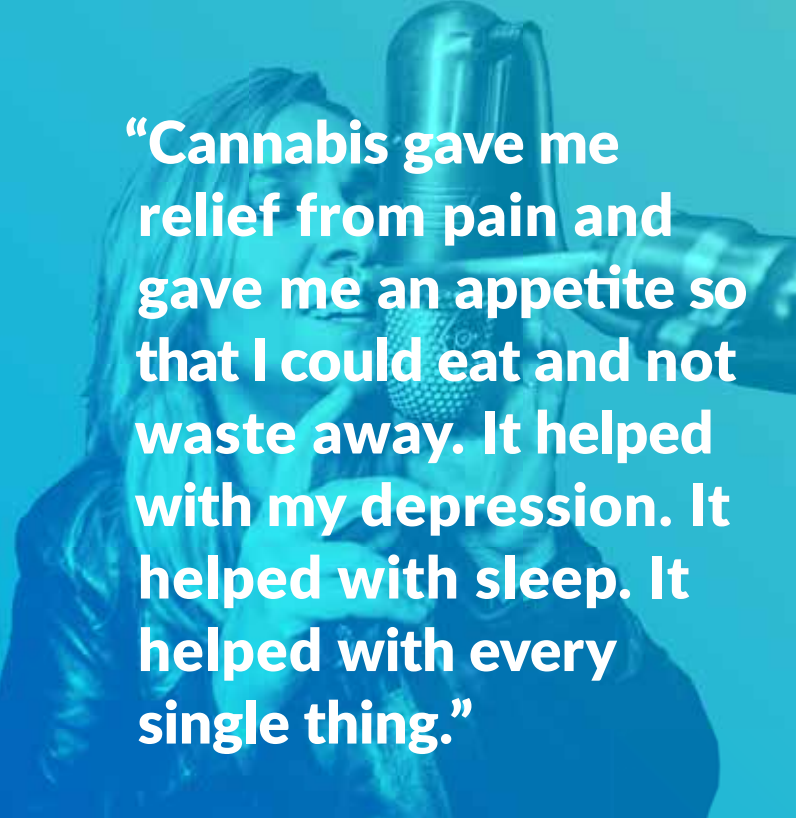
Etheridge chose cannabis instead to alleviate the impact of her cancer treatment. "Cannabis gave me relief from pain and gave me an appetite so that I could eat and not waste away," she says. "It helped with my depression. It helped with sleep. It helped with every single thing."

The Celebrity Advocate award honours Melissa Etheridge for her cannabis activism and efforts to normalize the plant.

Now over a decade later, she's finding creative ways to help others unlock cannabis's benefits. Some of the products Etheridge Farms will sell are edibles as well as pre-rolled "honey sticks" that Etheridge says are "super-duper powerful" ("I always have to warn

people: just one puff!”), and a cannabis and eucalyptus salve called Balmz Away that Etheridge pronounces as “*Balm-z-z-z-z-z Away!*”

“It’s one of the best things for arthritis, for inflammation, for aches and for the back,” she says. “People who have said, ‘I’ve tried everything and have given up’ tried Balmz Away and were cured. Cannabis as a topical has been known for centuries to be healing, so I am not surprised.”



“Cannabis gave me relief from pain and gave me an appetite so that I could eat and not waste away. It helped with my depression. It helped with sleep. It helped with every single thing.”

Etheridge is just as passionate about cannabis’s capacity for awakening creativity. “When I sit down to write a song, you better believe I have a nice sativa,” she says. “It just sparkles up the creative side of my brain.”

Her track record speaks for itself. All of Etheridge’s 14 studio albums save her 2008 Christmas album have cracked the top 40 on the Billboard 200. She’s won two Grammys for Best Female Rock Vocal Performance and has been nominated for 15 Grammys in total. Most recently, she toured with her Stax Memphis Rock and Soul Revue, a touring band complete with background vocalists and a horn section.

The set list includes such Stax Records soul classics as “Born Under A Bad Sign,” “Hold On, I’m Comin’” and “I’ve Got Dreams To Remember,” as featured on her 2016 album *Memphis Rock and Soul*. The night before our interview, Etheridge re-teamed with singer Joss Stone at the Montreal Jazz Festival after 12 years to play the same soulful mashup of Janis Joplin’s “Cry Baby” and “Piece Of My Heart” that they’d memorably performed at the 2005 Grammys, when a defiant, post-chemo Etheridge flaunted a shaved head.

Never one to back down, Etheridge emphasized that it’s still frustrating working against decades of legal precedence. She calls the current status of Etheridge Farms “up and down,” because while she is still building the brand, current regulations stipulate all product be sold through Santa Cruz dispensary Greenway (GreenwaySantaCruz.com), although she expects it won’t be long before they can be branded and sold through Etheridge Farms. Her hopes are that these early steps will serve as a pilot project for what she could someday do in Canada. She was in Toronto last April networking with others in the cannabis industry, but admits that even she can’t read the tea leaves—or THC leaves—as to what legalization will look like. “We’re all sort of in the same spot,” she says, “trying to understand [the regulations]. Once we get our research and data together it can really be world-changing.”

Another vision she has is to one day play a cannabis-licensed environment. Asked if she thinks we will witness that within our lifetimes, she answers, “I think we’ll see it within five years! I’m working on it right now!” She also predicts that women’s voices will be instrumental in destigmatizing cannabis use. “There are a whole bunch of middle-aged women whose children are grown or are in high school and who are looking for relief from many different things,” she says. “I think it is those women who are going to make it a household product.”

It may be too soon to say if Etheridge Farms can so decisively crack the mainstream, but the rock icon loves a challenge. “I have found the last 10 years of advocating for cannabis to be some of the most rewarding,” she says. “Scary and frustrating at times, yet always moving forward. It’s a big part of my life. I will never stop singing and playing, but this really touches a part of me. It gives me that extra insight into why I’m here and why it’s worth it to wake up every morning and get out in the world and create.”

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High Achiever: How One Doctor's Dedication Soothes the Pain of Thousands

Jane Langille talks to renowned cannabis researcher Dr. Mark Ware, recipient of this year's Canadian Cannabis Award for Lifetime Achievement.

One day in the late 1990s, an elderly man with full-blown sickle cell disease walked into a medical clinic in Kingston, Jamaica. Dr. Mark Ware, a clinical research fellow at the time, was surprised the man looked so youthful and apparently healthy. Sickle cell disease is usually devastating, as misshapen red blood cells clog blood vessels and cause severe pain. When Dr. Ware asked the man's secret, he leaned over with a twinkle in his eye and said, "You must study the herb, Doc!"

That insight ignited Dr. Ware's passion for investigating cannabis's pain-relieving properties. For the last 18 years he has done just that, championing groundbreaking clinical research in Canada and advancing the science of cannabis's potential, despite many obstacles.

Back in 1999, three factors cemented his decision to move from Jamaica to Canada. "There I was, a clinician with a research interest, surrounded by patients in

terrible pain, in a country with a notoriety around cannabis," says Dr. Ware. "That's when my education about the complexity of studying cannabis began." His Jamaican colleagues did not want to collaborate for fear of jeopardizing funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health. So when Health Canada announced \$1.5 million in funding for cannabis research, he set his sights on McGill University in Montreal for its reputation in pain research. He started as a research associate at the McGill Pain Centre, now the Alan Edwards Pain Management Unit, and by July 2001 had become an assistant professor in the Departments of Family Medicine and Anesthesia.

Getting funding and approval to conduct any clinical research requires miles of red tape, but Dr. Ware faced extra hurdles to study cannabis. He had to obtain test product with different levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) from suppliers, the hospital pharmacy had to be licensed to dispense it, and he had to find labs to test blood for THC. It was also challenging finding volunteers, since the university's research ethics committee at first only approved recruiting individuals with previous cannabis experience and severe neuropathic pain for at least three months.

He also had to figure out how to ventilate smoking in a non-smoking hospital. "I remember that it took Mark years just to get approval to move the air duct," says

Jeffrey Mogil, PhD, director of the Alan Edwards Centre for Research on Pain at McGill University.

Nevertheless, Dr. Ware and his colleagues persisted. Twenty-one volunteers inhaled herbal cannabis for five days. They reported reduced pain intensity and improved sleep with no notable adverse effects compared to smoking a placebo. The published study made a big splash on the cover of the October 5, 2010, issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal, Canada's leading medical journal. Dr. Ware keeps a framed cover on his office wall.

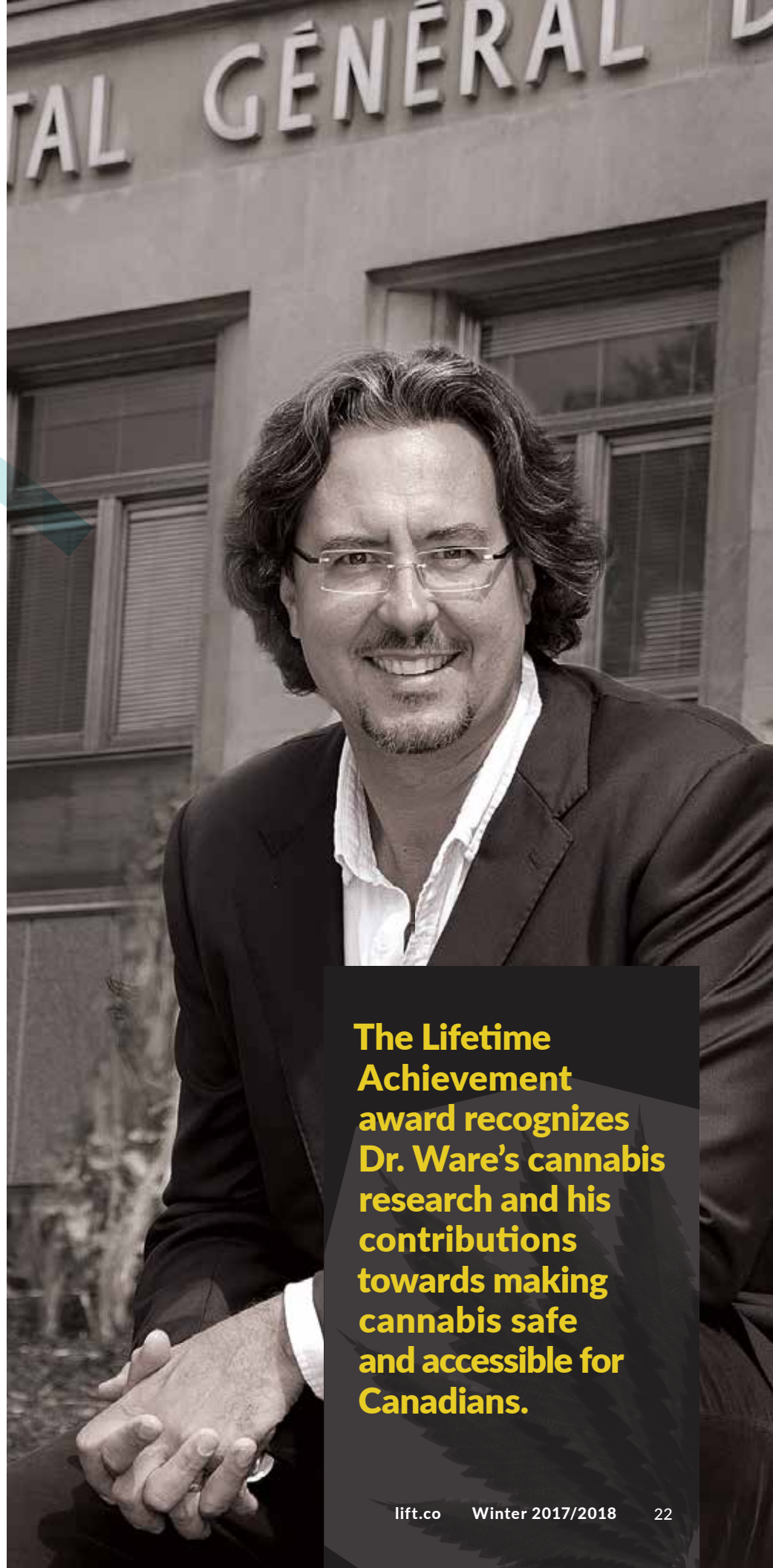
His second funded study was much larger. The Cannabis for the Management of Pain: Assessment of Safety Study was the first in the world to examine long-term safety. To recruit over 400 people who met the ethics board's criteria, he organized teams at seven pain clinics across Canada. Half of the participants used a standardized cannabis product for one year and the other half did not. The study found that medical cannabis had a reasonable safety profile as part of a one-year treatment program for chronic pain. There was no difference in the risk of severe adverse events between the medical cannabis group and the non-user group. In addition, medical cannabis significantly reduced pain intensity and improved quality of life in people with previous experience. The paper was published in the prestigious Journal of Pain in December 2015.

When asked about his success, Dr. Ware mentions his good fortune working with incredible teams of collaborators. At times, he has felt that one more barrier might be a sign to quit. Then he hears more patient stories about the remarkable effects of cannabis and says, “There’s too much potential and too much suffering. We have to keep moving.”

“You have to give serious credit to Mark for pushing his research towards mainstream acceptability,” says Mogil. “He has a perfect personality: an amazing blend of enthusiasm and gravitas. He’s enthusiastic about the promise of cannabis, but from a place of authority that makes it an effective message.”

Today, Dr. Ware continues his work as director of clinical research at the Alan Edwards Pain Management Unit at the Montreal General Hospital and executive director of the Canadian Consortium for the Investigation of Cannabinoids. He recently served as vice chair of the Canadian Task Force on Marijuana Legalization and Regulation and also sits on the board of directors of the International Association for Cannabinoid Medicines.

Meanwhile, he hopes to inspire a new generation of professionals and to help position Canada as the global leader in cannabis research. As cannabis laws relax and research opportunities increase, it’s a good time for specialists to follow Dr. Ware’s lead in carving out a niche. Humbly, he recalls the old saying, “In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man soon becomes king,” and looks forward to continuing his quest.



The Lifetime Achievement award recognizes Dr. Ware’s cannabis research and his contributions towards making cannabis safe and accessible for Canadians.



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Beyond Relief

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BY COLLEEN FISHER TULLY

MEDRELEAF CEO
NEIL CLOSNER

Nothing can prepare someone for a traumatic brain injury, a complicated condition that can leave you feeling lost and lifeless for decades. This was the case for Dave Book, who sustained his injury during his military service back in 1987. “I would cycle between getting well and getting sick, on and off, for nearly 30 years,” says Book. Having been prescribed dozens of psychiatric medications over the years, he developed a dependency on benzodiazepines and self-medicated with alcohol. Book was even told he was untreatable, until a fellow veteran recommended cannabis therapy. “My life has gone 360 degrees,” he says of the past year as a MedReleaf patient. Freed from his former addictions while also treating lower back pain, arthritis and PTSD alongside his cognitive condition, Book says he finally feels normal.

Inside the immaculate white walls of

MedReleaf, the Markham, Ont.-based licensed producer with a powerful reputation in the medical cannabis market, is a serious pharmaceutical business. With a robust team of PhD-level scientists and top-tier executives plucked from Toronto’s prestigious Mount Sinai Hospital, CEO Neil Closner says the forward-thinking facility launched with a hard science focus back in 2013. “We always sought to meet a standard that would be accepted and recognized by the medical community, because they are the gatekeepers,” he explains. “So from the very beginning, our slogan was ‘Setting the medical-grade standard.’”

Not only have they set the standard, they’ve set the bar. MedReleaf’s most recent innovation is a topical cream designed to be mixed with its prescription cannabis oils. The only cream from an LP approved for sale by

Health Canada, this product is a boon for anyone managing arthritis, sports injuries or painful skin conditions.

MedReleaf also led the way in the capsule market in 2016, becoming the first LP to offer medical cannabis in pill form. Calling it “a very important product launch,” Closner says prescription capsules helped open the cannabis conversation within the medical community by providing a product with a similar form to conventional pharmaceuticals. In other words, it’s easier for most doctors to prescribe a pill than dried bud to vaporize.

And it’s not just health care professionals who are more comfortable with MedReleaf’s innovative products. Robin Lightstone, the company’s team lead in patient care, says capsules also make it easier for patients to utilize and understand medical cannabis.

Nothing can prepare someone for a traumatic brain injury, a complicated condition that can leave you feeling lost and lifeless for decades. This was the case for Dave Book, who sustained his injury during his military service back in 1987. "I would cycle between getting well and getting sick, on and off, for nearly 30 years," says Book. Having been prescribed dozens of psychiatric medications over the years, he developed a dependency on benzodiazepines and self-medicated with alcohol. Book was even told he was untreatable, until a fellow veteran recommended cannabis therapy. "My life has gone 360 degrees," he says of the past year as a MedReleaf patient. Freed from his former addictions while also treating lower back pain, arthritis and PTSD alongside his cognitive condition, Book says he finally feels normal.

The Top Licensed Producer award celebrates the licensed producer with the most overall wins. MedReleaf swept this year's votes, with four first place finishes and two runner-up awards for strains and oils, plus second place prizes for customer service, compassionate pricing and product packaging.

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Smokin'

BY COLEMAN MOLNAR

Hot

The Brand of the Year award recognizes Tokyo Smoke for celebrating community and culture, with style.

In Toronto, a middle-aged woman walks into a coffee shop, orders a drink and picks up a pipe. She turns to a young man nearby and asks, “What is this?” She’s inquiring about the pipe, but she may as well be asking about the shop itself, which is many things: a shipping container-turned-hipster haven, a coffee shop and a cannabis brand that defies easy explanation.

But Tokyo Smoke co-founder and CEO Alan Gertner isn't shy on descriptions, offering words as purposeful and precise as the beard that dominates his inquisitive face. To him, the brand is “a modern lifestyle business that’s inclusive of cannabis.” Although Tokyo Smoke cafes don't currently sell cannabis, the company has a branded line of strains through the licensed producer Aphria.

There are few places in Canada like Tokyo Smoke, which emulates Amsterdam's coffee shop culture. There, coffee and cannabis have come together for decades, providing a sense of community that includes cannabis, but isn't centred on it.

Here, Tokyo Smoke serves a similar community of people seeking a place to drink good coffee, shop premium gear and hang out. Gertner himself exudes a relaxed vibe, one that belies his grand ambitions. “Let's imagine this world where five years out, ten years out, cannabis is more accepted as universal,” he says. “If Tokyo Smoke can be the Starbucks of that movement, we would

obviously be delighted.”

Becoming the Starbucks of cannabis is less about profit and more about investing in community, he says. “Before this I worked at Google for about six years. I had learned this narrative of work hard, get promoted, lather, rinse, repeat, and that was going to drive happiness and meaning in my life.” But, like so many who wake up in their 30s to find they're successful but not fulfilled, Gertner realized he needed more.

So he set off to find direction, using a spreadsheet to track happiness and purpose as he travelled the world, spending time as a backcountry ski guide in Japan, and driving from London to Mongolia in a 20-year-old Toyota with a group of friends. Through these experiences, he discovered he was most fulfilled when facing challenges and feeling part of a community.

Gertner then returned to Canada, where he worked with his father, lifelong cannabis advocate Lorne Gertner, to shape the brand that would become Tokyo Smoke. Two and a half years after opening the doors of its first showroom on Adelaide Street in Toronto, the business has grown to include multiple shops in the Greater Toronto Area, Calgary, and upcoming locations in Hamilton, Vancouver, Seattle and more.

Today, Tokyo Smoke bustles with customers of all kinds, including the woman who asked Gertner about the strange but stylish object in her hand.

“She asked me, ‘What is this?’ and I said, ‘Oh, it's a pipe.’ She said, ‘I don't understand. What's it for?’ and I said, ‘It's for many different things. One potential use is consuming cannabis,’ and she said, ‘I don't smoke, but this is a beautiful pipe.’ Then she put the pipe down, asked me a couple of questions about other things, got her coffee, said thank you and left.”

And that's how Tokyo Smoke is moving Canadian cannabis culture towards acceptance—one cup of coffee, or conversation, at a time.



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My Life with Cannabis

BY MICHAEL PASINI

AS TOLD TO DEVON SCOBLE

The first time I tried cannabis I felt very grounded, and that was a novel experience for me. I was an anxious child and my anxiety is still significant. I've been diagnosed with multiple anxiety disorders, ADHD and a mood disorder. But that moment was the first time I felt comfortable outside my family home, and it inspired me to learn more about cannabis as a medicine.

In the last six years I also developed several chronic pain issues. I have severe osteoarthritis, myofascial pain syndrome and TMJ, temporomandibular joint syndrome, with a disc that displaces if I yawn. Medical cannabis helps me manage the pain.

There are articles out there that say cannabinoids reduce patients' reliance on opioids, and that seems to be the case with me. I've been on a long-acting opioid medication for a number of years and have never had to increase the dose. And unlike some of the other medications I've taken for anxiety and pain, like Gabapentin and Pregabalin, when I'm only taking cannabis, I can still wake up in the morning.

My disabilities limit what I can do. I volunteer for the Canadian Cancer Society as a driver and I do small things in bursts so I have time to recover. Other than that, I read. It's all I do. I'm a huge knowledge aficionado. Not to say I have all the knowledge, but I want all the knowledge—to help myself and others.

Lift is a database for people to leave reviews and build their knowledge. Being an anxious person, I like that the reviews are 100 per cent legitimate, meaning that Lift verifies them. Every other kind of cannabis review website is like a big "Who has the best bud?" contest, and I feel it should be more about the information.

I've spent so many years researching the effects of cannabis, and I feel I'm in a fairly good position to help people. I want to be able to help others. I want to have that answer. I care especially that I can explain things properly and communicate to others what helps me and what can potentially help them. And I benefit, too. If I find a review from someone who has a similar set of issues, and if X, Y, Z strain helped them, maybe X won't help me, but Y and Z will. It's proof that our efforts are worthwhile.



The Top Lift Reviewer award recognizes Michael Pasini for his contributions to the Lift community. Read his reviews at www.lift.co/members/m1kek9/reviews

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I'm about as square as it gets. I don't drink, don't smoke cigarettes, and I've never had a single puff of pot, not even in the '60s. But my doctor suggested medical marijuana as an alternative to some of the medications I'm on now, especially sleeping pills. I'm open to trying, but my wife is against marijuana, and I'm afraid she'll lose it if I bring it home. What should I do?

Partner Problems in Penticton

Dear

Cannabos

Dear Partner Problems,

Your wife's support is integral to your happiness and health, but so is your doctor's. And if your doctor can see past years of stigma and prohibition to decide that cannabis might be good for you, then I'm hopeful your partner can, too.

Remind her that you're still the guy who sailed through the '60s with nary a puff, and that this isn't about riding the white rabbit back to reclaim your lost party days. This is a medical decision, and you're weighing the benefits and risks of one legal drug, sleeping pills, against another, cannabis.

Oftentimes naysayers come around when they learn that prescription cannabis can be taken by dropper or capsule, just like other medications. Let your wife know that you can experience the therapeutic benefits of medical cannabis without ever smoking a single joint.

The more she knows, the more likely she is to support you. Invite her to your next doctor's appointment or print out Lift's evidence-based patient guide for a crash course in prescription cannabis (lift.co/patient-guide). And be patient. Your wife's opinions are coloured by decades of misinformation and may take time to overcome. In the meantime, put on your best sweater vest and crank up the Kingston Trio—anything to remind her that you're still the same old square you've always been.

I've been smoking pot for years and have a pretty good tolerance, but I stay away from edibles. I swore off them after a terrible experience with special brownies back in the day. But recently my doctor said to cut down on smoking and try oil instead, so I did. It was awful: my heart was beating, I felt paranoid and I couldn't get off the couch. I know oils are healthier than joints, but I'm afraid. What if it happens again?

Scared in Scarborough

**Seeking advice on
a cannabis conundrum?**

Send your questions to ask@lift.co

Dear Scared,

If there's anything worse than a bad experience, it's being told just how preventable that bad experience was. But...I think you know what's coming. You didn't say how much oil you took, but your high tolerance comment has me wondering if you thought your smoking habit had primed you for a higher starter dose of oil. If that's the case, let me remind you: ingesting cannabis in any form—prescription oil, edibles—feels radically different than smoking or vaping. How you feel smoking cannabis is not a reliable benchmark for how you'll feel swallowing it.

Follow your doctor's directions and start with a low dose, increasing slowly over days and weeks, not minutes and hours. If you still experience negative side effects, know this: no one has ever died directly from a cannabis overdose, and the feeling will pass. And if you have any CBD oil or flower on hand, there's a chance it may help. Better studies are needed, but there's limited evidence to suggest that CBD, or cannabidiol, can mitigate some of THC's negative effects, such as anxiety. Check with your prescribing doctor to be sure—it may be just the buzzkill you need.

Gear Guide

Forget the Sucrets tins and pop bottle bongos of yesteryear—today's market offers a wealth of sleek and sensible gear for storing, consuming and celebrating cannabis.

Like what you see?

Visit www.lift.co/giveaways to win the products featured here.



1. Stash Stealth

The EcoStash lockable carrying case by Stashlogix is the cannabis-consuming parent's stylish new best friend. With adjustable dividers, a zippered pocket, sturdy exterior walls and a coded zipper lock, it's a handy vessel for transporting your medicine or storing it securely at home. Out of cannabis? Use it to stash your secret candy supply, the remote or anything else you want to keep to yourself.

Find the EcoStash at stashlogix.com for \$69.

2. Stylish Storage

The proverbial cookie jar gets a cannabis-friendly update courtesy of Milkweed's Cabin Vibe canisters. Inspired by foggy coastal Canadian mornings and designed by a master ceramicist, these handmade vessels add rustic charm to any countertop and are perfect for storing grinders, papers and other accessories.

Find the Cabin Vibe canister at shopmilkweed.ca for \$45 (small) and \$65 (large).

3. High Design

You can think about cannabis as a product or a medicine, but the folks at Ahlot encourage you to consider it an experience. The base model of their Ritual Box comes complete with glass doob tubes and storage jar, rolling tray and papers, grinder and beeswax candle, and can be customized to suit your cannabis and accessories supply.

Find the Ritual Box at thinkahlot.com for \$140.



4

4. Perfect Pouch

Milkweed's Road Trip Kit has enough room to pack your portable vaporizer, rolling papers, grinder card, lighter, filter tips and cannabis tin while still leaving space for your cell phone. Crafted from vegetable-dyed Italian leather, it's both contemporary and timeless.

Find the Road Trip Kit at shopmilkweed.ca for \$275.



5

5. High and Mighty

From Storz & Bickel comes the world's first battery-powered vaporizer designed specifically for the medical market. Using a combination of convection and conduction heating, the top of the line Mighty vaporizer promises efficient vaporization and ease of use, all in one portable German-made design.

Find the Mighty vaporizer at torontovaporizer.ca for \$509.



6

6. Portable Powerhouses

The Arizer Air II was too new to capture voters' attention at this year's Canadian Cannabis Awards, but its predecessor, the Arizer Air, took the prize for Top Portable Vaporizer. Building on the success of the Arizer Air, the pocket-sized Arizer Air II promises precise temperature control, faster heat up time and the option to swap in a spare battery if the first runs out. Meanwhile, the Solo II packs powerful airflow and up to 20 uses per charge. Just like the earlier version of the Air, the Solo II's predecessor is well-respected, winning Product of the Year at the 2017 CCAs. Long story short, you can't go wrong with either of these upgrades to Arizer's well-loved vapes.

Find both at arizer.com for \$289 (Arizer Air II) and \$299 (Solo II).

7. Value Vapes

While not as chic as some of the market's better-known vapes, the Utillian line is hardly a slouch in the looks department, providing user-friendly vaporizers at competitive prices. Most cost-effective is the Utillian 420, a solid choice for vape beginners, with four temperature controls, digital display and glass mouthpiece. For cannabis connoisseurs, the Utillian 721 employs a flip-top mouthpiece and convection heat, which preserves more terpenes (the aromatic oils that give cannabis its flavour). Fans say it's more efficient than conduction heat, stretching the value of each bud to last a little longer.

Find both at torontovaporizer.ca for \$90 (Utillian 420) and \$219 (Utillian 721).



8. Two for One

Most vaporizers are stellar at vaporizing one thing, whether that's flower (bud) or cannabis concentrates, such as wax (which is not technically legal unless it's made with your own prescription, but you can find it at dispensaries). But the Focusvape Tourist is remarkable for providing a pleasurable vaping experience no matter what it's loaded with.

Find the Tourist at torontovaporizer.ca for \$259.

9. Cannabis Couture

Pharmaceutical company swag is typically the kind of clothing you'd find at the bottom of pyjama drawers, but in the cannabis space a number of companies have stepped up with gear that's not only fit for public wear, it's actually cool. Case in point, Tantalus Lab's comfy Future windbreaker and Tantalus toque. With minimalist branding and not a pot leaf in sight, only cannabis insiders will know your slick new garb comes from a licensed producer.

Find both at tantaluslabs.com for \$26 (Tantalus toque) and \$128 (Future jacket).





10

10. Old School Fun

Is it possible to medicate with a bong? Sure. But let's be real. You're more likely to find celebrities endorsing them than doctors. The celeb behind this frosted beauty is Olympic snowboarder and cannabis enthusiast Ross Rebagliati, best known for winning the sport's first gold, then being disqualified for THC consumption, then getting his medal back. While we can't promise this product will provide the same dramatic highs and lows, it does come with its own bong hat, which is pretty cool.

Find the Frosted Straight Shot water pipe at rossgoldglass.com for \$179.

11. One-Hit Wonder

Microdose in style with Maitrileaf's compact Prana pipe. Handcrafted from ceramic and cherry redwood by Canadian artisans, the deep bowl of this beauty works with ground cannabis as well as whole flower. Small enough to pop in your pocket and pretty enough to display, this petite pipe is also a cinch to clean.

Find the Prana pipe at maitrileaf.ca for \$120.



11



12

12. Chilled to the Bong

Why scrub a dirty bong if you don't have to? The Canadian-designed Hexagon by BRNT Designs doesn't need a complicated cleaning regimen any more than it needs vowels. Not only is this 3D-printed stunner dishwasher-safe, it's also freezer-safe, so you can add some extra brrrr to your next chill session.

Find the Hexagon at brnt.ca for \$180.



13

13. Sharp Teeth

The shark of herbal grinders, the Zeus Bolt XL is a durable bud buster made from aircraft-grade aluminum and super sharp diamond-cut teeth. A solid addition to any cannabis consumer's home kit, the Zeus Bolt XL comes with a magnetic lid and sieve layers, so advanced users can sort kief (cannabinoid-rich resinous crystals) from flower.

Find the Zeus Bolt XL at torontovaporizer.ca for \$59.



14

14. Smell Test

If you like smoking joints but don't like smelling like you do, meet Refresh*t. Despite the off-colour branding, this pocket-sized spray bottle is filled with a wholesome formula that transforms even the dankest odours into a soothing medley of mint and lavender.

*Find 30 ml bottles of Refresh*t at refreshht.com for \$20 (package of 3).*

15. Raw Papers

Relive that backpacking trip to Amsterdam with Raw's Pre-Rolled Cones Classic. These unbleached, pre-filtered, cone-shaped papers come ready to fill, offering connoisseur-quality papers in a goof-proof format. Simply add ground cannabis and you're ready to rock, no rolling required.

Find Raw Cones Classic 1 ¼ Size papers at toronto hemp.com for \$2.95 (package of 6).



15



Luminarium by MedReleaf
Top Sativa Flower - 3rd place

White Widow by Peace Naturals
Top Hybrid Flower
- 3rd place

Ambition by Aurora
Top High THC Flower - 3rd place

Wabanaki by Organigram
Top Sativa Flower - **WINNER**

BEST

We asked Canadian cannabis enthusiasts to vote for their favourite flowers, and the results are in! Congratulations to the licensed producers who nurtured these beauties from seedlings to full-grown Canadian Cannabis Award winners.

Sedamen by MedReleaf
Top Indica Flower - **WINNER**

Avidekel by MedReleaf
Top High CBD Flower - **WINNER**

Pink Kush by Tilray
Top Hybrid Flower - **WINNER**



Warwick 2 by Aurora
Top Sativa Flower - 2nd place

Pink Kush by Canna Farms
Top High THC Flower - 2nd place

Raphael by Peace Naturals
Top Indica Flower - 3rd place

Lasqueti by Broken Coast
Top Indica Flower - 2nd place

BUDS

Eran Almog by MedReleaf
WINNER *Top High THC Flower*

Midnight by MedReleaf
Top Hybrid Flower - 2nd place

Dance Hall by Peace Naturals
Top High CBD Flower - 2nd place



N DRIED MARIHUANA | 5g
MARIHUANA SÉCHÉE | 5g



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1. The total amount of THC and THCA in the product.
2. The total amount of CBD and CBDA in the product.
3. The amount of THC in the product.
4. The amount of CBD in the product.

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Weekend Brunch

BY DEVON SCOBLE



All praise weekend mornings, arguably the best excuse for donning stretchy sweatpants and enjoying a feast. Set the stage for a cozy day of indoor indulgence with this vegetarian brunch menu, designed to satisfy your weekly cravings while providing enough healthy ingredients to skip the guilt.

Each recipe has been tested with and without prescription cannabis oil, so if you're cooking for a crowd, dose only the portions you need. As with all cannabis edibles, take special care with dosed servings, keeping them well away from children, pets and unintended snackers.

Strawberry Cashew Cardamom Smoothie

Cashews are one of the creamiest ingredients around, rivalling whipping cream for their rich flavour and smooth texture. Blended with sweet strawberries, aromatic cardamom and warm vanilla, they become a crowd-pleasing breakfast drink, exotic enough to please discerning adults and sweet and pink enough for kids to love, too. Avoid the temptation to add extra

cardamom—one pod adds a delightful hint of spice, two is too many.

Be sure to choose raw, not roasted, cashews. Find them at your local health or bulk food store, and soak in just enough water to cover them for at least four hours before blending.



Ingredients

serves 4

4	<i>cups water</i>
½	<i>cup maple syrup, or more to taste</i>
1 tsp	<i>vanilla paste or extract</i>
1	<i>cardamom pod</i>
1 cup	<i>raw cashews, soaked overnight</i>
2 cups	<i>frozen strawberries</i>
Optional:	<i>your preferred dose of cannabis oil</i>
Optional:	<i>fresh mint and strawberry slices</i>

Safety Tips

Prepare cannabis-infused and non-infused goodies in separate batches.

Colour code your cookware and your serving and storage dishes to distinguish at a glance which items contain cannabis.

Keep track: keep notes on your prep procedures before you sample your work, and carefully label every serving.

Directions

Drain and rinse the soaked cashews. Then, in the order listed, add all the ingredients except the cannabis oil to a high-powered blender. Whiz at top speed until well blended. Pour into serving glasses and, if desired, add cannabis oil to individual servings, stirring well with a spoon or chopstick. Garnish with mint and strawberry slices if desired.

Shakshuka

North African in origin, Shakshuka is a popular Israeli breakfast dish, a colourful jumble of veggie-laden tomato sauce spiked with fragrant za'atar spice mix, topped with poached eggs, and finished with briny feta and rich olive oil. This simple recipe tastes good no matter which products you choose for the base ingredients, but high-quality tomato sauce and olive oil make it sing. Za'atar is sold in most Middle Eastern grocery stores and online, but in a pinch you can substitute an equivalent amount of thyme, oregano and toasted sesame seeds.

If you enjoy the flavour of cannabis and will dose your serving, choose a prescription oil with its terpenes, or natural aromatic compounds, intact. The cannabis flavour adds a herbaceous counterpoint to the acidic tomato and salty cheese, and is a natural addition to this satisfying dish.

Directions

In a non-stick frying pan set to medium heat, sauté the onion, paprika and cumin in vegetable oil until the onion is semi-soft, around two minutes, adding extra cooking oil as needed. Next, add the garlic, zucchini and cabbage, frying another two to three minutes, or until nearly cooked. Add the tomato sauce and za'atar.

Turn the heat down to low or medium-low, enough to maintain a simmer, and crack the eggs onto the sauce, spacing them evenly apart. Cover and continue to simmer for about eight minutes, or until the eggs have set to your liking.

Carefully scoop the shakshuka into individual serving dishes, each with an egg on top. Top with feta, parsley and a glug of olive oil. Finish with cannabis oil and chili flakes, if desired, and serve with warm flatbread or challah.





Ingredients

serves 4

As needed:	<i>Vegetable oil for frying</i>
1	<i>sweet onion, diced</i>
1 tsp	<i>smoked paprika</i>
1 tsp	<i>cumin</i>
2	<i>cloves garlic, minced</i>
1	<i>medium zucchini, diced</i>
2 cups	<i>coleslaw mix or shredded cabbage</i>
4 cups	<i>tomato sauce or stewed, diced tomatoes</i>
3 tbsp	<i>za'atar</i>
4	<i>eggs</i>
1 cup	<i>crumbled feta cheese</i>
1 cup	<i>fresh chopped parsley</i>
To taste:	<i>Olive oil</i>
Optional:	<i>your preferred dose of cannabis oil</i>
Optional:	<i>dried chili flakes to taste</i>
4 pieces	<i>warmed flatbread or a loaf of freshly sliced challah</i>

Fruity Oatmeal Pumpkin Breakfast Cookies

Fibre, protein, chocolate, cannabis—these soft, flavourful cookies have it all. Plus, this not-too-sweet recipe is healthy enough to serve for breakfast and easily modified. Don't have any pumpkin purée on hand? Applesauce or apple butter work equally well. Prefer peanut or cashew butter to almond butter, or want to experiment with a different combination of dried fruits? Go for it!

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease a large baking sheet. In a large bowl, combine rolled oats, oat flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Stir well.

In a separate bowl, combine eggs, almond butter, maple syrup, pumpkin purée, vanilla paste and coconut oil. Stir until well blended, then add all remaining ingredients except the cannabis oil and incorporate well. Next, add the wet ingredients to the dry and mix thoroughly.

Form the dough into balls, using roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per cookie. The dough should be slightly larger than a golf ball. If adding cannabis oil, use your finger to create a well in each cookie, then add the oil to the well, cover it with dough and roll it in your hands to incorporate the oil into the cookie, forming it into a ball once again.

Place the cookies onto the baking sheet, spacing them out evenly. Using a spoon or the heel of your palm, press down on each cookie to flatten it slightly to about 2 inches in thickness. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes, and allow to cool before serving.





Ingredients

makes approximately 22 cookies

2 cups	<i>rolled oats</i>
1 ½ cups	<i>oat flour</i>
½ tsp	<i>baking powder</i>
½ tsp	<i>baking soda</i>
½ tsp	<i>salt</i>
1 tsp	<i>cinnamon</i>
2	<i>eggs</i>
½ cup	<i>almond butter</i>
½ cup	<i>maple syrup</i>
1 cup	<i>canned pumpkin purée</i>
1 tbs	<i>vanilla paste</i>
¼ cup	<i>coconut oil, melted</i>
¾ cup	<i>pumpkin seeds</i>
¼ cup	<i>toasted coconut strips</i>
½ cup each	<i>chopped dried apple, chopped dried apricot, dried cranberries</i>
1 cup	<i>dark or semi-sweet chocolate chips</i>
Optional:	<i>up to 0.5 ml per cookie of your favourite cannabis oil</i>

Make It Vegan

Substitute two eggs with two tablespoons of ground flaxseed and six tablespoons of water. Leave the mixture to gel for at least five minutes and add to the wet ingredients. Choose dairy-free chocolate chips.

Make It Gluten-Free

Choose oats and oat flour that are labelled gluten-free.

Make Your Own Oat Flour

Add rolled oats to a blender and whiz until fine and floury.



**CANADIAN
CANNABIS
AWARDS
2017**

2017 Canadian Cannabis Awards Winners List

Top Licensed Producer MedReleaf

Top Licensed Producer **Customer Service** Emblem

Top Licensed Producer **Compassionate Pricing** Organigram

Best New Cannabis Product

Decarb, Hydropharmacy
2nd: Argyle Softgels, Tweed Black Label
3rd: Elixir No. 1, Hydropharmacy

Top Hybrid Flower

Pink Kush, Tilray
2nd: Midnight, MedReleaf
3rd: White Widow, Peace Naturals

Top Blended/Value Variety

Blueberry Cheesecake, Organigram
2nd: Bakerstreet Milled, Tweed
3rd: Shake, Canna Farms

Top Indica Flower

Sedamen, MedReleaf
2nd: Lasqueti, Broken Coast
3rd: Raphael, Peace Naturals

Top High CBD Flower

Avidekel, MedReleaf
2nd: Dance Hall, Peace Naturals
3rd: Yellow No. 1, Mettrum

Top High THC Oil

Aurora THC Drops - Indica, Aurora
2nd: Elixir No. 1, Hydropharmacy
3rd: Champlain - Indica, Aphria

Top Sativa Flower

Wabanaki, Organigram
2nd: Warwick 2, Aurora
3rd: Luminarium, MedReleaf

Top High THC Flower

Eran Almog, MedReleaf
2nd: Pink Kush, Canna Farms
3rd: Ambition, Aurora

Top High CBD Oil

Avidekel, MedReleaf
2nd: Aurora CBD Drops, Aurora
3rd: Canna Oil 0|10, Canna Farms

Top Home Growing Box

Grobo One Grow Box

Brand of the Year

Tokyo Smoke

Employer of the Year

James E. Wagner Cultivation

Most Promising Licensed Producer

Tantalus Labs

Top Licensed Producer Packaging

Hydrophothecary

Startup of the Year

Wheaton Income

Innovation of the Year

Tweed Main Street

Top Charitable Initiative

Canopy Growth Corporation

Top Non-Profit

The Canadian Consortium for the Investigation of Cannabinoids

Top Clinic, West

Natural Health Services

Top Clinic, East

Apollo Cannabis Clinic

Top Seed Company

Crop King Seeds

Top Nutrients Company

Remo Nutrients

Top Cannabis Accessories Shop, West

Next Level, Calgary

Top Cannabis Accessories Shop, East

The Hippy Co, London

Top Vape Lounge, West

Terp City, Victoria

Top Vape Lounge, East

Vapor Central, Toronto

Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Mark Ware

Celebrity Advocate

Melissa Etheridge

Innovator of the Year

Chuck Rifici

Most Progressive Researcher

Dr. Jonathan Page

Cannabis Crusader

Clinton Younge

Top Effort Affecting

Policy Change

Jonathan Zaid

Writer of the Year

Jenna Valleriani

Top Lift Reviewer

Michael Pasini, m1kek9

Top Glassblower

Redbeard Glass

Top Cannabis Chef

Cody Lindsay

Product of the Year

Arizer Solo

Top Desktop Vaporizer

Arizer Extreme Q

Top Portable Vaporizer

Arizer Air

Top Social Media

Account, Facebook

Aurora

Top Social Media

Account, Instagram

@bluntsandkicks

Top Social Media

Account, Twitter

@JodieEmery

Top Podcast

The Cannabis Show

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