



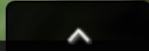
THE GRASS IS GREENER IN SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County is perhaps best known for its wine. But it also has a deep history of cannabis cultivation. Generations of farmers, forced underground by prohibition, have nurtured and harvested cannabis gardens for decades. As California ushers in a new era of legalization, those master growers and their protected genetics may finally get the recognition they deserve: Like its wine, Sonoma County produces some of the best cannabis on the market today.

While new statewide regulations are still being debated in the state legislature for both medical and adult-use cannabis taking effect Jan. 1, 2018, existing farms and companies are preparing for the standardized rules that come with legitimization and mainstream acceptance. While some cities and counties across the state have enacted bans and overtaxation in a panic, Sonoma County instead opted for responsible legalization. But it's a long, labored process with leaders intent on involving advisory boards, public forums and workshops, while focusing on the protection of environmental resources, growth of the local economy, and the provision of safe access to medicine for those in need.

During the frenzied transition prior to 2018, a few local cannabis cultivators and product-makers stand out. These are proudly Sonoma-based companies that are committed to sustainability, health and wellness, and good ambassadorship for the cannabis industry as a whole. We're impressed by the quality of their products, the sophistication of their processing and packaging, and the care they give to their end users—be they the medical cannabis patients of today, or the adult-use consumers of 2018 and beyond.

BY SAMANTHA CAMPOS
PHOTOS BY LOREN HANSEN





"During the frenzied transition prior to 2018, a few local cannabis companies cultivators and product-makers stand out." —Samantha Campos

LEGION OF BLOOM

A prominent garden and manufacturer of extracts, Legion of Bloom is a multiple Cannabis Cup award-winning company that uses sustainable cultivation practices and lab-testing. Legion of Bloom was founded Jan. 1, 2016 by five collective cultivators who'd known each other for 15 years or more. Although they worked independently, they realized that with the new regulations coming next year, being just a small collective cultivator/farmer wasn't going to be a successful business model. Co-founding cultivator Troy Meadows said the longtime friends joined forces to find their niche within the expanding market.

Legion of Bloom's manufacturing is based out of Sonoma County, as well as two collective farms, with distribution from their hub in Santa Rosa. Their flagship product is the Monarch Vape Pen, a small portable device used to inhale cannabis without producing smoke, using cannabis concentrates or extracts of the plant material's active chemical compounds, called cannabinoids. Cannabis also contains terpenes, aromatic hydrocarbons that produce distinctive flavors and scents, and are known to have therapeutic properties, much like essential oils. All of Legion of Bloom's vape products and concentrate products are sourced from 100 percent California-grown cannabis—much of it from their own gardens.

"With the Monarch, we use a triple-refined distillate oil," said Meadows. "And then we re-introduce cannabis-derived terpenes. So we actually extract the natural flavor profiles from the cannabis flowers that we grow at the Legion and then re-introduce it into the oil to create these very high-quality 75 to 80 percent terpenes cartridges that ultimately have the same effects that you would find from the [original] strain of cannabis."

Another popular product is the Terrapen, a vaporizer pen with cartridges of varying ratios of two prominent cannabinoids: cannabidiol, or CBD, a non-psychoactive compound with a wide range of medical benefits; and THC, the plant's main psychoactive

compound. The Terrapen also utilizes therapeutic terpene profiles for pain relief, sleep support, to produce an energizing effect, or to enhance "mental clarity."

"We found that a lot of the patients coming into the CBD market are looking to find help for specific ailments," said Meadows. "Or maybe they're not as inundated with cannabis culture so they don't really know that this strain's a sativa and because it has these terpenes, it helps with these things or brings these effects."

With next year's regulations looming, Legion of Bloom's founders are looking to move into a new manufacturing facility in Sonoma County where they can create all their own extractions in-house and start to vertically integrate their processes. Although they currently have five collective farms throughout Northern California, the Legion team is busy aligning with various landowners to form Legion Family Farms that would allow for a cultivation network to create all of their raw materials.

"We think that Sonoma has one of the best terroir in the whole Northern California for cannabis cultivation," said co-founder Marcos Morales.

Legion of Bloom is a member of the Sonoma County Growers Alliance, and their products (flowers, waxes, oils, vape pen cartridges, etc.) are featured in more than 60 dispensaries throughout the state, including Sebastopol's Peace in Medicine. For more info, visit www.thelegionofbloom.com.

CANNACRAFT

With an impressive 36,000 square-foot manufacturing and distribution facility in Santa Rosa, CannaCraft is primed to dominate the California market with its array of specialized cannabis brands, which officially launched about three years ago. Their AbsoluteXtracts (abx.org) line of products featuring strain-specific, high-THC cannabis oils is one of the most well known concentrate brands in the industry. Care By Design (cbd.org/) focuses on



Dennis Hunter, CEO, CannaCraft, Inc.



Dustin from Critical Solutions, CannaCraft's sister company and extraction machine manufacturer

CBD-rich products in various CBD:THC ratios, Satori Chocolates (satorichocolates.com) is an award-winning line of bars and bites using TCHO Chocolate and high-potency cannabis oil. Sutra Sensuals (sutrasensuals.com) features a massage oil and a "pleasure serum" made with cannabis and essential oils.

As a seed-to-shelf company—which means they control the supply chain from cultivation to the point of sale—CannaCraft utilizes raw materials from plants that are sustainably grown and harvested from multiple gardens in Northern California, then processed and repeatedly lab-tested in Santa Rosa. All products in the brand family (including oils, sprays, tinctures, soft gels, vape cartridges, honey sticks, etc.) are processed using non-volatile carbon dioxide (CO2) extraction methods, with manufacturing taking place in a pharmaceutical-grade "clean" room, ensuring everything is sanitary and safe.

CannaCraft regularly gives educational tours of manufacturing to city staff and planners, county board supervisors, law enforcement and fire officials, state senators and assembly members. CannaCraft founders Dennis Hunter and Ed Fussell believe all of these interactions are an opportunity for their company to positively

represent the industry and help government officials understand how they operate.

"As a company we've been proactive in working with the state, county and local officials directly to help educate them on the workings of the industry so better policies and regulatory decisions can be made," said CannaCraft representative Ashley Browne. "On the whole, local and county officials and staff have been receptive to working with us and taking our concerns into consideration."

Despite their diligent compliance, CannaCraft suffered a tremendous setback in June 2016 when they were raided after a disgruntled employee wrongly reported that the Santa Rosa facility was extracting using butane—a highly flammable solvent that's illegal in California. CannaCraft remained calm and organized, garnering an outpouring of support from the community and the cannabis industry, as well as the advocacy of Sonoma Growers Alliance. They've since bounced back with great success.

"Our whole team came together—we're like a huge family in general," said Browne. "And so it's been really amazing to see in just one year how much our teamwork has paid off, and the support from everyone, too."



Ashley Browne, CannaCraft, Inc. account executive



CannaCraft products can be found in many Sonoma dispensaries, including Organicann, Peace in Medicine, Sonoma Patients Group, and Mercy. Or visit any of the CannaCraft family of brands' websites, type in your zip code, and the nearest dispensaries with that product line will be displayed.

SONOMA CANNABIS COMPANY & AYA

Another cannabis concentrate company using sustainable practices is Sonoma Cannabis Company. Sonoma-born and raised Sam Edwards and a silent partner started the company—along with its beautifully designed, premium cannabis product line, AYA—in January 2015, launching in April 2016. Prior to that, Edwards worked as a project manager and civil engineer with a longtime interest in the cannabis industry.

"My partner and I just wanted to bring some integrity to the industry with organic, pesticide-free material," he said. "There's nothing but pesticides out there in the market right now. We formed the company with the principles of 'clean cannabis.'"

Their signature vape pens and cartridges utilize pure CO2 oil processed at low temperatures. "A lot of other manufacturers and most of the CO2 machines out there operate at a temperature that's kind of high—over 120 degrees and up," said Edwards. "When you do that, it's kinda like extra virgin olive oil, you don't get the flavor or terpene profile."

All their cannabis operations are locally based, but during the transition leading up to 2018, the company may need to outsource manufacturing while keeping cultivation close by. Although Edwards said it's sometimes been challenging politically and financially—mostly due to the cost of real estate and operation—they're not going to turn their back on

COMPANIES

Legion of Bloom
thelegionofbloom.com

CannaCraft
cannacraft.com

Sonoma Cannabis Company
sonomacannabisco.com

DISPENSARIES

Organicann
naturalcannabis.com

Peace in Medicine
peaceinmedicine.org

Sonoma Patient Group
leafy.com

Mercy Wellness of Cotati
mercymmd.org

ORGANIZATIONS

Cannabis Advisory Group
sonomacounty.ca.gov

**Cannabis-Advisory-Group
Sonoma
Growers Alliance**
scgalliance.com

**Status of Legislation and
Sonoma County Cannabis
Advisory Group**
sonomacounty.ca.gov

Sonoma County. "It's our home," he said.

"Sonoma is a very hearty agricultural community, and cannabis is just another agriculture crop," said Edwards. "And for the best, cannabis thrives in Sonoma County, and so does grapes. They both do really well and produce awesome flavor profiles."

In the meantime, Edwards has been working with policy development, and is currently a member of the Sonoma County Cannabis Advisory Group. AYA products are now selling in 40 dispensaries throughout the state, including nearby at Sonoma Patients Group, Organicann, and Redwood Herbal Alliance. For more information, visit sonomacannabisco.com.

THE EMERALD CUP: DEC. 9-10, 2017

The Emerald Cup is an annual event at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds that celebrates the Northern California region for cannabis cultivation and sustainable, outdoor farming. Started by Tim Blake in 2003, The Emerald Cup has grown from a few hundred to 10,000 attendees, and the event features a competition of cannabis flower judged on color, smell, trichomes, crystals, taste, vibrancy and psychoactive effect. But unlike other cannabis contests and expos, the Emerald Cup focuses more on the science and quality of cultivation itself, bringing together growers, educators and experts in an epic community celebration that includes speaker panels, informational demos, live music—as well as a showcase of the absolute best cannabis strains, seeds, edibles and topicals in the industry. **ED**

For the past eight years, Samantha Campos has provided communications and media support for Harborside, a renowned medical cannabis dispensary based in Oakland, Calif.