

South Carolina has never been one of America's most progressive states. When we do move, it's slowly forward — and admittedly, sometimes backwards. But there's hope on the horizon, at least when it comes to the issue of marijuana. In 2014 a new law was passed allowing for cannabidiol, a marijuana-based drug, to be used in specific cases. Sadly, a much broader medical marijuana bill failed this past year. Sigh. Regardless, South Carolina is finally beginning to take its first steps toward full-on recreational marijuana legalization. That day is inevitable. It's not a matter of if, but when. And seeing how this issue comes out on 4/20, well, we couldn't avoid taking a special look at that special bud. Enjoy.



Photography by Jonathan Boncek
Model Taylor McMurry

A Budding Business

AS MARIJUANA BECOMES LEGALIZED, GANJA-PRENEURS ARE GROWING THEIR PRODUCTS

By Connelly Hardaway

2016

is a crucial election year — for reasons that have nothing to do with who's the next president. Things are heating up for the marijuana industry, and there's a good chance that four states — Nevada, California, Vermont, and Arizona — will legalize recreational marijuana this year. In addition to these pot-friendly states, up to 20 more will also look to ease restrictions.

Last week *The New York Times* published an article, "In California, Marijuana is Smelling More Like Big Business," talking about the expected profits from legal recreational pot, noting that "out-of-state investors, cannabis retailers, and financially struggling municipalities [are] all racing to grab a piece." And it's not just the *Times*. Google search results yield plenty of pun-ny headlines — "Annual Pot Sales Blaze to \$5.4 Billion, With Many Highs Ahead, Study Finds" — that all suggest the same thing: if it smells like ganja, it smells like money.

While South Carolina isn't in the weed business yet — on April 7 of this year a medical marijuana bill, S 672, was shut down — there is one local entrepreneur who's jumping into the pipe-making industry feet first.

"I feel like I'm standing on a cliff," laughs Doreen Sullivan, creator of the brand-spankin'-new company, My Bud Vase. Her mission: take old flower vases and turn them into high-end water pipes.

Sullivan is currently selling My Bud Vases* on Etsy and talking to a bud and breakfast in Denver about selling her products, but she wants to do more than just make pretty things.

"There's a need for a paradigm shift," she says. After years of working for other people she realized that she wanted to create something for herself. So she took her interest in antiques and combined it with what she considers a huge growing industry. Sullivan finds flower vases and other interesting containers at flea markets, antique stores, and thrift shops. She then has a friend drill a hole in them, where she places a downstem and bowl. Voila: a vase pipe.

When you think of marijuana, do you think of a college student wearing a tie-dyed T-shirt, hot boxing his mom's minivan? Ganja-preneurs hope that when you think of places like Denver and Boulder, that's not the image that comes to mind. Sullivan, for one, wants to change peoples' minds about marijuana.

"I'm always trying to communicate change. I want to represent the underdog. I don't want people to think 'oh, a stupid pothead,' when they think of weed. You can be a successful entrepreneur," she says. Sullivan has based a lot of her business model

after Annabis, a fashion brand that creates fine leather purses that double as stash bags for wealthy women's weed. The company describes itself as moving marijuana culture "beyond the baggie." The idea for the company was formed one night when founders Jeanine Moss and Ann Shuch were giggling inside a Mercedes Benz, reaching inside their Gucci bags to retrieve their weed, and wishing they had a fancy stash bag to save them all the trouble. So, they created one.

These are the kind of pot smokers Sullivan wants to meet in her travels to states that already have legalized recreational marijuana, and those that may follow suit. "Creativity and cannabis go hand in hand," she says. "I'm creating a lifestyle that's more representative of the people that actually smoke."

Sullivan has made several trips out to Denver, and she says that the weed culture there is like night and day compared to Charleston. "People who are hiding it in South Carolina are having fun in Denver," she says, adding that she's met a lot of South Carolina residents in Colorado. Why are they there? To experience what Sullivan says is the future of pot smoking. "It's upscale, it's conversational," she says, describing the atmosphere at bud and

breakfasts where guests share different strains of weed, with rolling papers, pipes, and grinders provided.

"I want to be a thought leader that turns this into something of beauty," she says. Sullivan is passionate about each of her vases, gingerly touching them, turning them around as she explains how she picked them, and even how she names them. There's the small yellow vase with a scalloped top — Buttercup. Julina is purple and looks like an old perfume wafer, while Georgette is rotund, a large white vase featuring an intricately painted pink flower.

"People see them and they have a reaction," says Sullivan. "They remind them of someone."

It's this personal touch that Sullivan thinks sets her apart from every Cheech and Chong selling a lollipop-colored tobacco pipe. These vases, as Sullivan giddily puts it, "Are for your mother." The Colorado mom that smokes or the mom who recoils at the thought — they can both enjoy a pretty vase, it just depends if the bowl is showing.

Although South Carolina isn't likely to legalize marijuana anytime soon, Sullivan hopes that she's onto something. "It's part of my personality, to find something to showcase," she says. "I was thinking about the growth of the industry. I wanted to be ahead of the bandwagon." ☑

*You must be 21 years or older to purchase My Bud Vase. They are for tobacco use only in South Carolina.



DOREEN SULLIVAN LEARNED A LOT ABOUT THE MARIJUANA INDUSTRY IN DENVER



Rocky Mountain High

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA IN COLORADO

By Dustin Waters

For all of its stately homes and palmetto-laden vistas, Charleston doesn't quite have what it takes to meet the needs of every traveler. Yes, there's world-class dining and historic landmarks, but what the city doesn't have is legal marijuana. So, in a country where nearly half the population has tried marijuana at least once, many Lowcountry residents may want to cash in their frequent flyer miles and take a trip to Colorado where the slopes beckon and weed is legal — at least in some cities.

As of last June, Colorado was one of only four states in the U.S. that permitted the sale of marijuana for recreational use. Passing by a popular vote in 2012, Colorado's Amendment 64 changed the state's constitution to regulate the cultivation and sale of marijuana for recreational use. Cities are allowed to opt out of the law, but by 2014 many Colorado residents were able to purchase weed much in the way they buy alcohol. As long as you were 21 or older, you were free to purchase and possess marijuana. To the surprise of many of those who opposed legalization, Colorado did not fall into chaos. In fact, it gained a few new fans and a substantial influx of cash.

Over the past two years, Colorado has experienced a bit of a boom in tourism. A 2014 study prepared for the Colorado Department of Revenue estimated visitors' demand for marijuana to be around 8.9 metric tons. Looking at sales tax receipts, point-of-sale statistics, and data from tourist offices, researchers estimate that out-of-state visitors make up about 44 percent of metro-area retail sales and as much as 90 percent of sales in heavily visited mountain towns.

For those who wish to indulge and remain within the letter of the law, we've assembled all the info you need to know for a smoker's sojourn to the Centennial State. And when planning a weed-fan's weekend, who better to consult than Colorado native and former writer of the *Colorado Springs Independent's* CannaBiz column Bryce Crawford, who currently writes for the *Rocky Mountain Food Report*.

After working as an intern for the *Independent*, Crawford was brought on staff to pen the paper's marijuana news

column. Before that point, he says he had never even really smoked weed, but some things you just have to learn on the job.

So if you happen to decide it's time to join all those taking a trip out west, here are a few things to keep in mind.

Plan Ahead

Not everyone in Colorado is cool with you toking up, so make sure you do a bit of research before hopping on a plane. According to Crawford, Denver is probably the most accommodating tourist destination when it comes to marijuana use. A portion of the city's Broadway area has been re-dubbed as Broadsterdam due to its high concentration of dispensaries.

"As far as the recreational shops themselves, they're pretty out in the open. You'll see green crosses everywhere. The green crosses are a very big deal. There's lots of advertising limitations, so you won't see sexy nurses out on the streets like you used to, but the green cross is very prevalent," says Crawford, discussing the symbols that sit outside many dispensaries similar to a liquor store's logo. "If you're in Denver, there's a great chance they are selling recreational. If you're in Colorado Springs, it's going to be medical and you're going to need to be a resident and have a red card and jump through all the hoops."

Visitors to Colorado planning on purchasing pot from a retail shop must be at least 21 years old, so don't forget your ID. You'll be limited to a quarter ounce, but most dispensaries offer a wealth of options when it comes to methods of consumption. Just be sure to take it slow.

"Generally, a quarter ounce is taking care of what people need for the few days that they are here. There are lots of different ways you can do it as far as the product itself," says Crawford. "You can buy a quarter ounce of bud, but then there are also concentrates that are very high in THC. I do not recommend anyone who is traveling out here to start with concentrates. You can get edibles, gummies, food, drinks, sodas, pizzas, anything, tinctures you can put in teas, salves, and stuff you can use for joint aches. All of that sort of goes to this quarter-ounce bottom line."

Location, Location, Location

Just like you can't crack open a cold one while strolling down King Street, don't expect to light up on the streets of Colorado.

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