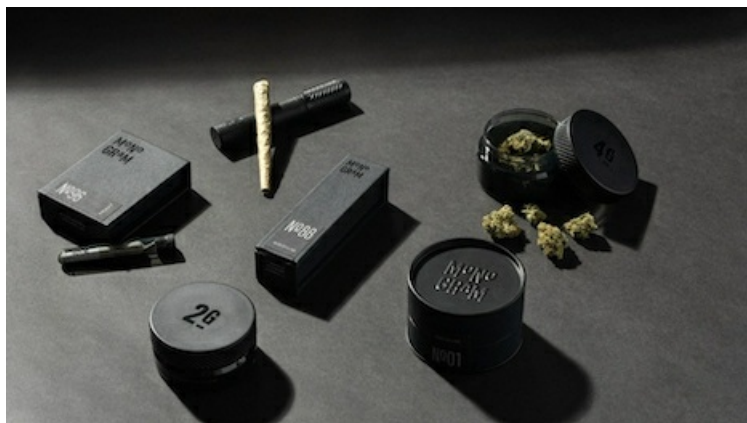


FOOD AND BEVERAGE

What luxury needs to know about cannabis

April 20, 2021



Recording artist and entrepreneur Jay-Z is among those investing in the high-end cannabis space. Image credit: Monogram

By NORA HOWE

As consumer attitudes and legalization efforts continue to shift in favor of the recreational and medicinal use of marijuana throughout the United States, more brands are cropping up to offer luxury cannabis experiences.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

According to investment bank **Cowen**, the U.S. marijuana industry is expected to generate \$85 billion in revenue in 2030. Now that more than **90 percent of American adults** believe marijuana should be legalized for either medicinal or recreational use, the luxury sector should reexamine how the botanical is becoming more influential.

"There is no denying the growth of this industry, both domestically and internationally," said Jessie Casner, vice president of marketing at **Vessel Brand**, Carlsbad, CA. "The wheel of acceptance and full-blown legalization is already turning, and while there are a few holdouts by state, the overwhelming sentiment across the United States is not only that cannabis should be decriminalized, but that it has a place in mainstream health and wellness protocols.

"As a country that so acutely experienced the opioid epidemic, you see a generation of people who are skeptical of mainstream, Big Pharma solutions and are turning to plant-based wellness in all its forms, not just cannabis, as a cleaner alternative."

In high demand

In addition to offering premium strains of marijuana itself and other THC products, companies are elevating the consumer experience with vape pens, cannabis jewelry, CBD-infused beauty products and more.

Community-led cannabis company Vessel offers its consumers luxury accessories including a high-end line of vape pen batteries and dry-herb accessories.

Made with premium materials and finishes, Vessel batteries power any oil with details including optimized airflow technology, extra long battery life and low-temperature settings. The company's collection of pen batteries retails from \$59 to \$89.

"At Vessel, our background is not in cannabis, but rather in customer experience creation and design," Ms. Casner said. "We have spent our time creating premium consumption experiences, in a niche rife with commodity, through materials, finishes and storytelling.

"The trick with any brand looking to enter the luxury cannabis market is that it cannot just be about plating something in gold and throwing zero's behind the dollar sign," she said. "Success in the luxury market will mean demonstrating thoughtfulness, crafting a meaningful narrative and creating the tug of aspiration for which traditional luxury brands are known."

San Francisco-based cannabis vaporizer company **Pax Labs** aims to deliver quality and wellness benefits through innovations in design and technology. Its Pax 3 device, which retails at \$200, heats up in 15 seconds and lasts for 90 minutes, while the slightly thinner, more discreet Pax Era Pro retails for \$70.

While some brands focus on the technological innovation moving the cannabis industry, others are more concerned with educating consumers on the plant and its complicated history.

Canadian-American actor and comedian Seth Rogen and screenwriter-director Evan Goldberg recently launched their cannabis company **Houseplant** in the United States, which includes both deliverable marijuana and a cannabis home goods product line retailing between \$85 and \$280.

Almost ten years I go, I envisioned having my own weed company. And today I can say that my company Houseplant's weed will be available in California next week! Also, Houseplant is making lovely Housegoods like ashtrays, lighters, and YES, even ceramics.

<https://t.co/TNjpWFhbWB> pic.twitter.com/00xR8QKNH3

Seth Rogen (@Sethrogen) **March 1, 2021**

Included on the Houseplant ecommerce platform are four video tutorials titled "How to ingest cannabis," "Know your strain," "Portion control" and "How to roll a joint."

The company also feels strongly about educating consumers on the biased history of cannabis use, including the War on Drugs and racial disparities within the industry, according to its site.

"Houseplant was born out of our love and passion for cannabis, design and art," Mr. Rogen said in a statement. "Evan and I also recognize that our lifelong dream of starting a cannabis lifestyle brand like Houseplant comes with a commitment to changing the unjust and racist cannabis laws that still exist in today's society."

According to the **American Civil Liberties Union**, marijuana arrests account for more than half of all drug arrests in the United States. Of the 8.2 million marijuana arrests between 2001 and 2010, 88 percent were for possession of marijuana.

Nationwide, the arrest data revealed that, despite equal usage rates, Black individuals are nearly four times more likely than white individuals to be arrested for marijuana.

"We understand our responsibility to help right those wrongs and are dedicated to creating a more diverse, equitable cannabis industry," Mr. Rogen said.



Barneys New York opened its luxury cannabis lifestyle shop "The High End" in 2019. Image credit: Barneys New York

Education has been an integral element in legalization efforts by companies and Congressional representatives, and now an overwhelming **majority of Americans believe cannabis should be legalized**.

Founded by cannabis and television executives and powered by 420MEDIA, Connected, previously called "A New Cannabis Channel," is a cannabis streaming media channel which strives to connect consumers with information and products surrounding the cannabis, CBD and hemp industry.

"We hope that Connected will be able to teach people who are seeking more knowledge and education about the plant and history so they can make more informed decisions," said Kerri Accardi, CEO of [Connected](#), New York. "Cannabis was actually in our medicines up until the 1930s and made illegal over hemp, and the U.S. government has had it listed as a [Schedule 1 drug](#) with no medicinal value while simultaneously having a patent on it for medicinal properties."

Premiering April 20, Connected programming will feature medical professionals and patients, professional athletes and entertainers, cannabis cultivators and scientists and policy makers aiming to open the door to legalization across the world.

Investors are also taking notice of the growth opportunities in cannabis services.

This week, commercial cannabis financing firm [Bespoke Financial](#) announced the close of an \$8 million Series A fundraiser co-led by Snoop Dogg's [Casa Verde Capital](#) and [Sweat Equity Ventures](#), bringing the company's total funding to date to over \$28 million.

Boston-based cannabis delivery company [Zip Run](#) secured \$2.3 million in seed funding, as it is on track to become the first adult-use cannabis delivery company in the city. The recreational use of marijuana was legalized in Massachusetts in 2016.

Cannabis culture

In 2018, Emerging Insider found that the majority of high-net-worth cannabis consumers would prefer to spend large sums on luxury services and equipment.

Monogram showcases a luxury lifestyle in its marketing efforts

Whether that be in the form of rare strains of the plant or in custom, luxury equipment for consuming cannabis, 74 percent of consumers said they would spend \$300 or more on cannabis and 30 percent said they would spend up to \$1,000. Additionally, 41 percent of respondents said they are more open to buying premium brand name strains of cannabis, and 36 percent said they are open to purchasing expensive rare strains of cannabis ([see story](#)).

High-end retailers Neiman Marcus and the now-defunct Barneys New York have previously experimented with pop-ups featuring cannabis-related offerings, from CBD or hemp-infused beauty products to rolling papers, vaporizer pens and lighters ([see story](#)).

As legalization efforts continue, record producer and music mogul Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter and his cannabis brand Monogram recently launched the first installment of a three-part campaign, aiming to lift the stigma associated with the industry.

For the campaign, Monogram reimagined the work of renowned mid-century American photographer Slim Aarons through a contemporary lens. The brand tapped Hype Williams, known for capturing striking images of modern hip hop and culture, to depict what the "good life" looks like today: a life in which cannabis has the right to exist.

The imagery aims to illustrate the dynamic, expanding landscape of modern luxury and how it intersects with a new chapter in cannabis culture ([see story](#)).

"The growth of the cannabis sector is based on many factors, but generally speaking, it makes people feel better," Ms. Accardi said. "Cannabis is one of the most versatile plants, and one that could truly save the world from general wellness and healing to fiber, skincare, hemp fuel, clothing, housing and environmental benefits."