

Delectable Delights

Rachel King's acclaimed pastry chef experience shines through in Kaneh Co.'s edibles

by R. Scott Rappold | October 3, 2019



For most people who enjoy cannabis edibles, taste is secondary to the buzz it packs. It's on your lips for a few seconds, while the THC inside will hopefully keep you going for the whole Phish concert.

But trained pastry chef Rachel King asks why edibles can't be delicious *and* THC-infused?

"If you're going to eat an edible, you might as well make it enjoyable," says King, co-founder and culinary director of Kaneh Co., a San Diego, California-based gourmet cannabis company.

Launched in 2016, the company has grown from three to 65 employees, with edibles sold in more than 200 stores across California, an explosive growth King attributes to meticulous dosing and the belief that edibles customers are looking for a wide variety of sweets that taste just as good as what you'd get in a fine restaurant or candy store.

"As our clientele widens and cannabis becomes more and more accepted by people in different walks of life, they will be looking for a product that is not just a vessel for medication."

"I wanted to make sure people were getting a delicious, good product that would get them high, not just something they're trying to choke down to get high."

A Pastry Chef

King, 36, came into the cannabis industry in a roundabout way.

Her first experiences with cannabis—smoking whatever flower her friends had out of an aluminum can—were not positive.

"I would usually get way too high, so it was not that pleasant for me," she said.

King was trained at the San Diego Culinary Institute and went on to work at some of the city's finest restaurants. Pastries were always her specialty and focus; *Food & Wine* magazine named her one of the best new pastry chefs in 2013.

"Pastries hold a special place in peoples' hearts. You'll always remember that birthday cake or extra-extravagant dessert you've had," King said.

But restaurant work can be demanding, so when her brother and some friends came to her with a proposition for an infused edibles company, she listened. So, in January of 2016, Kaneh was born.

From the beginning, King explained she would not sacrifice the quality of her desserts simply because they would be cannabis-infused.

"Considering my background was in pastries and not cannabis, it was really about the food product itself," she said. "I wanted to make sure people were getting a delicious, good product that would get them high, not just something they're trying to choke down to get high."

"I didn't compromise the quality that I was already used to working with in my cooking background."



A New Ingredient

Still, adding a major new ingredient to the type of cooking she had long done presented a challenge. There were some hits and plenty of misses.

"Working with the product itself, figuring out when to add the medication, how it affects the overall product, was a bit of a learning curve," she said.

Kaneh hit the market with a large array of products—cookies, brownies, snack bars, nuts, dates and cocoa powder. She was one of two kitchen employees.

"Now we have a huge professional kitchen staff with people who used to work in bakeries and restaurants," she said. As of this writing, the company has 22 different products available, from cookies to jellies to caramels to that staple of stoner cooking for decades, brownies. Each is a 100mg product, divided into 5mg or 10mg doses.

Kaneh sells as many as 50,000 products a month, according to King. For now, they're just in California, though the company is exploring licensing in other states. She attributes her company's success to "the quality of the taste, and obviously the consistency of the medication." Ingredients are the same she would use to make desserts in a fine restaurant.

When people get an edible, they expect the potency to be exact, and so does King. She's found a way to finally enjoy cannabis—five milligrams at a time.

She believes the future of edibles is in diversity, offering consumers a wide variety of options.

"People are getting super creative. The consumer base is widening. People are going to want more things rather than just the same old things. Nothing to disparage the classics, a good chocolate chip cookie or brownie will never get old, but the more people that try edibles, more they will want something different."

That said, she noted that a brownie is Kaneh's best-seller.

"It's the Best of Both Worlds, a classic fudgy brownie. We press in a piece of chocolate-chip cookie."

"It's so good."