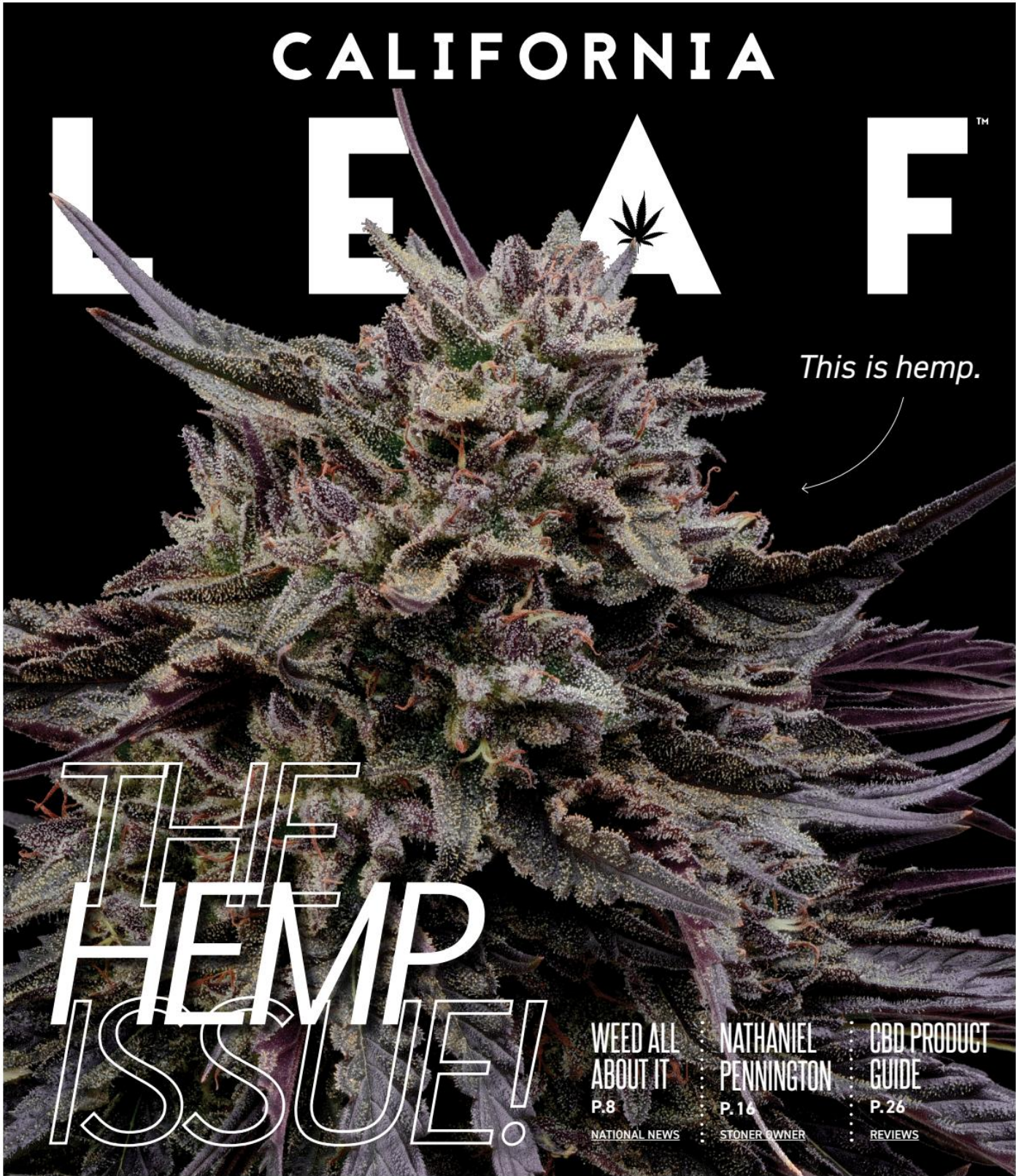
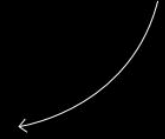


CALIFORNIA LEAF™



This is hemp.



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IN THESE STRESSFUL TIMES,
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Before she was creating delectable Cannabis treats, Rachel King was already acclaimed for her role in the restaurant world. Among her numerous honors was a 2013 nomination in Food & Wine magazine for Best New Pastry Chef. Since 2016, however, she has served as the founder and culinary director of Kaneh Co. As a family-run company located in San Diego, Kaneh Co. is dedicated to producing high-end desserts with premium ingredients. Chef King generously spoke with me about her company's plans for expansion, tips for baking at home, and the importance of placing women in roles of power.

HOW DID KANEH CO. FIRST GET STARTED?

I was transitioning out of restaurants. I had been a pastry chef for about 10 years and I connected with some business partners who had extensive Cannabis industry experience - whether they owned dispensaries, previously owned an edibles brand, were growing, all of that kind of stuff - and we created this brand together. We were in the medical market for quite a while and then we transitioned to recreational when the guidelines changed. We've been around for over five years now. It's been a roller coaster. If I thought the restaurant industry was crazy, I was definitely kidding myself. I thought this was going to be easy and relaxed, but here we are. I think we had like five total employees when we started and now we have around 65. We're also in Oklahoma and soon to be Michigan.



FOUNDER | CULINARY DIRECTOR

WHAT'S THE STATUS OF OPERATIONS IN OKLAHOMA AND MICHIGAN?

We are not [in Michigan] yet. We are planning to launch around November 1, fingers crossed, but that's if everything goes perfectly. The first state we got into was Oklahoma, which was not on our radar at all. People were like, 'Oh, you're in Oklahoma? That's random.' But they reached out to us. There are a few different options: You can go and set-up there, but then obviously, you have to run production there. It's different operations everywhere because of the state laws. People think that we're just opening another branch or whatever, but that's really not how it works at all. It's a separate business each time and that's not just due to distance. All of our head people are from San Diego, basically, and we have families, etc. here so we thought it would be best to license.

What that means is that we are working with other entities that are local to that state, and they are making our products and distributing our products there. That just makes it easy on us and it's also beneficial because they're local to the area. They have a better understanding of the market and more interpersonal relationships with people there. In terms of Michigan, we do have some partners who are actually from there, so that was an easy transition. The markets, both in Oklahoma and Michigan, are still pretty young. That's what appeals to us, because we don't really want to go into a mature, oversaturated market. We'd rather become a favorite brand in the infancy of the industry, so we're really excited for Michigan.

I KNOW KANEH CO. HAS MADE A PRIORITY OF PLACING WOMEN IN POSITIONS OF POWER. CAN YOU SHARE THE NUMBERS?

Yes. I would say, at any given time, 60% to 70% of our staff are women. 50% of our management staff are women. We have a lot of moms working here, so you know we get stuff done! It's a good environment. It would be hard to have a female founder and not believe in hiring women for managerial positions, right?

WHAT HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH CALIFORNIA'S ADULT-USE MARKET BEEN LIKE SO FAR?

It really has been a roller coaster ride, for many different reasons. Regulations played a huge part in that - just riding those out - and licensing played a huge part too. However, at the end of last year, 2020 was predicted to be this doomsday year for California Cannabis businesses. We were very aware of that coming into this year and it really is interesting how it has played out. Our sales are better than ever and we've been able to hire people who were working in restaurants and got laid off from their jobs. Our expansion has helped to create some different jobs and stuff like that, which is not what I expected for this year, but it's been great. I know that's messed up to say, but it's true.

"WE REALLY JUST WANT OUR CUSTOMERS TO ENJOY THE TASTE, AND OBVIOUSLY, THE EFFECTS - AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE EATING."

DO YOU FEEL OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE STILL FAILING TO CONNECT LEGAL CANNABIS WITH JOB CREATION?

Yeah. I won't go down that rabbit hole. I'm really upset about that because it's ridiculous. I mean, our main employees that have moved up that are managers now, have been with us since the beginning, and a lot of them are looking into buying homes now. That makes me feel a bit emotional and also proud that this is what this company can provide to people: a living where you can strive and grow in whatever way you'd like.

WHAT IS YOUR CHIEF FOCUS WHEN IT COMES TO EDIBLES?

I would say that taste is foremost. Myself and a lot of our kitchen staff and our COO all come from a culinary background, so I think we might create products in a different way from other companies because of that. I'm thinking like, 'Okay, this is what I want to make, but how can I make it to fit with the regulations? What about shelf life?' We really just want our customers to enjoy the taste, and obviously, the effects - and feel good about what they're eating.

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST POPULAR PRODUCTS?

Our brownies are by far our bestsellers. We have four different types and they've

been our mainstays since the beginning, although we are coming out with some new chocolate flavors that we've never done before. One of the flavors has some CBN in it, so that's going to be something new.

ANY ADVICE YOU CAN OFFER TO ASPIRING HOME CANNABIS COOKS AND BAKERS?

There are a few different ways you can go about it. I don't really recommend making your own Cannabis butter because you won't really know what you're getting. You can follow guidelines or a recipe, but it's not going to be the same as buying a lab-tested item. For that reason, I would recommend buying a tincture. Then you can dose your item that way, whether you're baking or even making something like a salad dressing. There's fun stuff to do with pre-made products, you know? You can make s'mores with an infused chocolate bar or make ice cream sandwiches with medicated cookies. That way, you don't have to deal with the tough part.



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