

HEMP INDUSTRY



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BRAND THAT TERROIR

(SOMETHING CRAFT CANNABIS AND HEMP FARMERS CAN AGREE ON)

MAYBE YOU LIKE a particular Cannabis cultivar, say **Columbian Gold**. No one expects it from **Grower A** to look, smell or feel like the **Columbian Gold** grown by anyone else. That's why savvy shoppers tend to reach for their favorite cultivar from the same company. This is true for craft Cannabis, as well as smokable hemp.

Why is OG Kush different when you buy it grown by another farm? The weather, soil, water and even the sunlight varies from place to place. Together, these environmental influences are known as terroir. Genetically two clones may be the same, but where and how they're grown has a direct influence on color, taste and chemical composition. This should come as no surprise to those who enjoy fine wine.

If we take cuttings from one grapevine in France, no one expects the wine made from grapes grown in Chile, Australia or Washington State to taste the same. Why should they? The environmental

influences specific to a given place determine how a plant's DNA is expressed. This is terroir at work.

Terroir can differentiate one brand from another. Smart growers work within the confines of their location to produce something unique. This can be used as a marketing tool to the grower's advantage.

For example, if you're growing a sativa the odds are it has a long flowering time, because plants like these have roots in the lower latitudes where the days are longer. Cannabis and hemp farmers in the northern latitudes have a hard time allowing sativas to grow to full maturity outdoors.

Growing indoors allows near complete control over the environmental influences. The argument can be made that indoor farms can create their own terroir. But if you prefer

outdoor Cannabis, where it's grown is a big deal. Terroir means little to those who grow for CBD extraction. If all you want is CBD (or CBG or any other cannabinoid), terroir is a non-issue.

Instead of thinking of your particular terroir as a limitation, think of your location as a marketing advantage. Make your unique terroir work for you. The first thing is to match what you grow to where you grow. As much of the hemp and Cannabis grown today was bred in California, Oregon or Washington, this poses a challenge to farmers in the Deep South, Hawaii or Alaska. Over time, breeders will create cultivars that will work in these locations.

Marketing craft Cannabis and smokable hemp is more than growing a good crop – it's about standing out in a crowded market, reaching those that appreciate what you're selling, and building a relationship with your customers. Yes, a snappy name helps. Yes, an eye-catching logo on a well-designed package is needed, but that's just your first sale. You want to build a brand that can't be duplicated by anyone else. Your Super Lemon Haze may have a color and taste that no one else can achieve. Without growing next door with the same genetics, no one else can compete for your loyal customers.

All of the above is old news to wine merchants. Not only do producers have a history of creating consistent wines, the authenticity comes from standard appellations – France or AVA (American Viticulture Area) in America.

There is no equivalent designation for Cannabis or hemp in America, yet. This won't be easy considering that

the Cannabis growers in California are often shoulder to shoulder with wineries. As of today, no one in Napa or Sonoma wants to be associated with the pot farmers next door.

Yes, terroir matters. And yes, customers will become more sophisticated in their shopping.

Over time, we'll see smokable hemp and craft Cannabis with location designation alongside names and cannabinoid levels. Mark my words.

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