

Thinking Outside the Bud

Episode 397 - Peter Cardoz

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Peter Cardoz, Founder & Owner, Cardoz Blended Gourmet

Making Gourmet Cannabis Approachable. As a veteran laboratory researcher and passionate cannabis advocate with a family background in food and hospitality, Peter is the founder of Cardoz Blended Gourmet, a unique cannabis and hemp company that looks to demystify cannabis cooking. He recently released the first line of hemp derived live resin infused culinary oils and was a competitor on America's Test Kitchen: The Next Generation Season 1.

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You're listening to thinking outside the bud where we speak with entrepreneurs, investors, thought leaders, researchers, advocates and policymakers who are finding new and exciting ways for cannabis to positively impact business, society and culture. And now here's your host business coach, Bruce Eckfeldt.

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1:07

Welcome everyone. This is thinking outside the bud. I'm Bruce Eckfeldt. I'm your host. Our guest today is Peter Cardoz. He is a cannabis consultant Founder and CEO of Cardoz Blended Gourmet we're going to talk about the world of cannabis. We're going to talk the world of culinary sort of science and culinary services and culinary arts and how cannabis is really I'm going to make a pun here and fusing of these areas with just interesting kind of aspects not only kind of the the effects of THC and other cannabinoids but really how cannabis is not only a medicinal product, but as a plant, and how do we incorporate it into our health, our lifestyle, our enjoyment of food enjoyment of, of life. So I'm excited for this conversation. This is a really interesting part of the cannabis industry, and one that comes with a lot of passion and a lot of interest. So excited for this. So with all that Dieter, welcome to the program.

1:59

Well, thanks for having me, Bruce. I'm really excited to talk about this. I've kind of been on this journey for a little bit. And it's exciting to see people look at cannabis more differently than they have been in a while. Yeah.

2:10

Now I'm excited for this. And before we get into what you're doing today, and the work that you're doing with cannabis, let's get a little background. How did you get into food? How do you go to culinary arts? How did you get you know, how did cannabis come into this? Tell us the story?

2:23

Well, so my background is actually lab science. So I've been formally trained, doing all sorts of laboratory research. I've worked in DNA sequencing, drug development, cancer research, CRISPR research, I kind of started doing that when I was a teenager, got an internship when I was relatively young. And that kind of sparked my enjoyment with science and learning more about medicine in general. And then, of course, got interested in cannabis recreationally, but also kind of more learning about the way we view it as a medicine because that was around the time when CBD was starting to be explored for epilepsy. Yep, so a family member who has epilepsy and that kind of sparked my knowledge. I'm interested in, you know, interest in it. So that was the focus and start of my cannabis kind of career. And then my father was a very passionate, well known chef, who won Top Chef Masters and, and all sorts of culinary accolades. But I've watched him develop his cooking technique and be really curious with food. And it also always sparked my curiosity with food. So naturally, as we kind of explored the cannabis industry and learned how terpenes are a huge portion of the cannabis experience that kind of made me think about how to view cannabis as more of a culinary ingredient like an herb as opposed to just another psychoactive. Yeah.

3:43

And how's it come together? I mean, it feels like you've got a couple of different threads, you know, from a professional point of view, or artistic point of view, like, what was the kind of stages where you started to realize that, hey, I can actually bring these things together and how, like, what were the events or the things that you experimented with?

3:59

Yeah, so first, I mean, it started with viewing cannabis as a medicine. I still view it as a medicine but it was more of the research focus on it because obviously, as I'm doing drug development, in regards to cancer, I see the benefits THC and other cannabinoids have. So it made me really curious about it that way. So I learned a

lot and see the different types of cannabis and things like that. And then as I got older, I started realizing that cannabis itself is a very under utilized medicine naturally without needing to privatize it, because that kind of got me to want to enjoy it alone. And then as we started seeing different strains and different terpene profiles and different ways they affect people, it made me realize that there's a little more diverse applications you can use it with. And then as I started experiencing that I had planned to actually open a business with my dad. I got him into the gummy aspect of cannabis. He he smoked a little bit when he was younger, but he a lot of times he was like, joking about like You smell that that's weed and I'm like dead. Dude, I don't even smoke. I don't know what the hell you're talking about, like, okay. But then I started working the industry and educating him on it and how it's not so bad like we've learned it was. So he liked the gummies for sleep, and it helped them a lot. So we wanted to do something together, and then unfortunately passed away from COVID. And now I use that, I appreciate that. But I use that to kind of fuel me and use this to kind of make me be with him again, but also at the same time, using his knowledge and my knowledge and kind of combining it together to educate everyone else. So the old school way of looking at cannabis like, you know, it's got a chlorophyll flavor, it's grassy, it's gross, is kind of outdated because of the science we're using previously.

5:45

Yeah, yeah. I'm curious as a chef, you know, from a culinary point of view, how do you look at the cannabis plant? Um, you mentioned, you know, you can kind of you can look at it as an error, but what is it? Is it you know, do you see it as kind of a whole product? Do you look at its constituent parts? Like, what, what becomes interesting for you, from a culinary point of view and using cannabis in different ways?

6:05

Well, I I find it really interesting that like, the leaves are very underutilized. They're another leafy green. I mean, if you look at it, like basil, or you know, even spinach like you treat them kind of similarly, you'll cook it relatively similarly, I think more on the spinach side. You know, if you overcook your spinach wilts, it starts getting more bitter flavors. Same thing with the cannabis leaves. I've actually made cannabis leaf pesto before. Interesting. Yeah, you just literally sub out the basil, you add maybe some arugula, some other some other leafy greens, so it's not so funky. But you know, all these different strains have natural flavor profiles with them not so prominent, like it isn't flower, but you can kind of get those to accentuate so if you you have a lemon profile, you can use lemon in your dish to accentuate that lemon flavor. And it detracts from the pungent skunk Enos that you would normally associate with cannabis. Yeah.

7:03

Is that I just kind of curious, your opinion on this. It is that sort of funkiness of cannabis, a cultural thing? I mean, from a culinary point of view, is this just another kind of flavor? And and how much are we? How much do you feel like we're just bringing in, you know, kind of bias? Or, you know, versus Yeah, there isn't a culinary analysis of, of sort of the taste or the aroma, or that kind of feeling of cannabis that is quite different from other herbs?

7:29

I actually really liked that question. Because if we were to phrase it in, we were to talk about alcohol. Yeah. When most people have a drink, like a mixed drink, there's usually a bite to the alcohol that people associate with the drink that they find pleasant. And I think if you view cannabis in the same way, you change your perspective on it, because there are a lot of drinks that I find very unappealing. But there are a lot of people that would look at me and be like, Oh, you're uncultured because you don't have the palate. Yeah. And I think

that's because we've had years and years of understanding the way these flavors work together. And I think cannabis is eventually going to get into that realm too. Because at this point, I'll smell a jar of flour, I'll smell a jar of hash and not notice this skunk Enos in the background, but immediately I'll notice the other floral or fruity notes immediately. So I find that to be something from me, continuously smelling cannabis and becoming more accustomed to it. It's kind of also the same way, you know, with coffee too. Like, it's really bitter. And it you know, I'd argue some coffee is really disgusting. But as you appreciate it more in the other Roma's to it you find it more appealing?

8:38

Yeah, yeah, I find that with how I remember kind of when I first started, sort of getting involved in cannabis. And that real kind of decently smell was was really, really strong and very off putting. And now like, if you find a really good cultivar that has, you know, has that it's it is intense like it is it's impressive, like how it sort of stimulates your kind of sensory system and things like that. So I look for it now, but it's taken some time.

9:07

I don't know if you've ever if you ever smelled some strains that like make you sweat. Oh, yeah. Yep. So those like that is just a very visceral reaction to the terpenes. And the way I like to tell people to buy their cannabis or you know, any kind of cannabis products is your nose, like the nose, nose, like, if you don't like it, when you smell it, I will almost guarantee that you will not enjoy the effect it has on you as well. If you are really drawn into the smell, and you can't pull your nose away from that jar. Yeah, I have a feeling that you're going to enjoy that strain. And you're going to always want that strain.

9:39

Yeah, yeah. As a facet, right. It's like saying that like hot sauces and stuff like that. It's like we're hot sauces are painful. But yeah, we love that. Yes. Interesting. So in terms of actually introducing cannabis into kind of culinary arts and culinary experiences are you looking at because how much of it is kind of The flavor profile, how much of it is kind of the effects of you know, THC, CBD, these other cannabinoids on us to change our kind of sensory experience of things, and how much of it is just hey, if we can lace some of the stuff with some THC and CBD it will help our health, but we're just kind of masking or trying to sneak it in there as a way to consume more or better product

10:22

well, so I guess it becomes a little tough because I view that I mean, and I feel like a lot of people do this view this now with the entourage effect. But I view that the terpenes have the larger effect as to why you feel the way you do. So it becomes a little tough, because when you're cooking, you're obviously trying to match flavor profiles. So I do feel like certain dishes are more inherently, you know, accepting certain flavor profiles, like you're not going to make a lemon curd, and then throw in GMO like that just be silly. But so you, you, unfortunately are limited on the flavor profiles, you might be able to combine. But that being said, I find that you know, there are certain dishes that might not work so well in certain times of the day. Of course, some people love breakfast for dinner, so that that's always an exception to the rule. But I think ultimately, you know, when we're talking about these things to be looked at more like a culinary ingredient, also you have to account for, sometimes you're going to use it in an application that doesn't activate the flower and you're using it more just purely as an additive for flavor. So you don't need to worry as much about getting a sativa feeling or an indica feeling so much.

11:33

Yeah, so I guess how, how is this played out professionally? I mean, where do you see cannabis being used in culinary arts? You know, currently, where do you see the future? Let's talk a little bit about political fashion and where we are in terms of using cannabis.

11:46

Yeah. So I've seen a lot of culinary dinners going on a lot of these infused brunches and dinners and things like that, which bring both sides of the community together, they'll usually use really good producers that focus on the flavor profiles of their product, and then get chefs that know how to work with those profiles and the food. And you see this really cool combination of fine dining and cannabis, which had you suggested that 10 years ago, I think you were crazy. Yeah, you see that. But also, you see a lot of new products coming out a lot of unique products. And they are focusing more on the full spectrum aspect, which means they have to remember that the flavor of cannabis is there. So they're making things that actually just taste good beyond the artificial flavorings and same old gummies that are out there.

12:36

Yeah. And in terms of the actual produce that we have, you know, in terms of the access to cannabis products, you know, cannabis, flowers, things like that. Where are we? I guess, how do you view the current state of cannabis production? You know, from a culinary point of view? Do we have history products? are we lacking things? Are you hoping certain things get developed? Well, it

12:57

really depends on the state you're looking at if, if it were federally illegal, I would say we're in a relatively, I'm putting air quotes around relatively, because obviously, there are a lot of issues going on in the cannabis industry. But I would say diversity and products and strains and things like that is really, really good in the US. But ultimately, you're limited on your individual states. And I would say it depends like California, it was just out there a little while ago. And they have so many new products that I haven't seen in the past, like two years that I've been there. I've seen a lot of different flavor profiles, it's really unique. Over here in Massachusetts, you don't see so many you see a few unique edible products, but you don't see as many as California, but you are starting to see a larger range of flour, we're starting to get more hash rosin production. You know, in Maine, there's a whole slew of things going on. Like, it's like the Wild West, but a little more regulated. So it's really great to see that. So I think, overall, we're in a much better space, but I think there's still plenty of ways to go.

13:59

Yeah. And are you looking generally, for kind of literal like flowers and plant or the, you know, the full plant, just the flower extracts concentrates? I mean, you mentioned hash, like where do these all kind of play from a culinary point of view are some more interesting than others for you.

14:14

I think they all have different different uses. You know, if you're going to use flour, you have to be very careful with how you infuse it into things because if you put too much heat to it, then it just ruins a flavor. Yeah, hash is a lot more forgiving because it isn't a solid so it's it's like it just dissolves into the oil. So you don't really have to worry as much of things burning. The solids actually overcooking. I like to grow my own flour. I personally consume concentrates though. So on a consumer and purchasing side I look more at concentrates because then I use that to further infuse my, you know, edibles or just consume in general.

14:51

Yeah. And where have you been a bit just professionally as you've kind of worked with the community? What are I guess how are you integrating the work that you've done into The cannabis community and where are you finding interesting kinds of collaborations, partnerships, relationships in terms of developing kind of the culinary aspect of cannabis. So

15:08

I've been chatting with a lot of people that are actually licensed in this space, because while they have the capabilities to do these things, having these unique products and kind of straying away from what everyone's already purchasing, takes some time and some some thought process. And unfortunately, with the cost of operating in the space, a lot of people don't have the extra capital to kind of do these things. Yeah. So that's where my brand and you know, myself in general come in, because I can work on these cool collaborations that are on a much smaller scale that allow you to kind of test the waters and see how does the community and the market actually enjoy these products? Like, what is your what is your consumer actually like? Are they is it something that will disrupt the market compared to gummies? Probably not. But it is something that allows people to look at a whole slew of products on your shelf, and actually have options instead of five brands of the same type of product.

16:04

Yeah, I guess is your interest or focus on finding creating products for kind of, I guess, sort of dispensaries being produced and distributed viewing kind of the dispensary route or creating these kinds of experiences? You know, you mentioned, you know, cannabis brunches, and events and kind of lifestyle kind of things. I mean, I could see these two different paths here. And then I've seen some things of like, THC infused pizza, frozen pizza that you could like a developing kind of that kind of stuff versus hey, let's figure out where can we create, you know, a cannabis abuse event, right? That's a whole culinary experience. Well,

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the way I like to view my business is by trying to make gourmet cannabis approachable. So with Carter's winning gourmet, the products themselves are meant for a Curious Cook, I will give you the basic ingredients that are infused, so you don't have to worry about the infusion aspect, you can just do your cooking like you would normally do. You don't have to change your lifestyle. You don't have to change anything, you can literally be just fry eggs. And that's the only thing you cook, you just use a little bit of the cooking oil and then boom, your meal is now infused. Yeah, the point is, so it can I feel like cooking itself becomes a little overcomplicated and people can get overwhelmed. So taking the extra step away of making you not have to worry about the cannabis portion allows you to be more creative at home in general. And then I find that this is a good vehicle for people to be like, Oh, well, if this is the kind of way cannabis cooking should be. And this is how it should taste? Well. Maybe now looking at these infused dinners or kind of the events that mix the two together. It's a great way for people to experience these things, because they weren't looking at it before.

17:42

Yeah. And who who is your market? Or who are you finding is interested in, you know, infusing cannabis into into cooking into their lifestyle? Like is there any insights that you've had, or things that you've noticed about, you know, where you're getting interest, where the products are going, what kind of feedback you're getting what's been kind of the insight there.

17:59

So there's a couple of different people that I find are interested in my products. When I'm doing a pop up and I have some stuff on display. The people that really catch get caught up in it are, you know, the ones that are there for edibles, and they're looking for CBD, but you know what's available is gummies or chocolates or something sweet. And I'm over here with something that's neutral flavored, so you can very easily check this product out and not have to adjust your diet now. Like if you're diabetic. Well, now you have to make sure that your sugar levels are in the right level for you to eat this gummy if you want. But yeah, if it's a cooking oil you don't have to worry about. So I found that it's in stores, it's people who are really looking for a different product. But as far as E commerce I've noticed it's the people that are probably watching the cooking shows they're shopping at Trader Joe's they're shopping at these stores that focus more on bringing you higher quality products. So ultimately, it's the people that know that they're spending a lot of money on their actual groceries. But then when they go and spend their money on their cannabis product, they're also spending a lot but unfortunately getting lower quality product. So I'm giving the people the same level of quality in their cannabis as they're expecting for their groceries.

19:09

Yeah, so you mentioned the oil, what other products are you working on? I guess whatever viruses you have currently what's in the pipeline, you know, tell us about where you're seeing this opportunity to infuse sort of cooking products with cannabis cannabinoids and things like that.

19:23

Yep. So right now I have the the truffle oil, I have a chili oil and I have a cooking oil, those are all CBD. My future plans are to get a garlic salt and cinnamon sugar. I have some test runs going with that they're they taste really good and obviously focusing on different strains. So the garlic salt is a more funky profile and then the cinnamon sugar is more sweet. And these are kind of you know, more meant for you to kind of add as a finishing So got a garlic salt if you got some pizza and you want to just quickly put a five milligram topping boom you know you would normally do it with an infused garlic salt. So here you go. There's all spices I want to do. My family does a lot of Indian spices. So what I'm trying to do is combine the two cultures together. There are a lot of people that are already combining Indian culture with the cannabis community. But unfortunately, they don't come from an Indian background. And I find that a little disingenuous. Yeah. So what I would like to do is, as I'm also learning more about my own heritage and the flavor profiles of the Indian community, I want to bring that in with the cannabis community. So we have another merge of two different communities that are already there, but maybe not so well represented.

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Yeah, ya know, there's a long history of cannabis and Indian culture. I mean, are you finding? Are you finding kind of interesting roots or kind of histories or kind of legacy there in terms of cannabis in Indian culture and Indian cuisine?

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Yeah, it's really interesting, because a lot of the different regions of India have some sort of association with cannabis. Right now, a lot of the cannabis that's grown in India is in that Hindu Kush Valley area, and they do it for religious purposes. It's very illegal in India right now to consume cannabis. But oddly enough, during religious times, like, if I'm not mistaken, it's holy, you can actually get a drink called Bhang, yeah, and it's a

cannabis infused drink, they use the live plant, they activate it with warm milk and mashing it down and just make like, almost like Alessi type drink. And it's super normal to do that. But unfortunately, because of the illegality, you still have people that are trying to just smoke a little weed getting in trouble for it. So it's this weird place where it's religiously accepted in certain areas, but it's still overall illegal. Yeah.

21:41

And where do you see the adoption going? I mean, is this going to be kind of a novelty? You think for folks in terms of, you know, cooking and kind of general household? Or is this going to become the next like hot sauce kind of craze of people using all sorts of different cannabis products, you know, that are, you know, infused with various things? Where is this gonna go?

22:02

I mean, the goal is for it to not just be a fad, I think it will pick up steam and there will be a large portion of like people doing it on tick tock like the water tic tock. I don't know if you're aware of that going on right now. But there's all these trends that will happen. But I foresee this being something that for regular cannabis users, this is an easy way for you to not have to change your normal routine, and just get the products that you are regularly using. I think, in the long run, when it's not stigmatized anymore, people won't view it so strangely, I mean, people use alcohol on their cooking and they cook off the alcohol without the without the goal of trying to get intoxicated. Yeah, the same thing will happen with cannabis cooking, you know, we're gonna have all these other cannabinoids that are available that are non psychoactive and non intoxicating that people will use in the regular application to just generally feel better.

22:57

Yeah. What do you think needs to happen from an education point of view, I mean, I, I find that there are some people who are very educated, very interested, very adopting of cannabis. There are other people that are kind of curious, but don't really know about it, like what needs to happen in terms of people understanding cannabis, so they can figure out you know, how and where to use it in their lives.

23:16

I think there's a couple ways of going about it. And I think one of the things is making sure that you know that, you know, cannabis doesn't have to be for everyone. It is a plant that is super inviting. And you can make space for cannabis in your life if you want to. But again, we're not forcing anyone to use it. And there's always going to be people that don't want to use it, that's fine. I think the important part is making sure that those people that don't want to use it are educated in the proper knowledge. So they're not continuing stigma. And I think for the people that are hesitant on it, they're hesitant, because of that stigma that was already there, there. You know, there's incorrect information that they're going off of. So I think the big thing is to show people that there are ways to use cannabis that don't ultimately disrupt your life and don't ruin your life. I mean, clearly cannabis doesn't ruin your life. But we still have to show people that it doesn't I mean, if you treat cannabis like a regular I mean, if we're not talking about psychoactive smoking cannabis, if we're talking about topicals people don't normally bat an eye when they have an article topical. Yeah. Because it's non psychoactive. So if you view it in the same, you know, knowledge and, and mindset, you find that cannabis isn't so scary. And I found that even my mom's friends who are very anti cannabis for the longest time, like I'll make themself and they love it. Like they will use it religiously. They will never they won't smoke, but they will use that self like, like lotion.

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Yeah, yeah, it just it just opens up a whole new kind of consumption route that, you know, potentially opens up for a huge part of the population who's not interested and yeah, smoking or vaping or, you know, consuming on that. Well,

24:52

it's just another plant at the end of the day.

24:54

Yeah. curious what your thoughts are on kind of the the early stage of this kind. of US consumption lounge, you know, kind of finding ways of bringing, you know, the use of cannabis into our kind of more public more social areas. I mean, do you envision or I guess I'm curious how much you're looking at sort of the consumption lounges and cannabis drinks, and then this idea of even cannabis food and restaurants and stuff, like where where's the interest? And where do you think that's gonna play off?

25:22

So I think those lounges are super cool. I'm, I mean, I think it's very important to have them. I think the largest problem that a lot of cannabis users have right now is the fact that they can buy it, but they're not legally allowed to zoom in anywhere but their house. Yeah, some people rent, some people just have partners that don't appreciate smoking or are sensitive to it. So it makes it difficult for a cannabis user to use their own products. Yeah, this would take away the issue of consuming in front of kids, because a kid can't get into a consumption lounge. Yeah, it would take away the issue of people going to public places and potentially starting fires because, you know, dry out, yeah, there's a whole bunch of issues that, that this solves. And it also gives people a place to gather like you would a bar and also it helps the industry as a whole, but also the tax revenue, like the amount of money that can be used to properly fund a lot of the issues that we're having, like, I mean, I drive a mess around Massachusetts all the time. And I joke about man, I wish this town had legal weed, knowing that the town has at least two dispensaries. You know, there's all sorts of things like there's a lot of school issues in town, we can be funding a lot of these problems and fixing them. Yeah. With additional streams of revenue in the cannabis industry.

26:43

Yeah. And if I, if I give you a magic wand to change one thing about the cannabis industry these days, I guess what would it be? What would you love to see, you know, changed, adjusted about how cannabis is playing out?

26:54

Well, while I'd love to see it legalized, there's a whole bunch of issues with it. But like my big thing with legalization is home growers should be legal. If I imagine one, yeah. 100% would allow everyone to grow at their own, you know, capabilities with some like limits, of course, but you should be able to grow cannabis plants at home like you can't grow tomatoes. Yeah,

27:15

yeah, I would tend to agree, Peter, it's been a pleasure. If people want to find out more about you more about the work that you do, what's the best way to get that information?

27:22

So I'm super active on social media. I'm very active on Instagram. I'm at PCardoz on Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn as well, where you can find me also at Cardozblendedgourmet.com at Cardos_blended gourmet on Instagram and YouTube. I think it's also TikTok. But, you know, just search up P Cardoz. Or Cardoz winning Gourmet. And you should be able to find me pretty easily. Great.

27:48

I'll make sure all the handles and links and everything are on the show notes. People get that, Peter, it's been a pleasure. Thank you so much for taking the time today.

27:53

Yeah. Thanks, Bruce. It's

27:54

been great. That's it for this episode of thinking outside the bud. Be sure to subscribe using your favorite podcast app so you don't miss our future episodes. See you next time.

28:05

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