

Thinking Outside the Bud

Episode 406 - George Breiwa

<https://www.thinkingoutsidethebud.com/podcast/innovations-in-cannabis-a-conversation-with-george-breiwa-founder-of-dynavap>

Innovations in Cannabis: A Conversation with George Breiwa, Founder of DynaVap

Tune in to this episode with George Breiwa, the founder of DynaVap, as we dive into the world of cannabis, product development, and the innovative technology behind DynaVap's cannabis consumption devices. George shares his journey into the cannabis industry and how he came up with the idea for DynaVap, emphasizing the importance of finding a better way to consume cannabis without the harmful byproducts of smoking. Exploring the science behind thermal extraction and how DynaVap's products offer control, flavor, and a range of effects. This episode also touches on the ritualistic aspects of cannabis consumption and how anticipation plays a significant role in the experience.

George was born in rural Wisconsin and was an early graduate from Lego university at the age of 6. In 7th grade lasers came into focus and with the help of a few teachers convinced the school to purchase its first laser. The drive to invent and solve problems has been a lifelong passion. Now a serial entrepreneur, inventor with multiple patents across 14 countries, and the founder of DynaVap, LLC, a company with the mission to "Make Smoking History".

Under George's leadership, DynaVap has become one of the fastest-growing companies in the US, making the Inc. 5000 list 2 years running.

George is also a speaker on topics related to cannabis and enjoys sharing products and ideas with others.

When not physically working he may be found on one-wheeled vehicles.

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EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

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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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1:06

Welcome everyone. This is thinking outside the bud. I'm Bruce Eckfeldt. I'm your host. Our guest today is George Breiwa. He is founder at dynavap. We're gonna talk a little bit about the world of cannabis. We're a product development and really interesting technology and approach that they've brought to market. I think this is one of the fascinating aspects of cannabis in the whole kind of cannabis world, which is innovation and finding kind of new interesting ways to solve problems and provide products for the cannabis world and for cannabis users. And this is an interesting one. So we're going to talk about the story we're going to talk about where they are, and really kind of what they found about being out of this business is some of the challenges, trials, tribulations that a lot of companies go through again of us, and really where they hope to go and what the future looks like. So with all that, George, welcome to the program.

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Thank you, Bruce, really happy to be here. Oh, it's it's fun to connect with other people in the industry and to talk about kind of the the ins and the outs of how things flow and sometimes how they don't

2:01

the ins and outs, the upside down to the side face all of that, ya know, it's a pleasure to have you on before we get into kind of products and what you've brought to market. Let's get a little background. How did you get into cannabis? How did you get into kind of product development? What's the backstory here?

2:17

Okay, so the quick backstory is, I think that as an individual, I fall into a camp that many other people that may have found their way into cannabis might resonate with. And that's, you know, there's certain moments throughout the day or the week where a little bit of cannabis helps me be more of who I want to be a hey, however, as I discovered this, I also discovered that, well, the same reason I don't like cigarettes means I don't like smoking. Anything. Yeah. Okay, there's got to be a better way. It's got to be solution. And there actually was a better way. I'll when I kind of started that journey, it just that better way was generally between three and \$500. And big, bulky and difficult to use. Yeah, so sick, okay, actually, I really liked the better way. And I think it'd be nice if more people had an option to use a better way, or episode and use the word technically better way, a different way that was less harsh and contain fewer combustion byproducts, if only it was a little bit more accessible in terms of more portable, more affordable

3:31

exercise. And so let's let's dig into so people kind of understand what we're talking about here. Kind of, so no, normally or if traditionally, or you roll a joint and smoke it, you're basically incinerating the, the cannabis product, the paper, the flower, you know, and through that process, decarboxylated it and getting into your lungs, and that's how it's entering your system. Obviously, a lot of other things are coming into your system at that point as well. I guess describe, you know why? For you and for a lot of people that is problematic. And then let's talk a little bit about how your product works and what the different processes,

4:05

okay, so if we think about it, from the perspective of let's just take, let's take hot breakfast cereal, right? So you wanted to have some hot breakfast cereal for breakfast, or, you know, some toast or whatever, but you didn't have any thing to heat it up with. So you decided that you know what, I'll just light it on fire. And I'll use the heat produced by burning my food to heat up the rest of the food it hit Well, that's kind of an analogy to what smoking is. We're going to take this product that we want to consume a and we're going to burn it as a source of energy to vaporize some of the active compounds in the product in the process it and we're going to consume effectively, all of the byproducts and the active compounds that we're looking to consume as we do it, it's these other things that are produced during the burning that tend to make the Experience harsh and uncomfortable, give it rather strong flavors, and also tend to contribute to some of the undesirable effects that people notice where, you know, I'll it burns my lungs or makes it a little bit harder to breathe or fill in the blank,

there's quite a number of things that can be attributed specifically to the smoke, and not necessarily directly towards the active compounds that are contained in cannabis when it's consumed through other routes.

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Yeah, and I guess what else is in here this a little bit to tobacco? Because I think that's the, you know, the

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initial kind of thought is, you know, this is just like a cigarette, how, I guess, is it just like a cigarette? How is it different from cigarette smoking, just from a chemical point of view.

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So if we're talking about smoking cannabis versus smoking tobacco, yeah, there are certainly some significant similarities in the regard that you are going to, in both cases produce a significant number of compounds that are not found in the plant matter itself. So if you take tobacco, you take cannabis raw, and you do a laboratory analysis into what's in it, you know, it's, it's gonna be a list of not a small number of chemicals, when you smoke it, and then do an analysis of the smoke, you're gonna find many of those chemicals still in it. But you're now going to find a whole array of new chemicals that were produced during the incomplete combustion part of burning it that have now been added into the mix. Oh, again, this is regardless of what it is that you're smoking, when you light things on fire, especially in a smoking smoldering fashion, where you're burning something in a condition where you don't have adequate oxygen to burn it cleanly. Therefore, haymaking smoke, this produces some of the, we'll call it the most problematic compounds through incomplete combustion, carbon monoxide being one of them. It's just a common toxin that people know about, but some of the other ones are actually, in some cases, somewhat worse in the regard that they tend to be more carcinogenic, and or asthmatic, contributing to a whole slew of health problems, especially if you are exposing yourself to them on a repeated and consistent basis.

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Yeah, interesting. And this is just something that smokers have just dealt with, right? I mean, it's just,

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it's just what comes with the territory. Yeah, yeah. You know, it just just what it is. And realistically, if we look at things from, we'll just kind of a pragmatic perspective, up until maybe 3040 years ago, not that the concept of vaporizing didn't exist, but it was extremely obscure, right. And there weren't simple tools that a person could

acquire, that will really make it easy to do. That's changed now. So now we've got this interesting option. If you don't mind, I really like analogies, because it helps kind of communicate a point go far in the past, if you wanted to, what to say have some cookies? Okay. You had to, but you didn't have a way to bake them. Okay. All you could do smoke them. You know what, I could go for some cookies, a Bruce, let's go back and smoke some cookies because I could go for some cookies. So we go back and we smoke some cookies. And it's great. We have a good time. And then we go back to do whatever it is we're doing in a slightly altered state of mind. And the day just got brighter. A hit will introduce the oven. Hey, you know what, you know, I met this guy. And he showed me something I'd never seen before. You know, those cookies. We just been going back and smoking because we like smoking or cookies. He put his cookies in the oven, and he baked them. And while he was baking those cookies, wow, they tasted really good. It tasted like they smelled as they were being baked. And then after he got done baking the cookies. He opened the oven and he took the cookies out as a goal. You know what? You now get to eat your cookies too. So what? You get to eat your cookies. You can't just smoke them. No, you can bake them and enjoy all the aromas during the baking process. But after they're done being baked, you can eat them too.

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And you're saying so how did you apply this to cannabis? Well,

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I applied in this regard, whether we're talking about a product that we make is dynavap Or we're talking about any other vaporizer type product, okay, or another way that we like to refer to our instruments or magic wands is as thermal extraction devices, because our products utilize heat from just about any source to bake your cookies. So in a nutshell, our products are little miniature ovens with a little built in thermostat that lets you know when your cookies are done, so you don't burn them. And that's where I think the comparison just kind of starts to come all together is it you can burn your cookies still, and you can still get that all of the things that you used to get when You used to burn your cookies it hit, nothing's changed. Or you can try this new alternative approach where you can bake your cookies. And you can get many of the same effects and much of the same experience, except your cookies don't taste burnt. And if you choose, you can save your already baked cookies in your favorite jar, and you can utilize them for another time. As inedible.

10:25

Yeah, yes, it's interesting. And this is just to make sure people are clear I like you know, lighting, actually burning cannabis does that decarboxylation and creates you know the things you want but creates all these other byproducts, some of which are considered carcinogenic, this is just heating it to very specific points so that you're releasing these compounds, and you can inhale them without the actually burning byproduct. But this is different than quote unquote vaping, which is an extraction technology that's turned into basically vaporizing you know, cannabinoids and compounds that have been extracted from the plant like you're still you're still using regular flow biomass. Yeah, yep. The flower itself

11:07

in that's the key thing, we are going through a process that, in our opinion, is analogous to smoking as any other option that at least we're currently aware of on the market, you know, our devices are small, lightweight, don't contain batteries or electronics, heat up in seconds, and can provide thick, rich, flavorful vapor that is very, very similar in terms of the feel of smoke a hit without actually burning anything and letting anything on fire. Okay. And yes, do you get all the decarboxylation the key thing here is, instead of burning and turning everything into ash, we're just simply baking the cookies, or getting them hot enough that they change form. And here's where it gets really fun. Okay, most people that have had cookies before, have had soft cookies, and have also had hard crispy crunchy cookies. And people from prefer one, some people prefer the other. And sometimes it just depends on where you're at, and what kind of cookie it is, as well, when you have a device like we manufacture here at dynavap, you get to choose, you want some soft cookies today brews, or you want some crispy crunchy ones, or somewhere in between. And we can do that in a very easy manner. Because the way that you heat up one of our devices determines how, how soft, how crunchy your cookies become it. So you have a lot of control. And so what we now have is we now have kind of a whole new element, right? Because when it comes to smoking, you're either smoking or you're not. Right, yeah, it's binary, there's not really much in between, other than the fact that the first puff tends to taste the best. And the last puff tends to taste, we'll just say the Smokiest Yeah, okay. And that's just because all of the other things that have been created during the smoking process have kind of concentrated in what's left versus when we're, when we're baking, instead of burning, we can change the temperature that we do our extraction, and you can actually create a broad range of different flavors, as well as a rather significant range of different effects. So a low temperature extraction, or we'll just call it soft cookies, is much much different than a high temperature extraction or crunchy cookies.

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It yeah, like I have friends who swear by, you know, going through this process, and these very sophisticated devices will be you know, and they they're upping the temperature by a degree each time to release like the next tranche of cannabinoids and terpenes and flavonoids and stuff like it's, it's a science for some of these folks to really dial in this process.

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And it's a rabbit hole to integrate further complicated when you start mixing in different strains, you know, in different hybrids, etc. So, again, you can really get into it. It's a whole new set of variables that you can kind of dial in your, your recipe.

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So I mean, one of the things that I really like about your product is honestly its its simplicity. All right. I mean, it's like I said, most most of the devices that I've seen, you know, along this lines are fairly big, fairly complicated. Oftentimes, you can't plug them in or you need batteries and stuff to be able to operate them you know, they're and they can be a little delicate. They can break or they can not work for a moment. It's there is something cool. Why don't you describe because I know that this is tough on the audio podcast to to do this justice, but describe your products, right? What does it actually look like and how does it work? So our product basically

14:39

looks like a new age one hitter, it is slightly larger in diameter, roughly the same length made out of generally higher quality materials, not that there aren't high quality one hitters out there, but most of them are not. So we primarily manufacture devices out of either medical grade titanium or stainless steel hit their gender composed of a few parts, a tip or extraction chamber on one end that is attached with a couple of friction football rings. And what we call a stem, which is basically a tuba handle to that tip fits on to. And then on the open end where you'd normally put your flower and then correspondingly lighted as a one hitter, instead of lighting it, what we do is we have what we call our temperature indicating cap, it goes over the opening, creating the oven and giving you that thermostat that allows you to then heat up your oven until you hear it click. And just for illustration purposes, because podcast, I'm going to do that right now I got an isolator here. And so if you can hear I'm just kind of heating it up. And it generally takes five to seven seconds, you're going to hear it's going to click when we hit temperature just like that hairless. So that's our indicator. And it gets really fun in the regard that as you get more familiar with your device, kind of like from the time that you first learned to ride a bike to the time you started taking your bike down the mountain bike trails, there's a little difference in skill. Popping really isn't absolutely, our devices are not much different in this regard, that it doesn't take long to grasp the concept and to be able to successfully ride down to the grocery store. And there's a reset click Have you heard that hit. So you can kind of get on the biking and start to ride, you start to get that enjoyable satisfaction. I can ride my bike, I'm now more free to go more places than I was just by walking or running. We can do that with these thermal extraction devices.

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Yeah, that's yeah, it's elegantly simple and highly effective. And I love the fact that yeah, I don't need batteries, I don't need to plug it down on a to charge it. I just need a heat source to be able to kind of heat the cap and you know, get get it to that right. Temperature. I'm curious is that what like? What is the temperature that that you dialed in on that kind of makes the whole system work or get the gets the best experience? Well,

17:01

so this is work is just a bit more complex. And it was kind of fun in this regard. Because as simple as the device seems on the surface, it's actually one of those things that's got a lot more complexity within it that just you wouldn't know until you really start to look into it. In terms of engineering, the size, the weight, and even the

geometry to help the heat be where you want it to be and not go where you don't want it to go. Okay, so part of this is inside of her cap, there's two little thermostats, and you can kind of hear if I shake it, right.

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Oh, yeah. Okay, I'm shaking mine. Yep.

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This is what makes the the click when it hits temperature. So these thermostats are calibrated to a rather accurate temperature. Okay, now that temperature usually gets complex, okay? That's the temperature the thermostats activate, okay? The thermostats are not in your oven, they're adjacent to it. Okay, so what they do is they indicate inferred temperature based on their location, as well as based on how you're heating your oven, and where you're heating your oven. Okay, so by simply changing what we're heating up our oven with ahead and where we're heating our oven, depending on if we're using a torch or an induction heater, because you can use either a hit or even a Bic lighter works just fine helped. In fact, probably worth just dwelling on that for a second if you're gonna use a Bic lighter, or a soft feeling lighter. And key is you want to bury the cap in the flame to try and get rid of all the yellow parts of the flame. So you want to entertain is little yellow. That's a temperature indicator. No, it's a suit preventer. Uh Huh. Interesting, okay, because the yellow part of your soft flame will be very sooty, it will make your capital black and then you're going to touch it now your fingers are black. It also makes it harder to heat because that big tall soft flame blows around in the slightest breeze. Versus when you bury it more deeply in the flame, the flame wraps around the cap and gives you even though it's not as hot, it gives you much more contact and provides better heat transfer. So got it anyway. So where I was going with this is when we hit the very end of the cap, where the groove is. Okay, this is going to have your thermostats click at the lowest temperature. In other words, soft cookies. Or another way we say it as you heat the tip for taste. If you lower down on the cap, okay, towards what we call the digger outer, which is this cute little tail that's kind of using some functional geometry, we cut it right into the cap so you can remove the contents of your oven without having to go find a tool to do so because it's already in your fingers, as we call it the base and you heat the base to go to space because when we lower it allows us to drive more energy into the oven because we're a little bit further away from the thermostats so everything gets a little bit warmer before they click. But the nice thing is they are calibrated to click at a temperature that allows you to get that oven rather hot but not so hot that you initiate combustion? Yeah. Which is the key here, which is the key. So the temperature is actually a complex question in the regard that it's not just the temperature that they click, it's the temperature that the oven reaches, reaches, yeah. Okay, through a range of heat sources, okay. And still being able to have them click at a temperature that allows you to get all the way up to maximum level extraction, while minimizing the likelihood that you're going to burn things. Yeah, because we're just the key here, which is the key. Unless you're looking for Bert cookies, which you could do to which you can just take the cap off and use it like a one hitter. Absolutely, which is, we should probably we're just dwelling on that for a minute. And the reason I say that is, our product is one of the few products on the market that allows you the option to soft bake, crispy, crunchy, bake, or just outright burn your cookies. And it's all fine, you're not going to hurt a thing. If you want to change it up, you can take it apart, you can soak the parts in your favorite cleaning solution, rinse them off, put them back together and start all over again,

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is interesting. So you know, simple, elegant idea. I'm sure there was challenges getting you here. Tell us a little bit about the product development process. You know, how did you go from, hey, I've got this idea to, you know, early concepts to final solution.

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Oh, boy, it was a journey. Let me tell you from initial concept in 2012, to prototypes to trying to figure out and find anyone that I could say, hey, if I give you this, will you try it out? And let me know what you don't like? And then following up because everyone says yes to a gift for the most part. But then when it comes to the follow through a you know, did you get a chance to try that? Oh, no, not yet. Or? Oh, yeah, it was fine. Okay, because people don't like to say, especially to people that they know, they don't like to say the negative things. Yeah. But when you're trying to develop a product, what do you need to know? All? It's great. No, it's not. I need to know what you don't like, because I can't improve on what's great. Yeah, exactly. I need to improve on the things that aren't great. And so that's, again, product development, it's a little bit more of a challenge than I think most people might realize, to get people that you know, to tell you the things that aren't great. Yeah.

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What were any big changes or kind of eureka moments in the process? And you? Sure,

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absolutely. So I'd say the first one came about was, so back in January 2012, I was sitting with a few people, I enjoyed their company. And we were enjoying a little bit of our favorite strains. And just talking about how it was nice to vaporize versus burn, because we're just sitting in my basement and it didn't matter because there's no smoke it. But why did the President need to be so big and expensive? And it? It was right there? Wait a minute. Okay. What is a vaporizer? It's an oven, nothing more. That's it. It's, it's an oven that you can control the temperature, how difficult could it possibly be to make one of these. So being a person that has liked to create things from the time I can remember, I tend to have things for creating things near me got up, I grabbed a glass vial. And it took apart a big pen to get a straw and I put a little bit of flour in this glass vial and heated it up with a big lighter, until I saw a little bit of vapor forming around that flour, and I sucked it out of that tube of the straw. It's like, oh, tastes just like my other vaporizer. Alright, this is actually not that complex. So now, how do we convert it into a product that people might actually want to buy, or that would be easy to use for people that don't understand physics or don't care to it? Well, so started with glass and then glass tubes and figured out that if you take a glass one hitter, so fun little thing here, our packet fully read favorite flower and take a lighter and instead of lighting the end, if you just keep the side you have a vaporizer, it's literally that simple. As long as your flame doesn't touch the flower, well you're heating up basically the chamber turning it

into an oven and you can thermally extract all of the compounds that are in that flower. So that's where I started. And what I found is if you're really careful with the flame, it actually works pretty good. But if you're a little bit sloppy the wind blows now all of a sudden your flowers on fire. So that first eureka moment came was like you know what, what if I put a cap over that to protect her and I was like wait a minute to put a cap over there to protect it. Now I can actually create a heat exchanger too because there's gonna be a little bit of gap between the cap and that chamber so when you draw on it is going to draw air between that cap and that hot glass. Cool. How do I make it so that people know when to stop heating so they don't light it on fire? Looked into things you know, like temperature, color changing paints change color and temperature and interesting dials and, you know, then went down just didn't really do a whole lot has been explored temperature sensors and a lot trionics and all this other stuff, put kind of abandoned that pretty quickly music at a batteries and circuit boards and heavy metals and sensors and all these new failure points and things to go wrong. And then there's that one moment where it just finally hit me. He's like, No, I just need to put a little round thermostat in that cap. It'll just simply click when it's the right temperature. Yeah,

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it is super elegant. The only problem I can see is if someone is hard of hearing.

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Well, actually, so here's the fun thing. Which model do you have? Bruce?

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I'm looking down at the name. It's got the, it's got the black silicone cover.

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So you gotta be okay. Okay. So if you notice the cap is slightly loose kind of wiggles and jiggles a little bit. Okay, I've got mine here. And I just have it cap side down, I can kind of tap on it. It just kind of moves. So if you hold your device in a slightly angled up position, and as you're hearing it, what you'll notice is the cap is loose like that. It tends to jump when the camera clicks. Nice. So you get a little visual indicator as well. Yeah, you could probably feel it too. That's the next thing. Because it's moving. Okay. And when those thermostats click, they actually move very, very fast. Yeah, it does make a little detectable vibration. And your fingers are actually very, very sensitive to things like this, especially once you train them what to feel for. And as you get more familiar with the process, you're you'll kind of know the timing. Right. So that case, it should be clicking any second now. So then your senses kind of transition into a high awareness mode.

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Yeah, yeah, you're expecting it looking looking for that moment? Yeah, you're looking

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for it, you're expecting it, you're anticipating it. And in this is actually a really important part of what's going on. Because anticipation just by itself plays such an interesting role in what the subsequent experience tends to be going sheriff in truck when you think about it, you know, when you're six years old, and you just can't wait

27:03

for your birthday party. Right? Christmas, the Tooth Fairy used it, all those

27:08

things, right. Instead anticipation, right, that, I think we tend to lose a little bit of that as we get older. Because we have so many of these things at our fingertips. Yeah, exactly. And so if you don't mind, I want to dive into that just a little bit more, when we when we go in engage in what I would consider a traditional ritualistic practice of taking your flour, breaking it up with a reason a grinder or using our fingers, it doesn't matter. Okay, what we're doing is we're beginning the ritual, okay, the preparation, and it's this ritual that kind of gets the mind prepared. It's kind of like the beginning of a meditation. Okay, as we engage a very familiar ritual of, I'm going to search for illustration purpose, I'm going to get up my rolling tray, I've got my grinder, I've got this new jar of flour, that someone gifted me whatever it might be, I opened it up, first thing I do is I smell it. And then I put it in the grinder and I grind it up, and I can feel all these things. And then they dump it onto my rolling tray, and get out my papers, and get it just right. And I know how to do all of these things, because I've done them hundreds or even 1000s of times before. So my fingers know what to do. And I'm stimulating so many of my senses, my eyes, my ears, my nose, right. And building that anticipation for I have the final product in my hand, you know, the craftsmanship of getting it all ready to go at it, put it in my mouth, and then I liked the end, we are able to retain much of this. When we have a product, it's designed, the way that our dynavap products are designed is to emulate that ritual as closely as possible, with really only one key difference. And as to separate all the good things from all of the unnecessary components of smoke.

28:56

Yeah. Josh has been a pleasure. There's a really fascinating project, I highly encourage people to check it out. And if you're at all, flour consumer, you know, this is a really interesting and innovative and novel way of doing things. People want to find out more about you and more about the product, what's the best way to get that information.

29:14

So we've got a website that's Dynavap, dynavap.com. We also have social handles that are going to be under the same name DynaVap. Right, you can find us pretty much on any search engine, just looking up DynaVap.

29:27

Great, I'll make sure the links are on the show notes and highly encourage people to check it out. Great product very reasonable. I'm excited about and continuing to enjoy it. And so thank you very much. I appreciate it, George. Thank you, Bruce. 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.

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