HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST CANNABIS

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About Steve DeAngelo

A Life Well-Lived in the Cannabis Movement

Steve DeAngelo is an inspired leader, who has contributed four decades of activism and advocacy to the cannabis reform movement. His vision and leadership have been featured by news teams from around the globe including major news outlets in the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The media has described Steve’s landmark Harborside Health Center as a unique facility that combines safe access to a wide range of lab-tested cannabis medicines, along with a full complement of free patient services, including a holistic healing clinic. Steve's other accomplishments include co-founding Steep Hill Laboratory, the nation's first cannabis testing laboratory; and ten years as CEO of Ecolution, a pioneering manufacturer of industrial hemp goods. More recently, Steve gathered together the A-Team of medical cannabis professionals into CannBe, the industry’s premier consulting and management company.

Steve has been featured by The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN, the Associated Press, The Wall Street Journal, NPR, and the BBC; Fortune Magazine and literally every major network news source in the country. His creation of a model medical cannabis dispensary and lifelong cannabis activism, coupled with his extensive knowledge in this arena, has made him one of the most respected thinkers and speakers in the cannabis and hemp industries. Steve is gratified by the great progress of the last few years, and looks forward to the day when the last cannabis prisoner is freed from their cell.
About Green Flower Media

We believe cannabis is a life-changing plant that’s lugging around an outdated public persona.

That’s why our mission at Green Flower Media is to produce original content that changes the social stigma of cannabis forever. That way, everyone, everywhere, can choose to benefit from cannabis without judgment or restriction.

This collective shift begins by educating people about the legitimate benefits, facts, and science of cannabis so that old stereotypes and misinformation can finally be put to rest. It also happens by telling compelling true stories of the people who use and enjoy cannabis, whether that be to stimulate creative thoughts, relax into life, deal with illness, or build empires.

Whether you are an existing cannabis user looking for a place to call home on the internet, or you’re a new or returning cannabis user looking for clear, credible information about how to use this plant in a safe and responsible way, we’re glad you’ve found us.

Make sure to sign up for our newsletter at www.GreenFlowerMedia.com to get new Green Flower Reports, profile videos, online courses, and more.
Introduction

The “best” cannabis means different things to different people. For some, potency is the key to quality; others place an emphasis on flavor and aroma. Further still, one set of consumers may prefer THC-rich cannabis, while another set may opt for CBD-rich strains.

The following framework will help you identify the most important drivers of distinctive cannabis qualities. But in the end, you will have to make your own value judgments about what is best. That’s one of the wonderful things about cannabis. It gives you the freedom to find what you love, and what works best for you.

The following sections are broken down into:

- The look of great cannabis.
- The smell of great cannabis.
- The touch of great cannabis.
- The lab results of great cannabis.
- The provenance of great cannabis
- Some helpful information so you can find the best cannabis.

Enjoy!
Look at it *(very, very closely).*

Check the color first. Most of the high quality cannabis on the market today comes in various shades of green with highlights in purple or orange or other hues.

Brown cannabis, on the other hand, especially if it appears to have been pressed or has seeds, is frequently an inferior product smuggled in from Mexico.
After studying the color, observe the surface of the flower—ideally with a lighted magnifying glass or microscope. Hold the bud within an inch or two of the lens to make sure the flower is free of mold or foreign objects (leaves, insects, insect eggs, etc). These contaminants will show up clearly under a 30x handheld microscope, which your dispensary should make available to you upon request.

Next, focus the microscope until you see some mushroom shaped crystalline structures come into view: these are called trichomes. The surfaces of the best cannabis flowers are densely packed with them.
Trichomes contain almost all the active ingredients in the plant (cannabinoids), and should have large translucent amber heads, slightly leaning over but not breaking off their stems. Be sure to open up the flower a little and examine trichomes on the interior as well.

Avoid flowers with cloudy, dark or red trichomes, or trichomes that have fallen over. These are indications the cannabis was harvested after its peak harvest period, which degrades flavor and potency.
If no microscope is available, do the best you can with your eyes. Instead of looking for individual trichomes, look for the overall amount of trichomes. They will show up as a crystalline coating on the surface of the flower. The most potent cannabis will sparkle like a diamond or at least like a rhinestone.
Smell it *(very, very carefully).*

The aroma and flavor of cannabis—and all plants—comes from chemical compounds called terpenes. They can be sweet or sour, earthy or spicy, acrid or pungent, piney or fruity. In addition to providing aroma and flavor, some terpenes have therapeutic and psychoactive effects.

Ideally, you should compare aroma side by side with several strains of cannabis. There is no right or wrong in this process—it is a matter of personal preference. Simply determine which of the smells is most attractive to you—which do you think you would most enjoy tasting?

The precise relationship between terpene content and how the cannabis makes you feel is still being explored, but most cannabis consumers express strong preferences or aversions for different aromas and terpene profiles. For most consumers, these preferences are more important to a satisfying selection than overall potency.
Touch it *(very, very lovingly).*

Pinch a bud between your thumb and forefinger. Your objective is to identify the stickiest flower. The freshness and potency of cannabis, and how well it has been cared for, is largely determined by the size and number of trichomes found on its surface.

Trichomes are intensely viscous, and the very best cannabis flowers are so sticky you can actually pick them up just by pressing down on them with a single thumb or finger.

This is a great way to judge the quality of cannabis when you don’t have a microscope, even if you are in the dark or otherwise having a difficult time seeing the cannabis in question.
However, be aware that cannabis flowers vary greatly in density. Many consumers mistakenly believe that tight, dense buds indicate higher quality, but in my experience density and quality do not necessarily correlate—some of the best cannabis I’ve ever seen had light airy flowers.

Avoid flowers that are dry, or that crumble. The bud should feel moist but not wet, and yield to the touch while retaining its basic form.
Check the **test results.**

Most well-run dispensaries in legal cannabis states run their cannabis through a laboratory test, and they make those test results available to consumers. The results typically include the percentage of THC and CBD as well as the moisture content of the cannabis.

THC is the cannabinoid most responsible for the psychoactive effects of cannabis; CBD modulates those effects and has powerful therapeutic properties.

Consumers who prefer strong cannabis should select THC-rich, low CBD strains. Consumers who prefer a less intense, more balanced experience should select a more equal ratio of THC and CBD. And consumers who are most comfortable with an even lighter but still relaxing experience would be well-advised to seek out CBD-rich, low THC strains.

Be careful though—some dispensaries inflate their test results by advertising the THCA content instead of THC content. THCA is a precursor of THC but is not bio-available to human beings. Make sure you know the real THC content prior to making your purchase decision, and shoot for a moisture content of 6-12%.
Cannabis flowers, like wine grapes, come in different varietals known as strains. Many strains were developed while cannabis was still completely underground and have colorful names like Granddaddy Purple or OG Kush.

Like wine, each cannabis strain varies in flavor and aroma. Each cannabis strain also produces different physiological and psychoactive effects. These variances can be almost unnoticeable, but in some cases are profound.

Most strains on the market today are hybrids of original single-source strains known as landrace strains, or more often hybrids of hybrids. For example, Grandaddy Purple was the source of a whole family of other strains: Purple Urkle, the Purps, Purple Kush, Lavender, and
many others. OG Kush was a source for LA Kush, Bubba Kush, Purple Kush, and many more.

Once you find a strain of cannabis you like, explore its genetic history (just Google the strain name). Identify the family of strains it belongs to—you will quite likely enjoy other strains from the same family.
Find a trustworthy, reliable source.

Cannabis is a complex product. It features the same variances in quality that all natural products have, plus interactions between cannabinoids and terpenes we’ve yet to fully understand, and an ever-increasing array of consumer choices: vaporizers, vape-pens, extracts and dabs, and infused products and capsules and sublinguals, topicals, and more.

The best solution for consumers who find themselves overwhelmed by the complexity of the decision tree is to find a trusted source of information. Ideally that source will also be able to provide a variety of different types of cannabis, and track your purchases and preferences.

Over time, through a process of trial and error, you will be able to hone in on your most favorite kinds of cannabis; and as new varieties that are similar to it come onto the market, your trusted source should be able to introduce you to the new products you are most likely to enjoy.
If you’re in a legal cannabis state, any well-run dispensary should be able to help. If you are in a non-legal state, you could seek out a sophisticated and conscientious grower or dealer, but there aren’t many of them, and they are difficult to find.

If you have cannabis consuming friends who live nearby, you could ask them for advice; and if you don’t have nearby friends, you could check online for usable information (just Google *choosing best cannabis*).

Of course, then the challenge becomes finding what you want in a necessarily secretive underground market.

The sad reality is that you might have to go out of state to find the best cannabis for your needs—or just stay put and work to end cannabis prohibition.
Do you have access?

Depending on where you live, you may or may not have access to this type of cannabis. This can make it challenging and frustrating to properly medicate – to even get the medicine you need.

But it’s important you know what high-quality cannabis is so you can hold a vision for what’s possible and keep fighting for full legalization. Keep fighting so that everyone, everywhere can enjoy this special plant.

There are 3 ways you can do that:

1. If you haven’t already, go get your copy of Steve’s new book – *The Cannabis Manifesto*. It will provide you with all the knowledge, information, and fuel you need to bring cannabis out of the dark and into the light.

2. Go spend some time on the Green Flower Media website, which is filled with top quality cannabis content to educate, entertain, and enlighten you to the truth of cannabis.

3. Let’s be friends on social media so you can continue to engage with us, in real time, around these important cannabis conversations.

Thanks for reading, and we’ll talk to you soon.