Celebrity Jeweler Alex Todd Gets Saucey

His clients include Jay Z and and Rihanna. Now, he's targeting cannabis consumers.

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It's graduation season – a time when high school and college grads all over are counseled to "do what you love, and you'll never work another day in your life." Well, cannasseurs are listening too, and many of them are taking this advice to heart – though they'd certainly take issue with the notion that they're not busting their butts. Celebrity jeweler Alex Todd, who has designed pieces for Jay-Z and Rihanna, among others, has just launched Saucey Extracts, a line of strains, cartridges, apparel and accessories that are available in California and Oregon. We spoke to Todd about how he turned his passion for cannabis into a profession.

What were you doing before you launched Saucey?

I was in the jewelry business for the last ten years, creating some of the most well-known hip hop pieces, and working as an advisor to some of the biggest watch collectors in the world: Kevin Hart, Jay Z…

And how did you go about launching a cannabis company?

It really started as an idea with a couple of friends. We thought it would be easy, but soon realized it was like any

other business: We needed to do a lot of work, research, build out infrastructure, do our due diligence, make lots of mistakes, and do a lot of learning.

What kind of mistakes did you make?

Jumping in too fast without doing proper research. Just finding out about simple stuff like how much consumption there was in each state. Oregon is a place where they gave unlimited licenses, so anybody could enter the business, and there wasn't enough consumption to sustain it all. If we'd known that, we wouldn't have built as big a structure.

How do you go about building a brand?

Same way as I did in the jewelry business, focus on the quality of the product. Whenever someone experiences the product, it's gotta be a top of the line, pleasurable experience. When someone walks into a store and sees the packaging, all the way to how it's consumed, it's about quality. Once you have a quality product, we think everything else will translate. Obviously, you want an attractive product as well, an aesthetic that's gonna draw the consumer's attention; we wanted something that felt very New York in terms of the design, and very California in terms of the quality. With the relationships I have in the jewelry business, we have a cultural backing and influencers, and we've gotten tremendous reactions from them. A lot of people are calling for the product, not because they want to get something free, it's because of the quality.

What exactly distinguishes the quality of Saucey from other brands?

We have a patented extraction method for our oil — a chromatography technology — that is different than 95 percent of the oil out there. It's a full-spectrum oil, we keep all of

the cannabinoids and terpenes intact, so it’s not just like getting the THC, it’s very much like smoking the flower.

Did you have a product line in mind right from the beginning, or has it been evolving?

No, the first couple of years I was just figuring out the space: what angle to play: do I want to be on the cultivation side, the extraction side, the development side in terms of software? Once I started doing my research, I learned where I could build the brand and be profitable.

What were some of the setbacks along the way to profitability?

We signed a lease for the Oregon property before we even had a license. So we gambled on that, and every day I still see hurdles that can put a monkey wrench into our business. In Oregon we were too close to a school, so we had to go to the community board and explain why it’s beneficial to have us there, how many jobs are being created. This is the fastest growing job market in the United States, and I don’t think that’s gonna slow down over the next five to ten years. We think we’re doing a lot of good – in terms of employment, in terms of taxes, and just the power this plant brings to people. We want to give people the opportunity to deal with anxiety, for me it helps digestion… the most important thing is giving people the medicine.

Are you positioning yourself as a wellness brand, a recreational brand, is it all mixed together?

We’re branded right now for the recreational market, I don’t think people are gonna take us too seriously if I tell them

I’m gonna medicate them with some Saucey medication. But we will be creating a more medical, farma-based, clinical trial division, and we’ll have a sister company with a full CBD line. They’ll be completely different products: tinctures, creams, teas, waters, drinks… it’s a different market and needs to be branded differently.

Any advice for other entrepreneurs looking to carve out their own niche?

Do your due diligence, and really focus on what you love doing. I realized I didn’t love cultivating; I’m not a farmer, I never grew a plant in my life. Once I realized that, I relied on other people to handle that part of the business. So I’d say stay true to yourself, find what you’re good at and find how that translates in the space. If you’re a good salesman, go into distribution; if you’re a scientist, go into extraction. Follow your passion.

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