OUR STORIES

The people behind Hemp
“The world is shaped by two things: the stories told and the memories they leave behind.”

Vera Nazarian, Writer
Dear reader,

We are the European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA) and we are thrilled to present you our latest project: "Our Stories, the voices behind hemp".

But first, let us tell you a bit more about ourselves!

We are a European association based in Brussels. We represent and defend the interests of the European industrial hemp sector by working on EU policy-making and regulations.

**Our core mission is to steer and promote hemp farming, processing, and trading across Europe.** What’s more, we believe in a sustainable economic model that reconciles agriculture and the environment. For this reason, we want to promote the development on the EU of local, yet globally-connected, value chains that are capable of delivering the multiple ecosystem of services that hemp has to offer.

In order to fulfil our mission, we think it is of the utmost importance to raise awareness about the incredible potential of hemp, and echo the voices of the people who work with this plant every day.

**Everyone working in the sector have something in common: their love and passion for the hemp plant.** We thought their stories deserved to be heard, and what a better way to do that than by gathering all of them in an inspiring storybook.

We would like to thank all EIHA members who have participated for their engagement and support. Projects such as this one would not be possible without you. We sincerely believe that you are the soul that drives this association.

**Now, without further ado, we will let you dive in and discover who are the people behind hemp.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daniel Kruse</td>
<td>Hempro Int. GmbH &amp; EIHA President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tony Reeves</td>
<td>CBD Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mark Reinders</td>
<td>HempFlax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rachele Invernizzi</td>
<td>South Hemp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jacek Kramarz</td>
<td>East Hemp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Florian Pichlmaier</td>
<td>Signature Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Catherine Wilson</td>
<td>CannaWell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jace Callaway &amp;</td>
<td>Anita Hemmilä</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>CTAEX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Elisabeth Denk</td>
<td>BioBloom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rebecca Kruse</td>
<td>Hempro International GmbH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sekou’s story</td>
<td>Enecta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Kata &amp; Marcus</td>
<td>Kama Hemp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Johannes Schröttner</td>
<td>Sonn’Werk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mari Elfving</td>
<td>Hampa &amp; Miljö i Sverige AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Django Ramseyer</td>
<td>CBD Alchemy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Andrea Bamacher</td>
<td>Deep Nature Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Danni Bramblett</td>
<td>HempRise - Layn Natural Ingredients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Inge van Delft</td>
<td>Labocan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The HempMate story</td>
<td>Hemp Mate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Lars Opdam</td>
<td>Dutch Natural Healing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Max’s story</td>
<td>Max Hemp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Laura Bossom</td>
<td>Cultiva Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Alberto Ziveri</td>
<td>Opera Campi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Evgeny Skigin</td>
<td>Konoplex Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Enrico Giannuzzi</td>
<td>Ansce Bio Generic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Finn Hänsel</td>
<td>Sanity Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Lucien Pête, Dominic Sigrist, Stefan Strasser</td>
<td>Swiss Extract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Nejc Rusjan</td>
<td>Essentia Pura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Gerhard Adam</td>
<td>Zwei Zehn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Joscha Krauss</td>
<td>Medical Hemp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have been working with hemp since 1995. Already in my youth, environmental protection was an important topic for me because I saw in it a possibility to contribute to improve our world. I realised early on that I wanted to tackle this topic in an economically, sustainable and successful way. **Ecology and social justice are certainly good ideals, but implementing them effectively and sustainably requires economic success.** Publicity gestures, activism and protests also have a purpose, but they neither offer an economic perspective nor do they change the system - which is supposed to be improved - in the long run and from within.

**My goal was clear: I wanted to make the world a better, greener, and more sustainable place, while achieving economic success, creating jobs, and generating financial independence for businesses** - in other words, by successfully combining ecology and economy.

After my high school graduation, I completed a one-year study abroad in the USA and followed it up with a banking apprenticeship in Düsseldorf. After successfully finishing my training, I was very interested in the then still young “green stock market”. After a few months, interbank trading seemed too detached from the real economy and the link to sustainability was missing, so I revised my decision. I began to study business administration in Düsseldorf, while continuing to work in the bank’s carpool. One day, after a business trip, one of the managing directors gave me the current issue of a German business magazine. In it I discovered a detailed report about hemp as a raw material, its uses, and advantages. **What I learned about hemp in the article corresponded exactly to my idea of a sustainability model that could also be economically successful.** For a week I constantly thought about the topic, did some research, and came across the Berlin company Hanfhaus GmbH. I ordered their catalogue and found a book tip: **The rediscovery of hemp as a useful plant** by Jack Herer and Mathias Bröckers - something like the Bible of the then still very small hemp industry “community”. After reading the book, I was more enthusiastic than ever about the potential that hemp could offer as a raw material. In September 1995, together with a first business partner, I opened the Hanfhaus Düsseldorf on Mühlenstraße, and that is how my career in the hemp market began.
Due to internal difficulties, Hanfhaus GmbH had to file for insolvency in 2001. My colleague Rafael Dulon and I believed that we had to take another chance on hemp and founded Hempro International. Rafael ended up withdrawing from the business for family reasons, but ten years later we founded Hanf Farm GmbH.

Of course, in the past years I have repeatedly doubted myself and the possibilities of our branch. I also wondered whether the market was perhaps simply not ready yet to recognise the potential of hemp. Over the years, I met many people who at some point turned away from hemp and chose other paths, but nothing could dissuade me from my enthusiasm for hemp.

Hemp raw materials and products are becoming more and more important in the food industry as well as for the use in food supplements, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Hemp fibres are now a raw material for the construction, automotive and textile industries. There is no doubt that large markets with enormous future opportunities are emerging here.

It is an honour for me to be president of the European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA) since November 2019. The association's board of directors and its team of experts will do everything to ensure that also in Europe commercial hemp will regain the status it deserves.

**Hemp stands for sustainable, ecological and safe products, whose demand is constantly increasing among consumers.** Of course, I also identify myself with our products: Hemp food is part of my daily diet. Food supplements containing cannabinoids help me to harmonise my physiological balance. I wear hemp T-shirts and use cosmetic products like hemp shower gel and hemp body lotion.

To return to the goal I set myself in my youth: I am convinced that my companies can make the world a little bit better. We process a good, sustainable raw material and put it on the market - a raw material that is given more attention and use in agriculture every year, that contributes to the improvement of the soil and the air and from which many thousands of sustainable products are made.

I would like to thank all my partners, customers, colleagues and employees who, by working together, have made current achievements possible. I am sure this is just the beginning of all that we can achieve! At this point, I would like to express my special thanks to two people whose openness, foresight and literary talent made it possible that after almost five decades of denial and defamation, the almost forgotten knowledge about the useful plant hemp has been available again for a little more than 25 years: posthumous Jack Herer for his life’s work and Mathias Bröckers as a writer, mentor and friend for his commitment to making Jack Herer’s life’s work known worldwide. Without Mathias, the rediscovery of hemp as a useful plant might never have taken place.

I therefore conclude with his words:

*There is much to do, let’s plant it!*
Fate, serendipity, luck? My hemp journey started through a combination of all three, and of all the journey’s I have embarked on throughout my career, this has been by far the most challenging exciting and satisfying, of that, I am sure!

Back in 2014, I was European MD of a meat-free business, selling a range of vegetarian burgers, mince, balls and so on. We had achieved some nice distribution with listings in the Co-Operative supermarket, Holland & Barrett, and a major own-label supply contract with Tesco. Ironically, for a number of reasons, I wasn’t a particular fan of soya (the main ingredient) and started to explore alternative plant proteins.

One morning over breakfast, for some reason my wife said “what about hemp?” Now at the time, like most people, I had of course heard of hemp but (again like many people) I had a limited understanding of its incredible range of applications. This is best defined by the three statements I was to hear many times in the months to come.

“It’s a good fishing bait, isn’t it?” – yes is it!
‘We used to make rope from it didn’t we?’ – yes we did!
And perhaps the most common misconception: “Can’t you smoke it (followed often by a knowing wink)” – not if you are looking for the affect that I think you are!

On day one of my research, I found this nice guy in Phoenix who had a patent for the extraction of protein from hemp seed – and this was the launch of my ‘hemp journey’ proper, as he put me in touch with some equally nice people in Vancouver who, it appears, had started the Canadian hemp seed industry some 15 years earlier. This family business was called ‘Hempco’ but later become part of ‘Aurora Cannabis’ and was renamed ‘Aurora Hemp.’ After several conversations and several months, I met with the family and was so impressed by their passion, mission and the opportunities represented by this amazing plant that I joined them with responsibility for the European expansion.

I already had lots of contacts and great relationships across the commercial sector, so getting meetings at a senior level was not a problem. However, I soon discovered that the level of understanding around hemp and its benefits was similar to mine at the start of my journey, i.e. tending towards zero (if you discount the aforementioned cliches!). So, I had now become a ‘hemp educator/evangelist’ not through design but through necessity!

Later, through another stroke of luck I met another nice guy (lots of these in our industry as I have discovered) called Jacek Kramarz, who introduced me to CBD – now I was aware of it (and suitably impressed by it), but I was so busy lecturing anyone who would listen on the nutritional benefits of hemp seed and its derivatives that I had done little research on this aspect. Next day (not really, but it felt like it!) I was on a plane to Poland and my passion/obsession with CBD began – and has been developing ever since! (…)

Tony Reeves
Events soon accelerated, I became part of EIHA’s Advisory team, began representing the industry (with Catherine Wilson) to UK regulators including the FSA, the Home Office and notably helped shift the MHRA position away from would have been a de-facto ‘ban’ on CBD supplements back in 2016. At the European level I contributed to the production of various paper and was part of the EIHA delegation to Brussels – this was a presentation to the PAFF Committee on the subject of Novel Foods.

Over the last few years, my passion for the plant and my dedication to the industry has only intensified to the point that it feels like a morale duty to contribute – let’s face it, the people, the planet and the economy need it like never before!

In previous lives I was a government scientist, ran my own laboratory business and was marketing director for one of Europe’s leading Food & Drink research associations; one of the many things I love about the hemp industry is that it allows me to combine my scientific and business background to best affect – a perfect marriage!

Currently, I am particularly involved in all things CBD and increasingly the minor cannabinoids such as CBG. I am still closely engaged with the FSA and the Home Office and have built some good relationships with parliamentarians and Whitehall. I am a member of the UKAS-led ‘CBD Food Product Approval Expert Group’ the Food & Drink Federations ‘CBD Working Group’ and consultant with several UK, European and North American organisations including THG (market cap £3.9bn).

So, my hemp journey was never planned, but once started, the road ahead was brightly lit, and I am absolutely sure the most exciting part of the story is yet to be written – and I hope to be one of the co-authors!
I was introduced to industrial hemp in my teens when my father began growing it in the mid 1990s — one of the first farmers to do so in the Netherlands. The crop was bound for a company called HempFlax, a new venture that had been launched in 1993 in Bant by trailblazer Ben Dronkers – the man behind the Sensi Seeds cannabis seed bank and the Hash Marijuana and Hemp Museums in Amsterdam and Barcelona – before moving to the small Dutch village of Oude Pekela close to the German border in 1996. It was Dronkers’ dream to restore the age-old plant’s reputation as a sustainable, multi-purpose crop that can benefit our wellbeing and the environment.

When my father started growing hemp I became fascinated by the crop’s massive growth speed, around 4cm a day. After bamboo, it is the fastest growing crop. Even after all these years, I am still full of wonder at how quickly it can grow!

I grew up in a rural part of the Netherlands so I was not confronted with the other uses of hemp. For me, it has always been an agricultural crop. I was amazed by the number of products you can make from it and the possibilities it throws up of things not yet discovered. That’s what really caught my attention.

In the winter of 2001-2002, when I was studying for agricultural management and crop production, I had to do an internship and decided to do mine at HempFlax. I wanted to know what happened to the crop after it left our family farm. I went on to do a Master’s degree in management, worked for a couple of years in potato trading and then did five years in the recycling business. I saw recycling as a good solution for the problems we are creating, but I also found out about the massive work that needs to be done to recycle stuff into reusable streams, always ending up with a part that isn’t reclaimable. I knew then that if we want to make a difference we have to change the start of the supply chain, not the end. With that vision, I returned to HempFlax in 2008.

Ben Dronkers founded HempFlax to prove that hemp could be an industrial crop and that it could be reintroduced. It took 28 years, but in the end he has been proved right, because today we are supplying fibres for BMW, Mercedes, Bentley, Jaguar and the Bugatti Veyron. We make insulation and building materials, CBD products in bulk and white label, hemp-based plastic replacements and animal care products. I think we have proven Ben Dronkers’ point that hemp can be an industrial crop.

---

I am passionate about building a healthy planet for future generations and I believe industrial hemp has a vital part to play in reducing CO2 emissions and making the world a more sustainable place.

---

Nearly three decades on and HempFlax is now Europe’s largest independent grower and processor of industrial hemp, working with around 80 farmers in the Netherlands, Germany and Romania. This year over 2,100 hectares of hemp has been harvested.
Rachele Invernizzi
South Hemp

I have always been fascinated by hemp, but at the beginning I was not familiar with all its uses except for the most well-known industrial ones. Then one day in 2000 in England at an agricultural fair, I saw a stand, set up in a corner, where they presented many of the basic hemp products, from the construction sector to the automotive, from food to cosmetics. I was blown away to learn that this wonderful plant existed for such a comprehensive and promising range of uses. However, at the time, it was too early to think of growing it in Italy.

In 1997, when the EU law recognised hemp as an agricultural crop, we had to start all over again. We no longer had any know-how nor processing plants from the early 1900s, and the police came to destroy the fields thinking it was its narcotic sister. South Hemp was created in northern Italy in 2013, and at the end of 2014, we opened the operational headquarters in Southern Italy, which houses the decortication line for the straw. **The south of Italy has a more sustainable agriculture, and needs new crops that can withstand the arid climate to make agricultural rotations with cereals.** So I moved from the north to the south, and we created the agricultural chain to serve the southernmost decortication plant in Europe.

I never thought I would do all that I have done and get to where I am now. The person who introduced me to the world of industrial hemp in 2011 gave me a very positive and easy picture: we didn’t have any problems with the supply chain, but we did with the production line machinery. The existing processing machines/lines that transform straw into fibre and hemp are not working very well. Also, it is difficult to find a line that is right and ready on a turnkey basis to obtain excellent quality material for the sectors in which it is used. **Making a medium quality product is perhaps easier, but hemp deserves to be processed at its best.** And so we have spent the last five years on a rollercoaster ride, between research and development and the search for financial backing. It has been a long period, not always positive, in which I have grown a lot, especially personally. We are now working on strengthening and fine-tuning our decortication line with the aim of transforming 7,000 to 10,000 tons of straw per year within 6 to 8 months. We will sow 500 hectares in spring 2022, reaching more than 1,000 hectares in the last 3 years.

The South Hemp plant is a medium-sized plant that serves one territory. I strongly believe in having multiple local plants in various territories, reviving the abandoned countryside, rather than a single non-local large plant, which is unsustainable for a country like Italy.

The first time I attended an Eiha conference was in 2012. Since 2013 I have been a regular member, and **since 2018 I sit on its board, representing Italy, a country historically known as a producer of high-quality hemp.** Working on legislation for industrial hemp is the most urgent thing to do for the sector. I deal with it by collaborating with the Eiha team in Brussels and Federcanapa, the national association for industrial hemp, of which I am vice president.

**The adventure continues with the certainty in our hearts that industrial hemp will be the future of the sustainable economy, growing and filling the fields and lands of the world again.**
I had a regular corporate life and a career plan ahead of me, but then I fell in love with hemp.

"It seemed like an endless blue ocean of opportunities"

He needed money to start hemp processing business and this is the story of the beginnings of HemPoland, one of the first and the most successful start-up companies in CEE countries. Before raising funds for the business I started researching the subject and I couldn’t believe the things I was finding. It seemed surreal that such a powerful and useful crop, with all its pro-ecological benefits could have been forgotten by the industry. The whole story didn’t make sense, but yet it was true. It seemed like an endless blue ocean of opportunities for all of us - the businesses, the consumers, but most importantly, for the planet.

I ended up leaving my banking career and working in hemp for more than 1 year without any pay, travelling across 20+ countries and 3 continents, meeting great people and re-evaluating all my priorities, my purpose in life and the entire lifestyle.

Working with hemp gives me a sense of purpose I did not have in my previous career. It is extremely gratifying to be able to contribute to the benefit of the community. I realize that the most significant impact I could have for current and future generations is through helping the hemp industry advance.

I believe entrepreneurship is a way of activism. We have to use our business skills to promote pro-ecological solutions as they will advance only if we make them economically competitive compared to existing solutions. This is the purpose of my new start-up company - East Hemp, who is looking to re-store hemp as one of the crucial elements of global industrial supply chain through its ecological benefits.
Hi, my name is Florian Pichlmaier. I want to tell you a short story about me and the journey that brought me to where I am today. Where am I today? I’m the co-founder and CEO of the Germany-based hemp supplier Signature Products.

But first let me tell you how my story began. I was born and raised near Pforzheim, a city in Germany that was formerly known for its flourishing jewellery industry but has long lost its shine due to the wars and industrial crisis. I spent the first 24 years of my life there until I finished my Bachelor in business law at the local university. For my Master of Law degree, I moved to Chester, England where I discovered my passion for startups and venture capital. In Chester, I had an awesome time. Besides visiting lectures and studying in the library, I played in the university’s rugby team and made a lot of new friends.

One of them moved to Phoenix, Nevada and in 2017 I visited him there. I have sleep problems on long haul flights (like the flight to the USA). As it turned out his job was quite stressful and he just recently tried a CBD oil that he got from a co-worker.

I finished my studies and joined KPMG in consulting startups and venture capitals. The job included lots of hard work and commitment but I loved it because it fulfilled my constant desire to learn more and dive deeper into the world of business. My loyal companion, CBD, was always by my side.

I told my colleagues about CBD and why I use it and they got interested in the mysterious oil I was using. After telling them about CBD and how it helps me, they asked me where to get it from. At this moment I realized that there wasn’t really a market for quality hemp and CBD products in Germany yet. I gave samples of CBD oils to a lot of family members, friends and colleagues. So one day, a friend told me about how the oil improved and changed his life and I felt the urge to do something.

He absolutely loved it as it gave him a clear mind. The more I started reading about hemp and the more I learned from my friend I slowly discovered how awesome the plant was. I was surprised that such a sustainable and multi-purpose plant could get such a bad reputation. The same evening I tried out the CBD oil myself. In the beginning I was still a bit anxious but after a short amount of time I started feeling relaxed and the many thoughts that usually rush through my head started to calm down. I was fascinated and bought some oil for my flight home. Since then, I have used CBD oil to help me concentrate during my lectures and in stressful situations.

It became clear to me that Germany needed to learn about the greatness of the hemp plant and I reached out to a friend of mine, Tobias, who I knew was always eager to bootstrap a startup. In the beginning we stumbled upon a few hurdles when it came to producing and selling the products but we soon found passionate people who supported us. During the time building our company from scratch, I learned more and more about hemp and discovered all its different applications.
(.)
From the beginning on, our vision was to give the people a sustainable, high-quality and affordable product that would improve their lives, like it did with mine. Because of this goal, we weren’t focused on maximizing profits or keeping all our knowledge to ourselves. We even decided to share our knowledge with others and help them to build their own companies and brands. We supported our private label customers and helped them to prevent repeating the same errors we did in the beginning. It felt awesome to see how the German market started to grow and how, through competition, the prices got more and more affordable for everyone.

Does my journey end here? Goal achieved? No! In my opinion, CBD was just a door opener. It started to open the minds of people again, letting them rethink about the prejudice they have had about hemp.

My team and I are now on to a new mission. With state-funding, we want to solve a part of the world’s food problem. Of course with the help of hemp. The production of conventional meat does not scale up well with the world’s increasing population and current plant-based alternatives on the market are often not very environmentally friendly. We aim to develop a regional hemp value chain and produce the sustainable and nutritional food of the future.

I’m looking forward to all the challenges this new project brings to us and to all the new connections and knowledge we can get from it. I’m proud of all the work my team has done so far and will continue to do in the future. Without it I wouldn’t be where I am today.
In spring 2014 a friend gave me a bottle of CBD oil and said “try this, it's great stuff”. I did and after a relatively short period of time, I felt a sense of improved overall wellness subtly. A short while later my friend said that she knew a few people who would like to try CBD oil and asked me whether I would like to import some as in her words ‘you are good with paperwork’. I said yes.

I was intrigued and wondered what is CBD? I started to do more research whilst looking into customs requirements and legalities. CBD was considerably more expensive in the early days, so I decided to import the smallest possible wholesale batch from Colorado.

Through word of mouth, I received more and more calls and within six months I realized that there was a significant commercial opportunity. I set up a website and started by selling an established US brand. By 2015 I decided that it was time to set up my own brand, CannaWell. The more I learned about hemp, the more I fell in love with it. Not just CBD, but the whole plant. Before hemp, I worked for many years in the waste electrics and electronics recycling sector which developed in response to the UK government adopting the Kyoto Protocol. When I started, the UK recycling rate was 4%, by the time I left it was almost 60%. During this time, I gained considerable experience in dealing with regulatory agencies. The experience proved valuable because little did I know when setting up CannaWell how tricky and controversial this simple and healthy food product was going to become!

Having spent a major part of my adult working life doing my best to clean up waste products, hemp seemed god sent and I could not understand why this natural adaptable, and useful raw material was not used more widely. Why clean up all the time after ourselves if we could produce more environmentally friendly products in the first place? I wanted to contribute with my experience to help in developing a legislative framework fit for purpose, so hemp could once again regain its rightful place in our society and economy, as a food to support for our health and in environmentally responsible products.

In October 2018, EIHA – I was a member of the Advisory Board at the time – was invited to present evidence on how hemp CBD foods complied with the relevant EU directives to the PAFF Committee in Brussels. We diligently prepared our presentation and during the meeting I could feel that some national representatives were surprised.In January 2019, without further consultation, the novel food catalogue wording was changed to turn an entire industry non-compliant overnight. I strongly felt that this was not fair, nor was it right.We have an entire body system dedicated to receiving compounds that only one plant naturally provides to keep us in a state of homeostasis. A cannabinoid-rich hemp diet is important to maintain and support our vital endocannabinoid system. We could not allow this important health promoting food to be taken away. In 2019 I was voted onto the board and later that year, to Vice President of EIHA. Since then, the industry has united and is submitting a consortium novel food application to prove that our products are safe.

My passion lies in the development of hemp as raw material and for carbon capture and I undertake selected consultancy work in HIP, which stands for Hemp In Products. Whilst we are only a start to bring back hemp, I believe it has genuine commercially viable potential, and my heart is set to see this come to fruition. When I spoke with a colleague and asked ‘why do you still grow hemp, how can you deal with all the problems and keep smiling’ he said ‘once you understand hemp, it becomes a moral obligation.

It’s true - so here’s to hemp!
Jace Callaway & Anita Hemmilä

We love hemp! It has been a companion to our species for thousands of years. At first, hemp asked us to do only one thing; “Grow me!”. So we did, and our lives have been busy ever since.

Jace Callaway and Anita Hemmilä, who founded the company Finola Oy (Finola Ltd.), have been growing hemp in Finland since 1995; first as a fibre crop and then as a grain crop, for the production of healthy foods from hempseed.

Initially, we began to grow hemp for the fibre and hurd. But we quickly realised that an expensive centralised facility would be required to produce large amounts of these products, and then make value added products for markets that basically did not exist at that time. Eventually we realised that the plant was giving us another message; “Eat me!”. So we did, and it was good. But the messaging did not stop there, and our next hemp mission was more of a challenge; “Sell me!”. So, we gradually disengaged from our academic day jobs and dove head first into industrial agriculture, business, politics, public policies and all the rest that comes with anything related to hemp.

To accomplish our goals, we developed FINOLA as the first hemp variety with an auto-flowering trait. This success of this variety is due to its very short stature, fast maturing time and ease of harvest with a standard grain combine. This oilseed variety is one of our main contributions to the global hemp industry. Since its development in the mid-1990s, FINOLA has been cultivated all over the world. Every stage of its cultivation, harvest and food production fits well into existing industrial infrastructures without re-tooling. In effect, this agricultural innovation has put a valuable means of production directly into the hands of both large and small scale farmers.

In the early 2000s, Jace Callaway made the first modern studies on hempseed nutrition, which included two clinical trials that identified hempseed oil as a functional food. The results of the first clinical trial showed that a daily consumption of hempseed oil improved the HDL/LDL cholesterol ratio in healthy humans. The second clinical trial demonstrated that the symptoms of atopic dermatitis (eczema) were eliminated or significantly reduced after the consumption of daily hempseed oil. These results were subsequently published in peer reviewed scientific journals. Several other scientific articles on hempseed nutrition were also published from these investigations, which were conducted at the University of Eastern Finland. FINOLA has become an extremely popular hemp variety for grain farmers in Europe, Canada, US, Australia and New Zealand, mostly because it typically yields more hempseed than other varieties and because its short stature make it easier to harvest than other varieties. This variety has also been widely used in the production of full spectrum extracts that are rich in CBD.
CTAEX is a private research association for innovation and agricultural & food technology from Badajoz, Spain. It has been acknowledged by the Spanish ministry of science and technology as a Centre of Innovation and Technology and Office for Research Results Transfer.

"Hemp was first introduced to CTAEX through a collaborative project with other entities from Spain and Italy, which gave us the opportunity to learn more about hemp and implement analytical practices for the cannabinoid profile of the plant." After that, CTAEX participated in the 7th EU Framework Programme call, which developed an integrated hemp-based biorefinery to provide fiber, and hemp oil, building materials, fine chemicals, and biofuels

The knowledge acquired by both these experiences enabled CTAEX to become specialised in the analyses of the plant and its derivative products. Nowadays, CTAEX has more than 750 Spanish and European clients for hemp control.

"In 2020, due to the huge growth of hemp cultivation in Spain, and the lack of knowledge concerning this plant among farmers, we decided to create the Polo Tecnológico del Cáñamo (Hemp Technological Pole), a platform where R&D activities related to hemp could be carried out to promote the value of this crop in Spain."

Extremadura, the region where CTAEX is located, needs innovation in traditional crops for several reasons: sustainability for exhausted agricultural soils and social and economic benefits for the rural population. Hemp is the perfect partner to advance on this path. Nonetheless, Hemp has been a personal challenge for us - from getting to know the plant and the levels of legality with the help of our laboratories to learning new ways of dissemination and application of the crop.

Discovering hemp and meeting so many people all over the world who work in this sector has been an enriching and invaluable experience. Moreover, making sure the authorities understand the benefits that hemp can bring to our region has been a challenging but crucial step to allow this sector to thrive. Despite the legal difficulties, the desire to continue working on hemp is only getting stronger."
My name is Elisabeth Denk and I am the founder of BioBloom. I have to thank my family for my deep appreciation of nature and everything it offers. After all, my family has been involved in organic farming for over three decades. After graduating from university, I started the first test fields with hemp in 2015 together with my partner Christoph.

Why hemp?

The hemp plant is an extremely interesting plant. It is amazingly versatile and has been used for a wide variety of applications for thousands of years. I simply wanted to learn all about this plant and see what we could do with it.

Like the BioBloom headquarters, the test fields with the industrial hemp are growing excellently around Apetlon, my hometown in the very east of Austria. Together with pharmacists and experts, the first organic CBD oils and an organic hemp tea were created. The feedback was overwhelming and BioBloom was founded in 2016. From the beginning, one thing was clear to us: “Only if we use the hemp plant in its natural entirety, can we get the best possible out of it.” To this day, that means the full spectrum of valuable ingredients in the hemp is preserved as best as possible in the final products, and in particular our BioBloom CBD oils, with absolutely no artificial additives or CBD isolate. This approach is also reflected in the organic quality.

“For me, it goes without saying that the food and products that we put into our bodies must be of the highest possible quality and must also be organic!”

That is why the products are subjected to numerous external controls and test procedures to ensure their quality. BioBloom is the only Bio Austria quality partner among all the CBD producers and BioBloom CBD oils are also the only ones that have the even stricter Bio Austria certificate in addition to the ABG (Austria Bio Garantie) certification in accordance with the European organic guidelines. “We want people to fully trust in the fact that they are getting the best natural products for their health. That is our mission and we take it very seriously and make no compromises.”

CBD continues to play a major role at BioBloom, but other cannabinoids and ingredients from hemp have become and are becoming increasingly important in product development. As an acidic precursor to CBD, CBDa plays a leading role along with flavonoids our unique hemp tea. And in the last two years, the production of hemp terpenes has been an integral part in the processing of the carefully harvested hemp plants from our certified organic fields.

“There is so much that can be extracted from the hemp plant. It never ceases to amaze us, and it is tremendous fun to learn more and try out its incredible potential in innovative product development.” With our approach - the combination of tradition and innovation and the sustainable use of nature’s resources - BioBloom has become a major player in the CBD business in the DACH region, even beyond the borders of Austria. Our journey out into the big wide world continues, with the BioBloom CBD oils now even available in Japan.
I started my career in the hemp business 15 years ago and can’t believe how fast time flies and that I’ve been in the business for so long. It all started with a girl’s party night in the Duesseldorf Old Town during my studies in economics. There I met Daniel Kruse and was impressed about this charming guy.

When I was the first time in his apartment, I saw a PURE hemp backpack on his wardrobe and mentioned that I have a bag from the same brand which I bought at “Bodyshop”. He replied jokingly that he already “earned money through me” because he is the agent for PURE bags in our area. Funny coincidence! After some time we became a couple, moved into an apartment together and I finished my studies. A bit disoriented and not really knowing in what kind of business I want to start my “working life” I thought about an internship for orientation. So, Daniel offered me the possibility to do the internship in his company, Hempro International, to do some projects for him.

I agreed for a month on trial basis. After that month, work and private life were still perfect, so we extended to three months. Still, all was well, and I agreed on a permanent employment. Not imaging at all that I will stay that long! Starting as a qualified management assistant, researcher for our own product lines, product and marketing manager, I finally became CEO, together with Daniel, in 2015.

“Growing up” in this kind of business was the best for my personal development and learnings. From a revenue of 760.000 EUR in 2006 to about 10 Mio EUR (including our sister companies), from three to about 30 employees, we grew together “organically”. On this journey we first focused on creating our own products, to be independent from other brands, but push our own brands. Which we did with our food brand “HANF FARM”, the clothing and cosmetic line “The Hemp Line” and the “PURE bags”. After several years we recognized that it would be better to have most of the whole supply chain “under control” to be able to react and develop our ideas quicker in our own high quality standard. That was the moment our sister companies Hanf Farm GmbH, Hemp Factory GmbH, MH medical hemp GmbH and HempConsult GmbH were born.

It was always a tough and work-intensive time, and private life was nearly not exiting any more. We “forgot” to take care for our marriage and finally decided to separate in a friendly manner. So we managed it to “switch” to a best-friend and best co-worker relationship.

From the beginning, I was and still am fascinated about the various possibilities hemp can offer us for a huge spectrum of eco-logical, sustainable and healthy products. I think this is the most important reason that drives me to continue. Besides all struggles we have everyday with “normal” business life, authorities, financial institutions, customers, suppliers etc. … Knowing that we are trying to make the world a bit better every day while supporting hemp, such a great gift from nature, is worth getting up every morning and fighting for its rights to be recognized and accepted!
Sekou's story
Enecta

My name is Sekou. Hemp entered my life out of the blue and changed it for real. I was born and raised in Mali. And if you are born in Mali, you know that at some point you will have to leave to survive, because as you grow the war grows with you.

When I left it was summer and I had nothing. I managed to reach Italy, where I was recognised as a political refugee. I lived for a while in a reception structure in the city of Sulmona, in Abruzzo, a green and peaceful region. One day a guy came to visit us. His name was Jacopo and today he is a dear friend of mine. Jacopo was looking for farm workers for his hemp fields.

He told us that he and his cousin Marco had founded a company called Enecta that produces cannabis extracts. He continued explaining us that they didn’t just make the extracts, but also grew the plants from which the active ingredients are obtained. And hey, he was offering us, refugees, a job. The reception center accepted the project and I started working with other guys in Castelvecchio, the small village near Sulmona, where Jacopo and Marco chose to grow their plants.

I learned a whole lot about hemp plants and cultivation techniques, and worked with local people, who treated me like a brother. They told me that there was nothing in Castelvecchio before the cropping of hemp began. I didn’t know, but Abruzzo is one of the poorest regions in Italy and among those with the heighest unemployment rate. My friends didn’t have a job and saw no future, especially the girls, who have fewer opportunities. They weren’t happy and neither was I before arriving to Italy.

With their company, Enecta, Jacopo and Marco created those jobs and gave us the chance back to create ourselves a future. Their company is committed to social responsibility. They told me that they have an inclusive model. That means that they try to create opportunities in forgotten places and perspectives for those who otherwise might not have one, like me. After a project year, I continued working for the company. When I left my country, I had nothing. Today I have a job and a house too. I live with Gennaro, a guy from Naples who keeps offering me coffee even though he knows I don’t drink any. I learned a profession and the Italian language, my third one. I have a future. Who would have thought it?

Jacopo and Marco are helping me obtain the Italian citizenship. I often tell them that hemp has changed my life. They say it changed theirs, too. They wanted to use hemp as a tool to start a small revolution and every time they see me safe in my house in Castelvecchio, while Gennaro and I make bets on who will get married first, they’re sure the revolution can be done and that it’s the way to go.
We Love hemp
Kate & Marcus - Kama Hemp

In the early days of 1999 we frantically finished our straw bale house and within weeks our third baby was born there.

Our experience with natural building materials, permaculture/regenerative farming and food production lead us very quickly down the path towards hemp. **We took the path and our hemp journey has honestly never been boring but there were times...** As many hemp processors know and most certainly in the early days, bloody knuckles and broken parts, were all part and parcel of development of the hemp industry.

When we bought a fibre processing plant in 2006 we had capacity for 10K tons per annum but funding went horribly wrong and we sold the factory soon after. Disappointed, but still determined we minimised the business and kept going on a much reduced scale. In 2013 Dr. William Courtney became a major influence and prior to that a woman called Ann Wigmore. We started juicing our hemp, burnt out our very first juicer in about 30 minutes, but we proved the concept and we persevered.

**In the intervening years we have managed to grow the business (even in the difficult Irish regulatory environment) expand our product range and most of all to help many, many people.** The truth is, the body of knowledge and experience with growing and processing hemp foods and how beneficial they are to the individual consumer, has kept us going from strength to strength. Encouraged by our clients, family and friends in 2014 we launched the Kama Hemp food brand.

Kamas’ office is the first hemp building in Ireland and we also happen to live in Ireland’s first straw bale house. **Pioneering is clearly our thing but we also engage in regular farming activities, we grow organic oats, keep livestock on our farm and produce much of our own food.**

Growing hemp and developing our Agri-business, on the whole, has been a very rewarding challenge. **There is still much work to accomplish here in Ireland regarding the regulation of all hemp foods but we look forward to the day when the Irish hemp industry is thriving in all its diversity and glory.**

The name Kama was derived from our names, Kate and Marcus. It also means love (in Sanskrit). We love hemp, we love everything to do with hemp and we love everything that hemp can do.
Even as a small child, my cousin Ludwig Bitzan knew that he wanted to work in agriculture. He has always felt at home in nature and immediately recognised that organic farming was his calling. After all the training and further education, including in the areas of sustainable management, he had acquired a very large wealth of knowledge in the subject of permaculture. At this point it was also clear to him that he wanted to do without classic machines and that he would work with horses wherever possible. **As one of the oldest cultivated plants with all its advantages for humans and nature, the hemp plant could of course not be missing in the overall concept.** However, one can imagine that agricultural work and work with horses and nature take a lot of concentration and time. At this point in time I was still absorbed in my physics studies, but I felt my heart burn for the philosophy and work of my cousin.

At that point - it was my birthday when we got in conversation - I knew that I wanted to do my part for the project. A very good partnership has developed, in which we enjoy our work, we can realize our ideas and a self-determined life in this community is seen as the top priority. Since then, my job has been to process this wonderful raw material and bring it closer to the people. Education about the topic of hemp and its false stigmatization is also a big issue for us. Reminding people of their roots and also showing them that agriculture can be done differently is one of our greatest endeavors. Sustainability, the sensible use of nature and the connection of old with new knowledge are our core points and should always remain in the philosophy of Sonnwerk. **With tireless work and deep faith in the matter itself, we have grown over the years, have met new people and established ourselves in the region. We are convinced that the overall concept is consistent with us, and if you do something with passion, it always leads to success.**

It's a lot of fun for all of us and we're happy about the opportunities and acquaintances that arise throughout this Project.
In 1992 I travelled with a friend to Canada and Alaska, where I first got acquainted with the cannabis culture. Also I found this shop in Vancouver, who sold balls of yarn, rustic knitted tops, seeds and oil all made out of cannabis. I always liked natural, handmade stuff, so the impression stuck with me but really I didn’t understand the big picture yet.

A few years later when I was living in Dorset, UK, I met an interesting old man called John Hansen, who was occupying the malt house by Lyme Regis water mill to save it from being torn down. In the malt house he had many pallets with reams of paper. He told me it was Tree free Hemp Paper. Being from Sweden where there are lots of trees, I wondered what the idea of that was? John kindly informed me of the advantage with hemp for paper in a country where there are no trees any more. I ended up buying the book which he had translated from French and re-printed on British Tree Free hemp paper. Marcandiers’ “A Treatise on hemp” led me into the world of hemp. Soon I discovered more and more things that are traditionally made from hemp and that can be made out of hemp. Ropes, canvas, archive paper, money, hat blanks, medicin, ink and so on.

*You could have a whole department store with just hemp based product because there are so many uses.* I thought.

A few years later again we had moved to Sweden and I decided to finally do just that. So I started my company and the web shop called Hampvaruhuset (The Hemp Department Store) in 2008. I travelled all over Sweden selling my hemp products during a few years, as well as through the web shop. I had everything from Hemp didgeridoos to toasted seeds and soap. *Not many people knew about hemp in Sweden at this time, so I spent a lot of time just educating people who came to my stall.* I kept learning more about hemp and everything that hemp can do for humanity, all the time falling deeper and deeper in love with this miracle of a plant. In 2010 I found the Swedish hemp network and since then I have been active in the organisation, working for the recognition of hemp as an outstanding agricultural crop that should be utilized much more (instead of trees!).
Django Ramseyer
CBD Alchemy

Where does your love for cannabis come from?

My story is definitely unusual... I started at the age of 13 because I found out it was a great remedy as I was suffering from epilepsy. Taking cannabis had a good effect on me, the episodes were less and less strong and I could feel again like a normal kid. So, cannabis is a sacred plant to me. I felt devoted to structuring a method to cultivate it and contribute to society, against the banning and stigma. Since I discovered it was very helpful for me, I have been growing it and making it my passion, my main life focus.

How do you think hemp can help people?

Well, hemp and CBD can help most people who have diseases related to the nervous system, from epilepsy to multiple sclerosis, anxiety... Actually, we are still discovering all the range of properties it can have and I am sure that this is just the beginning! This plant has been left out for years and only recently are we rediscovering its many uses. We have just identified the tip of the iceberg, but there is so much more that we still have to investigate underneath!

Which methodology do you use for cultivating?

If cannabis is a sacred plant, we have no choice but to grow it organically, without using pesticides, herbicides, or other contaminants. We want to respect everything that surrounds us, our Mother Earth, and be an example to others. This is our way to offer premium products, to keep the standards high, and to live in harmony with the planet. Me and my team are true cannabis lovers!

Why hemp?

Hemp is an amazing plant that has been used for centuries, millennia I would say. I feel it’s just the beginning of a new era, a new reality around it because mainly it has been just associated with drugs. Finally, we are taking the direction for it to be considered an industrial crop and also a medicine, something more concrete, healthier, and conscious use of it.

How did CBD Alchemy start?

CBD Alchemy starts from a dream. I have been growing hemp since 1996 in Switzerland and after CBD exploded in 2016, I opened CBD Alchemy in Italy in 2017. This marked the beginning of my “green revolution”: you must chase your dreams to make them come true.

What are your future cultivation plans?

Our new (and ambitious) project is to integrate zero-residue farming techniques, a practice that is at the top of the pyramid in terms of quality and eco-sustainability. Our goal is to grow in the medical direction, for which we would like to fully apply the GACP (Good Agricultural and collection practices for medicinal plants) on our fields and harvesting plants. We grow step by step, slowly and steadily: it takes time to get the best results!

CBD Alchemy is a living project, so we seek innovation and new practices, while having healthy and robust roots. We are also proud to be part of EHIA’s Novel Food Consortium because we believe that hemp can contribute to the overall wellness of society. CBD is an incredible molecule that belongs to humanity and can also benefit the our health.
Deep Nature Project was founded by Andrea Bamacher and Elke Moritz. While Elke Moritz has retired from operations but is still a co-owner, Andrea Bamacher, as managing director and CEO, is now responsible for research & development, cultivation and public affairs. The passionate sailor is one of the protagonists in the European hemp community.

“We founded the company in 2015 with the vision of developing sustainable products that promote health and are simply good for people. Hemp is a plant that has been with us for 4000 years, our mission here is also to really educate and re-explain the health promoting aspect.”

The founders of Deep Nature Project started their business in the field and in the kitchen. In addition to raising and growing numerous varieties under a wide range of conditions, they devoted special attention to genetics, organic field cultivation and modern processing techniques. Probably no other company in the industry works as consistently in a certified organic value-added process as Deep Nature Project. Our mission is to educate and re-explain the health promoting aspect of hemp. We need to think about what we consume and how these products are manufactured.

“Our goal is to really transparently demonstrate to our customers where the products come from. After all, they come from Europe. We know all our farmers personally who grow the raw materials with us. Quality assurance has been one of the big issues that has always concerned us a lot, because in this a very new industry we want to deliver to distribution channels that expect a very high quality standard. These are organic food retailers, the drugstore retailers, also the pharmaceutical sectors. And that’s why we started to do full organic certification. We were the first in Europe to have that across all production steps.”

Deep Nature Project has set itself the goal of becoming one of the top European hemp companies in the areas of food and nutritional supplements, animal care and natural cosmetics made from hemp with corresponding market recognition in the premium segment. In the process, the company has developed from a start-up to an established SME and grow-up since its foundation in 2015. “We have experienced a fascinating development since we started our company. In the beginning we were five people, then it grew organically. What was so fascinating to me is that the products were so well received by the customers, they recommended them to their families and relatives and friends. And the growth was so fast that today we have almost 70 people working in our company.”
Danni Bramblett
MBA, Regional Sales Manager, HempRise

My journey into hemp and CBD started in an unremarkable and common way, and I am so grateful I stumbled upon the benefits of this incredible plant.

Back in 2014, my sweet pup, Willamina, was experiencing severe arthritis, hip dysplasia, and over body pain. As a 14-year-old blue nosed pit, these ailments are extremely common. We had tried several remedies, both prescribed by our vet and natural, and nothing seemed to alleviate her discomfort. The prescriptions made her lethargic and depressed, and glucosamine just did not yield the intended response we had been hoping for. A friend had recommended CBD tincture specifically designed for pets, and we thought we would give it a try. This was before the 2018 farm bill, so there were very few options for consumers to purchase CBD extracts here in Kentucky. Luckily, we were able to find a reputable licensed store that specialized in CBD pet care. The tincture was pricy ($68 for 30 ml's), but nothing was too costly for our old lady. The response was remarkable. Within a week, she was so much more mobile. She was able to get up on her own, climb stairs, and even trot through the back yard (something she had not been able to do for at least a year.) The change in her demeanor improved by leaps and bounds as well. With her newfound independence and relief from constant discomfort, her shining, sweet personality came back in full force. It was incredible to have my girl back.

While Willamina eventually succumbed to her deteriorating body, I have no doubt introducing CBD to her regimen gave us a solid 2 additional years with her as a healthy and active dog. Seeing the benefits in her well being lead me to introduce CBD and hemp extract into my own wellness routine in skin care and assistance with sleep and stress. Whether it be in anti-aging serums, or tincture and gummies in the morning and at night, hemp extracts have greatly improved my overall wellness journey. I advocate for CBD at every opportunity and I look forward to continued opportunities to educate consumers and companies on the effective use of CBD and hemp extracts as beneficial active ingredients.
Inge van Delft
Quality Manager, Labocan

It never ceases to amaze me that a plant that’s been around for centuries continues to provide so much value. It feels like we’ve only just scratched the surface of what’s possible, and for me, that’s what it’s all about. Working with hemp, and by extension cannabinoids, means there’s never a dull moment.

Despite an affinity for health, my love for hemp, its chemical compounds, and its impact on the world were not instantaneous. Instead, I started my career as a nutritionist, advising on patient well-being, before focusing specifically on food safety in bakery products. And although this may seem a world away from CBD oils and cannabinoid-enriched products, there’s actually a tremendous amount of crossover.

As a nutritionist, you’re only really dealing with a disorder or personal issue after it’s happened. I wanted a chance to start at the source, and it seemed only natural to look to nature for the answer. Witnessing an increase in vegan and vegetarian lifestyles, it wasn’t long before hemp caught my eye.

What struck me at first was just how influential hemp really is. Although it doesn’t get nearly as much press as it should, the plant excels in so many areas. From the cannabinoids inside to its sustainability and impact on the environment, I was positively shocked by all its benefits.

Of course, transitioning from a nutritionist to a quality manager in the CBD industry, I needed a company that shared my fascination with food safety. Fortunately, I came across the Cibdol-Labocan partnership, two Swiss-based companies that not only believe wholeheartedly in the power of hemp, but understand we have only just begun to uncover the potential of what’s possible.

For me, the excitement of knowing we can improve people’s lives with a plant that’s existed for centuries—well, that feeling never gets old. With the backing of Labocan, I get to explore that desire with state-of-the-art equipment and the purest products on the market. Now, working for an international company that is taking care of the world, human health, and pushing innovation—it’s a dream come true. The CBD industry has changed my life, the lives of everyone I work with, and the customers we serve. So, when people ask me why I fell in love with CBD, my answer is simple—how could I not?

"I wanted a chance to start at the source, and it seemed only natural to look to nature for the answer."
The CBD extracted from hemp flowers is currently on everyone's lips and promises relaxation for body and mind, inner peace and balance. Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) already praised the beneficial power of hemp seeds in her writings. Inner balance and relaxation in stressful everyday life are among the most valuable factors of a balanced life for HempMate. The team around the founders Alexander Braun, Johannes Janssen and Thomas Pfeifer has been closely connected for years and in 2017 observed in Switzerland how the market around hemp and CBD was developing. **All three recognized the great potential to make CBD socially acceptable.** **The idea for HempMate was born.** Since then, they have been working together to lower the inhibition threshold on the topic and to bring the variety of possible uses out into the world. **Community and friendship** - the founding team loves and lives the family atmosphere. Not only in communication with each other, but also with all partners and friends from their network. All products are therefore distributed via their “Mate Model”. With this concept, the products are presented during a personal consultation by trained “Mates” (consultants) and sold to the end customer. With this distribution strategy, HempMate has the opportunity to advise its customers accurately and to educate them about the effects and possibilities. Especially at a time when our daily lives are dominated by to-do lists, meetings, a hectic pace and stress, complaints such as restlessness, burnouts and mental illness are on the rise.

Young adults in particular, who are in the middle of their professional lives, are true jugglers between job, family and leisure time. Switching off the head, relaxing and taking time for one's own well-being - these are all factors of our lives that have become valuable. Stressed people with health problems are increasingly looking for herbal remedies to bring their bodies back into harmony.

The founding team encourages their users to be brave and try new things. With HempMate they have a good friend by their side, who accompanies them in a sustainable and natural way on their way to their inner balance.
"After struggling, fighting and losing many times, stand up and start over and over again. In the end, my journey with hemp was simply written in the stars."

Lars Opdam
Dutch Natural Healing

Let me first introduce myself, I am Lars Opdam CEO of the brand Dutch Natural Healing from the Netherlands. Born and raised on the farm I couldn’t be any closer to nature and looking back today, my journey with hemp was inevitable.

My journey is inspired by my grandfather who was a true pioneer in farming. His passion and wisdom about harvesting and growing grass inspired me already when I was at a young age.

In my later life I got specialized in growing solutions of natural banks and all- natural, plant-based halophyte filtering. Due to my grandfathers spirit; always looking for new natural alternatives and perfection, I learned about hemp.

In 2003 I removed the reed, cats-tale and wicker from my farm and started to experiment with hemp. Those days ferimon and felina32 and inside my greenhouse. After 10 years of filtration, eco hydrology and hemp, I got a request from a lyme support group that needed hemp flowers for extraction. The same week I got introduced with the process of extraction with alcohol and after testing the extracts on family and friends, I was convinced and I set myself some new goals in life. From that moment on, my life was dedicated to hemp and later CBD (…)
(...) Things got big in a very short time. Got my first material from dutch farmers and later, I was able to buy extract from them so I could end my own crops and work with them. Unfortunately most Dutch Hemp farmers turned out to be unreliable and I lost my customer base more than once, but I stood up and never lost focus on my mission. I went from a Lyme disease support group to Ebay, bonanza, Etsy.com and in 2014 I opened my own little webshop with a global reach. Soon I found the right Biochemist and we started a cannabinoid laboratory together. Now I could understand the chemical processes inside hemp much better and do decent R&D.

**In 2015 I introduced the CBD oil to Retail and with some help from the Government, the oils were on the shelves in no time. From that moment we annually doubled in volume** but in 2019 the market started to change. From a pioneering market position, we ended up in a very hard and competitive landscape full of unwilling officials, haters and overall bad ethics. At the same time, our retail partner also turned out to be very unreliable and we got dumped the moment they didn’t need us anymore. Our turnover halved and we had to survive yet another critical situation.

**Strengthened by the inspiring feedback on our products consumers gave us, we changed our focus and sticked to our mission.**

I started growing the company from that moment again and with the goal of helping millions of people around the world every day in my mind, me and my team kept the drive and motivation to create the company we are today. I am very proud of our excellent organization and the high end set of products and production processes we created. With the production of over 200 SKU’s for many respected brands and the positive effect on wellbeing and health of over a million of people every day, we may call ourselves blessed. At the same time we also feel honored to have played an essential part in paving the path towards the acceptance of CBD in Europe generally.

What makes our story a boys book is the huge contrast between the rewarding feedback, the inspirational moments we experience by touching so many lives each day with the most gentle product on earth, and on the other side the constant struggle and war against unreliable businesses, the cannabis stigma, the unwilling officials and the bad ethics in our CBD landscape these days. Because of this enormous contrast, we **learned and developed a set of skills to be able to adapt to the continuously changing situations in the dynamic world of Hemp.**

With the production and sales of CBD products, we are still very much in the sickbay. People buying CBD are either ill or looking for alternatives. This group of people is very vulnerable. Growing the hemp and producing the products for this group of people require decent ethics and a lot of responsibility. Only one or two companies in Europe can match that image.

"I am sure once in a while my Grandfather will look down at me from above and nods his head on our achievements. When he does that, I hope he realizes he is my inspiration till today."
When Max Gudaniec - a 5-year-old boy from Poland - was hospitalized in 2014 for a severe form of epilepsy, doctors gave him almost no chance of survival. Due to constant epileptic seizures, sepsis, inflammation of the mastoid process of the temporal bone pyramid and many other ailments, the boy was put into a pharmacological coma. During the 5 weeks of hospitalization in the Intensive Care Unit, the doctors ran out of therapeutic options and advised the parents to say goodbye to their son.

The boy's family fought a heroic battle to import medical cannabis from Holland to Poland. Unfortunately, the doctors refused to use it as they did not know anything about it and the treatment did not comply with the hospital's procedures. Max was saved by the determination of his parents, especially the courage of his mother: Dorota Gudaniec secretly, at her own risk, administered an infusion of dried cannabis directly to the boy through a probe every time there was a possibility. For the doctors, who were unaware of the mother's willfulness, the boy's recovery was a miracle.

When the boy's condition was stable enough to awake him from coma, the story of Max Gudaniec and his family began to receive attention in the Polish media. Thus began a public debate on medical cannabis and its legalization for medical purposes in Poland - a country where possession of a few grams of cannabis can carry a prison sentence of 3 to 10 years. Max's story - and that of other heroes at the time - has resulted in nearly 40 million Poles today having legal access to therapy based on Cannabis sativa L.

Self-administered, instinctive and unsupported by any medical advice, medical cannabis therapy in the form of cannabis butter or infusion produced good, albeit insufficient results: epileptic seizures were drastically reduced from several hundred a day to a few a month. Parents learned that in addition to THC, CBD can also help to control the boy's epilepsy. Dorota and Marek Gudaniec, Max's parents, in order to provide him with the best quality CBD product, commissioned a full spectrum hemp extract. By sharing their experiences and progress with their son's treatment, they became an inspiration to many people in a similar situation and gained the trust of other parents who are now loyal Max Hemp customers. This is how the story began and continues to this day.

Every person deserves the best, and no one should be left on their own when fighting for his life. Therefore, today Max Hemp is not only one of the leading hemp companies in Poland, but it is also a Therapeutic Center that has over 9 thousand patients under its care. The company's mission is to provide the highest quality hemp product, education on the medical potential of cannabinoids present in hemp, and to achieve a reality where no patient in Poland, who has an indication for therapy based on phytocannabinoids, will be left without the support of doctors and practitioners. The personal story of the battle for the child's health and life naturally determined the role of the family business, and the fact that the boy uses the same products that anyone can buy today is the highest form of quality assurance.
My mission has always been to bring hemp textiles back to the UK. The textile industry was once one of the UK’s biggest exporters and during the industrial revolution, Britain was internationally trading hemp all over the world. As Brexit presents a situation of import tariffs set to continue to rise for international imports, we see the urgency for traditional British design and a ‘Made in UK’ label to be created here again.

Previously, hemp fibre production was once grown in Dorset, Kent and other parts of England where it was used by rope factories. Frost Brothers Limited established their first rope factory on Commercial Road in East London in 1790, where Manila hemp was hand-spun. When studying Design at Goldsmiths University, I was lucky enough to volunteer and learn at Hempen Co-operative, a local hemp farm based in Reading. Here I was able to learn about the plant and how it has helped many people. At this stage, I started collected hemp fabric swatches from all over the world, learning from industry experts. This was due to the fact there was no evidence of hemp textile production existing in the UK. Due to globalisation after the war, producing textiles abroad became much cheaper. Much of the industry collapsed and its processing equipment was shipped out to Asia. This once highly competitive industry has now been lost through a lack of education and machinery, where skills never passed down to the next generation.

Since finishing University, I decided to set up my own sustainable design business, Cultiva Kingdom. I was driven to make a difference for the fashion industry and decided to develop my own product line working with experienced textile producers overseas.

One of the most influential products was the vegan barrister wig. This was made by hand and crafted in the England with the oldest wig maker in the country. I was proud to be a part of a pivotal point in history, where we saw cannabis being worn in the court room for the first time. However, through this process, I discovered the hardships when it comes to supporting people and the planet. Currently hemp comes at a high price, and I believe a lot of companies who were interested in making an ecological switch over, could not afford the costs. Moving forward, this demonstrates the need for this industry to be built with resilience, with efficient economics of scale. It must meet the demands of many industries, not just fashion. Processed hemp fibre can be used for the car automation industry, furniture and homeware, packaging, construction and more. In a way, this is what is holding up the development of creating industrial processing facilities.

These industries need to develop a united partnership between them where research can be discovered to support several product lines to make the most financial sense when setting up a technologically advanced production process. It starts here where we must educate others and develop a market consumer demand to demonstrate the need for such a vital industry.

It is a part of Cultiva Kingdom’s mission to re-educate these skills and ensure that the history of the hemp fibre industry lives on.
In the hills around Parma, Italy, Alberto Ziveri and his friends found remnants of century-old ponds where Hemp was macerated hundreds of years ago. They began to study the history of Hemp, its unique properties and unparalleled sustainability. It was the most popular fibre until the 20s, when it became a natural competitor of petroleum-based ones. So, the humble Hemp was banned by the anti-cannabis propaganda.

"Our grandmothers taught us the history behind the Italian Hemp, showing us real Hemp sheets preserved from three centuries ago, spinned and woven in the countryside of Parma. These sheets were softer than any other modern Hemp fabric we could find. We were impressed!"

We started developing superior natural garments and fabrics. Inspired by our tradition and spurred by an innovative mentality, we worked with the most experienced Italian suppliers to weave the softest Hemp ever. Our research effort led us to "La Canapa", our first invention, 100% French Hemp woven in Italy, treated to imitate the century-old softest clothes.

French farmers stopped cultivating our favourite French Hemp because of competition from Chinese Hemp. We reached a turning point. After 9 months of deep research, we succeeded in sourcing another amazing Hemp cultivar, coming from the "Black Lands" of China. Thanks to Giovanni, our partner in innovation, we patented something extraordinary, the world's first stretchy Hemp: Herotex. It's the most futuristic Hemp ever made, with record-breaking performance.

Alberto persisted with the project. Going back to the roots, Opera Campi introduced its Zero Sweater, the first 100% undyed Hemp knitwear, which is carbon negative through its production lifecycle.

He didn't stop there and went on to invent Burro Canapa, the lightest Hemp fabric, and Lanapa, the warmest Hemp fabric, using an innovative yarn-twisting technology that combines Wool and Hemp: a perfect match.

"We took a chance on Hemp because of its advantages both in terms of sustainability and performance, especially compared to any other fibre. In a world facing a climate crisis, Opera Campi offers a particularly sustainable product that respects the planet."
To succeed in any business, several factors must coincide: a sincere passion for what you do, reliable partners and employees. What you devote your life to should not only generate money, but also give you pleasure, and benefit others, only then will you succeed. I found all these elements in Konoplex Group – Russia’s largest producer and processor of industrial hemp.

I decided to get involved with industrial hemp in 2009, after getting acquainted with the materials of the UN Conference on Climate Change. I have always been passionate about the topic of sustainable development and environmental conservation. That is how I came up with the idea of using industrial hemp as an optimal raw material. While living in Australia, I built my house using green technologies and, of course, using hempcrete building materials. At first, luck helped. There was only one company engaged in hemp production there — EcoFibre. I sent them an e-mail and, surprisingly, it went straight to the founder, Mr Phil Warner, who was looking for a partner to develop a farming business. Phil became my friend and mentor, I learnt a lot about hemp, its cultivation and methods of processing from him. In 2009, EcoFibre had 280 hectares of land in eastern Australia. In a few years we were able to increase the value of this business several times. But it was necessary to develop it further, so in 2016 I sold my shares to American partners, and in March 2019 the company did an IPO in Australia.

I wanted to take advantage of the fact that hemp can be grown everywhere so, that same year, I met the owner of Dun Agro, a Dutch hemp company, and became one of its shareholders. This is a large and successful enterprise. We ship parts of the products to German auto giants, it is used for interior decoration for BMW and Mercedes cars!

Business in the Netherlands is an important part of my global project. This country is famous for its advanced technologies in the agro-industrial sector. And, along with neighbouring Germany, it is one of the centres for the development of the sustainable and eco-friendly industry. However, being a small country, the acreage is limited. In Russia, my homeland, hemp cultivation has a huge potential, and the country has a long tradition of hemp farming! That is why, in 2015, together with my Russian partner, we founded the Konoplex Group. Unfortunately, because hemp tradition has been almost lost, we had to start from scratch. Now, Konoplex is a large agricultural holding. It includes companies involved in seed-growing, agricultural and industrial processing. We sow more than a third of all hemp in Russia, and we process and produce more than half of all hemp products in the country.

We have not only upgraded agricultural technologies, but also developed new high-performance varieties of hemp. The major challenge we are now facing is to increase our processing capacity, but we are on the right track! Last year, we opened the country’s most advanced food production facility, investing more than 3.7 Mio euros. What’s more, this year, we launched the first and most advanced production line in Russia for deep processing of hemp fiber. The first industrial concession in the country has been signed by the Government of the Russian Federation to create the first enterprise for the production of cellulose from bast crops, and the technologies used will become unique not only in the country, but also in the world. Our investments in this project will amount to more than 36 Mio euros.
Enrico Giannuzzi
Ansce Bio Generic

**Hemp is altruist. Hemp is resilient. Hemp is our inspiration.** Hemp has resisted to historical periods, wars and economic crises because good things last forever and that is what in Ansce Bio Generic we would create with our health projects Humpy, Omegatop and BioLybra.

Our story starts with a simple intuition: the urge to reconnect humans and nature. However, even simple ideas need dedication, determination, and spirit of sacrifice to accomplish a visionary project. I’m Enrico Giannuzzi, Founder and CEO of Ansce Bio Generic. I come from a family of visionary entrepreneurs; simple people who had a special spark in their heart that opened new horizons. “The impossible is not often attempted.” We, however, have made a bold attempt, by rediscovering the plant of Cannabis Sativa as a synthesis of health and wellbeing.

We have a long experience in the pharmaceutical area. Over the past 25 years, we have created a network of collaborations and found synergies with health care experts, aimed at ensuring patients’ health and while maintaining our social and ethical responsibility towards people, animals, and the planet. Among these collaborations, there was one of my best friends, a pharmacist, Dr Alfredo Tundo, known as the pioneer in galenic preparations of Cannabinoids for therapeutical use and an expert in hemp legislation. It was an autumn, 7 years ago, when we met for the first time and I felt like I was travelling in time, shapping a future full of new ideas and shared knowledge which led me to launch a project in R&D on Cannabis properties for cosmeceutical and nutraceutical use.

“Nature does nothing in vain”. Thanks to Dr. Tundo’s support, I understood how many virtues this plant has for the health of humans, animals, and the planet. In my company’s R&D department we started working on CBD. **By studying Cannabis, we understood that science is simply rediscovering the perfection of Nature.** 1 year later HEMPY was born. Our idea was to market a safe food product with a high content of CBD, and compliant with all quality controls and standards: a solution for people that needed to treat pathologies. A challenge which brought us to marketing HEMPY OIL in 2017: the first CBD oil in Italy.

In spite of the obstacles in terms of legislation and bureaucracy that hinder our path, **the testimonials of our consumers are the driver that push us every day to believe in this project**, in this plant, and to mobilize all our forces to surmount all the obstacles and advocate for a conscious and full use of CBD.

Hempy is a project of functional nutrition based on Cannabis’ seeds, cannabinoids and terpenes. HEMPY hemp seed oil is our main food supplement. My house and our offices have been built with hemp fibre. Around Ansce Bio Generic, we created a network of farms to foster local production and maintain the wellbeing of the territory in Salento. We have invented the HEMPY Terpenotherapy based on our pure terpenes (an example of what Nature can do for the health and wellbeing of our mind and body). We have launched the project WE ARE ONE- NO PLANET B, our personal commitment as a company at the service of humans, animals and our wonderful planet.

**Hemp is here for a healthy future. The future is green.**
**The future is HEMPY.**
"Caffeine used to be considered the driving force of a society that knew no rest. But for some years now, there has been a change. Staying awake is no longer a luxury, the primary problem is to calm down, relax and focus. We want to help people with natural ingredients like CBD and other cannabinoids to take a time out for themselves and their bodies, to regenerate and relax."

Hi, I’m Finn. In 2018, I founded the Berlin-based health and life science company Sanity Group together with my Co-founder Fabian Friede with the aim of providing people in Europe with cannabinoid-based pharmaceuticals and consumer health products and creating the necessary infrastructure. Our mission is to build the leading company for medicinal cannabis and cannabinoid-based consumer goods in Europe, our goal is to leverage the full potential of the cannabis plant and to research and harness the various cannabinoids for important social problems such as pain, sleep, and anxiety. The focus is on pharmaceuticals and medical products on the one hand and cannabinoid-based consumer health products on the other.

For me, the sensible use of cannabinoids is a topic that has accompanied me for a long time. My goal is to bring cannabis back into the center of society. I am sure that cannabis can have a positive influence on the lives of many people.

I campaigned for the decriminalisation of cannabis and its legal sale in 2002 as the former district chairman of the Young Union party in Flensburg (Federal State Schleswig-Holstein in Germany), my Co-founder Fabian Friede has been observing the market for years and quickly realised how important, but also difficult it is for patients with serious diseases to be supplied with the appropriate medication. We would like to give cannabis a new chance – because what some people associate with it is based on old prejudice. I am more than happy to see that in Germany with the new government a cannabis legalization will now – finally – be realized. Who would have thought that a few years ago? I am looking forward to the upcoming period and everything that is to come. Exciting times ahead!
Lucien’s parents would always grow hemp in their garden since he was a kid. His mother made her own ointments and hemp compresses any time the kids were ill – therefore hemp has been a fascinating plant for Lucien from early childhood onwards. After a long time spent in hospital, he decided to turn his passion into a profession and has made the organic cultivation of hemp his life’s work.

*Doing something good for people and the environment with sincerity is a very fulfilling task for Lucien!*  

Stefan fell in love with hemp during his time at ETH in Zuerich where he got in touch with Cannabis for the first time. He immediately realized the huge potential this plant offers – whether as an industrial raw material or for medical reasons. Being a master gardener, he was at one point asked by two friends if he could support them in the establishment of a CBD clone production already in 1997!

*He is a true believer in the healing power of CBD as it regularly relieves his back pain.*

Together with Dominic who joined Lucien and Stefan in 2016 they made their dream come true and launched their “BioSuisse” certified cannabis. **Quality, sustainability, traceability and Swissness** were their top priorities from day 1, because this is what they were missing in any kind of hemp product that was already on the market. This is how our success story began... stay tuned to hear more from us!
Nejc Rusjan
Essentia Pura

It all started in 2018 during a business lunch when I was introduced to the world of supercritical CO2 extraction. At that time I still worked as a management consultant and had a career plan ahead of me. I was actually just about to leave Ljubljana to start working in Vienna and continue my consulting career but with a focus on advising financial institutions. However, I started researching more about the industry and botanical extracts. I really got amazed by the studies I was finding and became keen to explore this industry with my business partners.

We soon discovered a company, which was established already in 2002 and specialized in supercritical CO2 extraction and development of botanical extracts with a focus on hemp extraction. The company had a great aim, which was to bring together the industry stakeholders and connect them with providers of raw materials and producers of consumer goods for the benefit and wellbeing of end-users. However, the company lacked the knowledge and resources required for the commercialization of the amazing goods and services it offered. We believed that we could bring this knowledge to the aforementioned company and so Essentia Pura was born.

Since then, I have learned a lot about different plants, herbs, extraction processes but what I was really blown away by were both the hemp community and the health benefits of hemp extracts. The positive effects they had on us, our families, and our friends are hard to describe and someone can only experience them. That’s why there was no other way than to share this with a larger audience. With the help of our wholesale and white label partners, we managed to bring our products to the market and start powering market leaders in the nutraceutical and cosmetic industries.

Today, one of the greatest satisfaction for me is to hear how our products have improved the wellbeing of end consumers as well as to experience and feel the motivation of our team to continuously search for the holy grail of hemp and other botanical extracts and make them available also for future generations.
Agriculture has accompanied me since my childhood days; I grew up on a farm and the experience was just exciting! **At the age of 18, I took over my parents’ farm; at that time, I already had a vision: to make agriculture different than usual.** In addition to everyday cultivation, I studied technical literature of well-known scientists because I wanted to understand soil life, humus build-up and the correlations of agriculture. My goal was not just to get returns on profit, but to produce a healthy, high-quality product. I believe that plants absorb nutrients better and grow healthier when the soil is balanced. The result of this approach a is high-quality food with important components and nutrients.

I have been practicing this since the beginning of my farming activities, and as time went by it became more and more obvious how important this way of working is. Climate change, soil erosion, nitrates in groundwater and extreme humus depletion show us that a global rethink on how we farm is needed. **A proof that regenerative agriculture is the right way forward.**

I came across the topic of hemp when a close friend of mine fell seriously ill and had to undergo numerous therapies. After fighting a long battle, she told me that CBD had a positive effect during her therapies. What she told me had a huge influence on me and my childhood memories of my grandfather, who already at the time cultivated hemp, came back to me. **All this gave me the starting signal to accomplish my vision: to take a chance on a different type of farming and to produce healthy, high-quality products at the same time. I visited numerous hemp farmers, enlarged my knowledge with technical literature and got the support from a friend who is very successful in the field of mechanical engineering.**

I found out that improving the harvesting and drying of hemp was a priority. While visiting hemp farmers, I met one farmer who was just harvesting hemp by hand, and shortly after I learned that after drying a hemp product, the analysed CBD values where much lower than expected and actually much lower than what they had measured on the field. **I immediately understood that this seemed to be a problem for many farmers, and I thought I needed to develop a harvesting and drying method, including the separation of seeds, leaves and stems, allowing farmers to store their hemp products without losing CBD during the process.**

To make a long story short, today we have an industrialised process ensuring that the highest-measured CBD values on the field are contained. The process does not destroy or reduce the CBD values and our dried and specially stored hemp maintains the same values after one year. The drying process is so gentle that transformation from CBD-A into CBD has almost not even started and it can be decided in the further processing how much shall be transformed. When you smell the dried product, you will immediately recognise that the terpenes and the full spectrum of the hemp flower have been contained. Additionally, with the process we can separate the seeds, leaves and stems from each other, and keep in mind this is done fully automated!

Our project is supported by the Bavarian Government as part of an EU program. I have received a lot of support from a German institute for processed foods to achieve the results – a special thanks to our supporters at this point. So, you see, I have fallen in love with industrial hemp.
I entered the cannabis industry end of 2014, back then when you still had to explain what CBD was to everyone. I always had a passion for this plant and the myriad of uses it can provide, but would have never expected to be actually working in a legal cannabis industry in Europe.

The industry itself has definitely a unique appeal, I’ve never met so many people from all over the world who have been so passionate about their work. There is a constant spark of enthusiasm surrounding everyone I encountered at conferences, trade shows and business meetings.

One lesson to take away is that the cannabis industry recognizes that just because things have been done a certain way for decades, it doesn’t mean that is the way things have to continue to be done. And this is an important message in times of climate change.

The hemp and cannabis market is still in its infancy and because it is a relatively new industry, it is not like other established industries that have a clear set of regulatory framework and daily routine. Everything moves incredibly fast. Within the cannabis community we like to say cannabis years are like dog years, one year here is like seven years in any other emerging market. If you’ve been in it for more than five years, you’re known as a veteran. The industry is in a constant dynamic state of change which can be very exciting but at the same time also mentally draining to work in such a fluid fast paced environment. You can be working months ahead in launching a new product next thing authorities change their mind which makes your product illegal and your right back where you started. **Improvise, adapt, overcome, repeat is the constant mantra in these times.** The industry definitely has its real challenges and just jumping in will not make you rich. The underlying reasons for all these challenges can’t be solved by just throwing money at it and hoping they fade away. It takes time, perseverance and a certain stubbornness and more to succeed in this industry. **We have the opportunity to build here something from nothing and we need to work collectively to increase access to a plant we believe will better society and our future. But it really is a marathon, not a sprint.**