

EAT & DRINK

# CBD craze

How cannabidiol has become a go-to addition to cocktails, coffee & sweets

BY MELISSA KRAVITZ  
Special to amNewYork

It's 5 p.m. on a recent Thursday in the lobby of midtown's Ace Hotel, but it's nearly pitch-black beyond the glowing light of laptops on communal tables. As freelancers and remote workers wrap up for the day, they pack in toward the bar in the back of the room, where The Breslin is passing out samples of special treats: CBD brownies and cocktails.

Though the cannabis-infused creations seem illicit, they are just a few of the many CBD-laced beverages and desserts popping up on restaurant menus throughout the city lately.

CBD, the colloquial abbreviation for cannabidiol, is everywhere, from trendy cocktail bars to vegan fast food chains. But what is it, and why is it all of a sudden everywhere?

**Wellness appeal**

Legal CBD is derived from the hemp plant and unlike its sibling, the marijuana leaf, contains only trace amounts of THC (the mind-altering chemical that can induce psychoactivity, or a feeling of being "high"). According to the World Health Organization, natural CBD is safe and doesn't have any harmful effects or abuse potential. It has multiple health benefits, according to experts — which explains its proclivity in the wellness space.

"CBD has wonderful anti-inflammatory, anti-anxiety, anti-insomnia and pain management benefits, and is incredibly safe and effective," Upper East Side nutritionist Brooke Alpert says. Some prescriptions shouldn't be mixed with

CBD (ask your doctor), but otherwise, "CBD oil is non-intoxicating, has almost no side effects, and is virtually impossible to lethally overdose," says Alexis Rosenbaum, owner of Rosebud CBD Oil, which is used in the Breslin's new CBD creations plus sold by the bottle to consumers who want to infuse CBD into their cooking (or drinking).

Rosenbaum notes that CBD usage dates back to prehistoric times, though research is nascent. As studies on CBD usage and benefits grow — Rosenbaum reports her products offer "relief and better quality of life from anxiety, inflammation and chronic pain" — the use of CBD will likely become even more mainstream.

**Ordering a dose**

CBD can be found in everything from body creams to bath bombs. To use as an ingredient in food and beverages, the hemp extract is typically mixed with an oil, like coconut, almond, orange or jojoba seed, which has minimal flavor.

Beyond the Ace Hotel, NYC destinations capitalizing on the trend of late include the upscale diner eatery Bubby's, which adds a CBD sweetener to beverages like coffee, lemonade and cocktails; vegan chain By Chloe, which has added CBD-infused desserts to its menu; and Chillhouse, a cafe and spa that just unleashed a menu with CBD-honey-drizzled ricotta toast



Get CBD in cocktails at new Astoria bar Adriaen Block . . .



. . . and brownies at Ace Hotel's Lobby Bar.

and a CBD hibiscus milkshake.

New businesses are also making CBD their main attraction. In Astoria, restaurateur Zsolt "George" Csonka recently opened Adriaen Block, an upscale stoner-themed lounge offering cocktails and nonalcoholic drinks with CBD tinctures. A "munchies" menu

also includes CBD-infused sauces and whipped cream.

Csonka became interested in CBD because of the health benefits and decided to open a bar that can help alleviate anxiety, pain and inflammation through food and drink.

Csonka uses a CBD peppermint oil, which is not strong enough to affect the flavor of the drinks.

"We add CBD to each drink and dish before serving, which allows us to customize them — this lets guests decide if they want CBD or not," says Csonka, who believes CBD works best with low-proof alcohols.

Csonka's menu also has non-boozy CBD drinks for an alternative form of winding down after a long day.

"[A]fter two CBD drinks

**CALMING CONCOCTIONS**

Here's a look at just some of the restaurants, bars and cafes that have CBD on the menu:

- **Ace Hotel Lobby Bar:** Recent additions to the menu include a CBD brownie (\$8) — a gluten-free treat made with Valrhona chocolate, coconut oil and 12 mg of CBD, and a cocktail dubbed The Rosebud (\$15): Pommeau, Grapefruit Sauvage, Italicus Bergamont and grapefruit juice. 16 W. 29th St.
- **Adriaen Block:** The bar's boozy CBD cocktails (\$15) include the punny Stony Negrini and Rolled Fashioned. Nonalcoholic CBD cocktails made with Seedlip are also available (\$15). On the food side, you can add a CBD sauce (\$7 extra) to entrees and CBD whipped cream (\$6 extra) to any dessert. 19-33 Ditmars Blvd., Astoria
- **Bubby's:** Make any cocktail a CBD one (\$6 extra), or give your coffee, tea or lemonade an infusion (\$10-\$13) with a CBD sweetener. 120 Hudson St., 73 Gansevoort St.
- **The Butcher's Daughter:** At the new Brooklyn location of the juice bar and cafe, you can add CBD to any dish, smoothie, coffee or pastry for an extra \$3. The CBD is available in both an olive oil and, for beverages, tincture form. 271 Metropolitan Ave., Williamsburg
- **Caffeine Underground:** Get a dose of calm with your java, with CBD coffee (\$6), cappuccinos (\$6.50), lattes (\$6.50), mochas (\$7) and Americanos (\$6) on the menu. Also find CBD lollipops (\$10), caramels (\$12), and, to spread on pastries, jam (\$2 extra). 447 Central Ave., Bushwick
- **Chillhouse:** The just-launched CBD menu at the cafe/spa includes tea-based beverages (\$7), a hibiscus milkshake (\$8) and a ricotta toast topped with CBD-infused honey (\$12), all using Green Witch CBD. 149 Essex St.
- **Harvey:** On the cocktail menu of this Williamsburg Hotel restaurant, the If You Like Pina Colada (\$16) features Kikori Whiskey and CBD-infused Singani 63, plus coconut and lime and pineapple juices. 96 Wythe Ave., Williamsburg
- **Patent Coffee:** The coffee shop's summer menu includes a CBD Arnold Palmer (\$6) and CBD cold brew (\$6.50). Or add 15 mg of CBD to any drink for \$2. 49 W. 27th St.
- **Sweets By Chloe:** For your next party, order a dairy-free ice cream cake dubbed the Mary Jane (\$65/serves 6-8, pick-up only) — that's chocolate and vanilla ice cream with vanilla frosting infused with 30 mg of CBD oil and topped with green sprinkles, all in the shape of a hemp leaf, of course. 185 Bleecker St.



(AMNY)

BY CHLOE

you should find yourself relaxed and mellow," he says.

Despite its ties to the wellness scene, Albert warns that most CBD-infused treats are just that.

"Consuming a good quality CBD can be a great addition to any healthy diet: The only caveat is that if you're consuming an unhealthy food with CBD in it, it won't undo the negative health effects from it," says Albert. "So a CBD soda, dessert or candy, while providing CBD, is still an unhealthy treat."

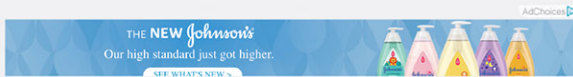
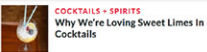
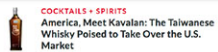
Alpert recommends her clients start with 5 mg doses and work their way up to 10-15 mg, depending on the strain and quality of the product.

**Staying power**

CBD may be pervasive now, but for how long? Thanks to New Yorkers' constant (and let's face it, futile) search for calm, Csonka believes the CBD craze is here to stay.

As more people seek an all-natural lifestyle, Rosenbaum also sees CBD playing a part in that.

"It started with the farm-to-table movement, poured into beauty and household products, and has now entered the health and wellness sector," he says. "CBD oil offers a plant-based health, wellness and beauty healing without any high, addiction or lethal overdose. It is definitely here to stay."



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## CBD Cocktails: What They Are and Why They're Taking Over Bar Menus Everywhere



Lily Brown



### Bartenders weigh in on the benefits of 2018's buzziest cocktail ingredient trend

DAN Q. DAO October 01, 2018

Cocktails are already a great way to relax and unwind, but a new trend you've probably seen everywhere is taking things things one, very chill step further. Replacing activated charcoal as this year's ubiquitous food fad is cannabidiol, the non-psychoactive chemical found in hemp and cannabis that's been creeping its way onto cocktail menus (and into coffee shops) all over the country.

While CBD contains no THC, and therefore will not get you high, it will still deliver some of the non-trippy effects of weed—a little sedation and relaxation. And bartenders are taking note, experimenting with the stuff in everything from infusions and tinctures to teas. But what exactly do you feel when you mix your CBD with booze?

"It gives you a different kind of 'buzz' for a relaxed state of mind," says Zsolt "George" Csonka, owner-bartender at [Adriaen Block](#), New York City's first dedicated CBD bar. "After two drinks, you should find yourself feeling calm and mellow."

A rooftop pool, frozen cocktails, cool beds.



Adriaen Block's cocktails, with witty names like the Rolled Fashioned and Stoney Negroni, get their CBD content from various tinctures added via eyedropper to manage the dosage. Csonka chooses to make his drinks exclusively with low-ABV spirits, such as vermouths and sheries, which he believes works best for calming effects and overall wellness.



Lily Brown

"CBD started popping up as a wellness trend to alleviate anxiety, pain, and inflammation," he says. "When putting CBD in a low ABV or non-alcoholic cocktail, you can enjoy a drink or two and still be able to go to the gym the next day."

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# Thursday Styles

The New York Times

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018

K N

**Boite** Adriaen Block | ASTORIA, QUEENS

There are CBD massage parlors, CBD bakeries and even CBD cafes. So it was only a matter of time before a bar would join this bandwagon. Adriaen Block, which opened in August, bills itself as the first CBD restaurant and bar in New York City, with four lower-alcohol cocktails infused with cannabidiol derived from hemp.

Zsolt Csonka, 41, who owns the bar, said he wanted to create a more good-humored joint, without the usual "cursing and screaming" of drunk patrons. "People feel just wonderful, chilled, relaxed, calm, mellow," Mr. Csonka said, regarding the effects of CBD on his patrons. "Then, everyone is able to get up and walk home in a decent manner."

## The Place

Close to Astoria Park, it straddles the quiet, almost suburban corner of 21st Street and Ditmars Boulevard on a stretch that's less commercial and bustling than the blocks near the subway station. Outside, there is a mural of the Hell Gate bridge with the bar's namesake, a 1614 Dutch explorer who discovered the area. Inside, the neutral décor is dominated by large windows and a colorful projection of blooming flowers against exposed brick.

## The Crowd

On a recent Thursday night, the scene reflected the ethnic diversity of Astoria. A middle-aged married couple were sipping wine and speaking French by the open glass doors, while a Latino family of four were seated across



STEFANIA CURTO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

the room having dinner. (It wasn't clear if any of them ordered the CBD sauce to go along

with their steaks.)

At the bar were three single men, in their late 20s to early

40s, wearing straw cowboy hats and bushy beards. The weekend crowd tends to be younger, with more of the professionals now colonizing the area.

## The Playlist

Mr. Csonka is in charge of the bar's Spotify playlist, which leans on indie rock from the 2000s (the Killers, MGMT), mixed with some classics from the 1980s (Queen, Dexys Midnight Runners).

## Getting In

On weeknights, it's easy to walk in and grab one of the 30 table seats or 10 bar stools. On weekends, there is a red velvet rope to manage occasional lines; the wait can be anywhere from a few minutes to an hour. Reservations are accepted.

## Drinks

The CBD drinks come with or without alcohol. The Stony Negroni (\$15), like the other CBD cocktails, are made with less liquor and taste a little sweet. Virgin drinks include the Garden & Tonic (\$15), which mixes Seedlip, an extract made from plants, with Indian tonic, a sprig of rosemary and a handful of peas. It's served in an icy goblet along with a plastic dropper of CBD.

BRIAN SLOAN

**Adriaen Block**, 19-33 Ditmars Boulevard; 718-606-1391; [adriaenblocknyc.com](http://adriaenblocknyc.com). Open daily, from 4 p.m. on weekdays, 2 p.m. on Saturday and 11 a.m. on Sunday. Closing hours vary.

# NEW YORK POST

## 38 Eating Right

Mystery: CBD's mellowing effects relax everyone but me

**C**BD is this year's It substance. The legal hemp plant derivative is touted as a stress-beater and all-around wonder drug, and it's popping up everywhere from yoga studios to beauty shops.

But at Adriaen Block, the self-described "city's first CBD-centered bar and restaurant," a half-gallon of the stuff left me as cranky as ever.

Adriaen Block brings an unaccustomed sight to a sleepy, residential Astoria neighborhood: a red-velvet rope on stanchions around the corner entrance.



**Steve Guozzo**

It's to contain crowds, says affable owner Zsolt "George" Csonka, a veteran of the One Group restaurant and club empire (STK, Bagatelle). He's made it his mission to introduce the dining masses to cannabidiol tinctures — which won't get you high but "may induce a calming sensation," the menu says. Early on Friday night, his spare but cozy little boîte was still waiting for the hordes to claim their CBD fix, although business picked up by 9 p.m.

A high-strung type full of nervous energy, I yearned to try CBD, which Adriaen Block serves in exotic cocktails (\$15), in sauces for nicely turned-out American dishes (small



Zsolt "George" Csonka of Astoria's Adriaen Block is proud to present CBD tinctures in his cocktails and in sauces to spoon onto dishes such as this New York strip steak.



my high-energy friend Karen. At first buzzing from strong coffee she had earlier, she reclined contentedly into a corner of the banquettes after a "1614," an elixir of Petrov Reserve, sparkling wine, muddled honeydew agave and lime. "A mellow stop at the end of the W line," she sighed.

But my anxiety level doesn't quit so easily. All I felt was the standard buzz I get from a killer cocktail — or a beer or two. At least I enjoyed the flavor: The tincture lent a gentle, peppermint lilt to everything it touched.

Adriaen Block isn't the only place to try CBD. You can buy it yourself on Amazon, or try it in some coffee bars and lounges around town. But Csonka says he prefers the kind he uses, an American brand called Every Day Optimal. Unlike some others, he says, it's guaranteed to contain zero THC (the high-inducing element of marijuana) and to be free of heavy metals and pesticides.

Whew! I can finally relax.  
19-33 Ditmars Blvd., Astoria; 718-686-1391, AdriaenBlocknyc.com

scuozzo@nypost.com

plates \$9 to \$14, grilled entrees \$22 to \$31) and in whipped cream with desserts (\$6).

Floor-roaming Csonka dispensed CBD droplets from an eye dropper with a lab technician's precision into potent libations, including the Rolled Fashioned (Aperol, Pineau des Charentes and Angostura bitters).

We also had it in side sauces with a juicy burger, moist and fresh wild salmon and chewy New York strip steak, and in whipped cream to spoon onto Key lime pie and chocolate crepes for dessert. CBD

peppercorn sauce with the steak was especially delicious. (An earlier rule of only two CBD items per customer to conserve supplies is "being relaxed," says a restaurant rep.)

I waited expectantly for the fabled, Valium-like chill that stole over customer Barbara Kovacs, a personal trainer, who said minutes after her first CBD-infused, "life-changing" cocktail, she enjoyed a "calming sensation. It relieved stress, and I felt peaceful."

It certainly worked its magic as well on

# TimeOut

NEW YORK



## BAR REVIEWS

### Adriaen Block



**CANNABIDIOL, OR CBD** oil, the completely legal, nonpsychoactive, calming substance found in marijuana, has been touted throughout NYC as a weed substitute and a wellness fad, adopted by restaurants that are either (1) seeking relevancy or (2) mixing it with activated charcoal. Adriaen Block is offering option No. 3.

Set along a quiet, residential stretch of Ditmars Boulevard, the Astoria bar is like the brick-and-mortar version of Tiesto walking into grandma's: A red velvet rope guards the entrance, scantily clad friends stand outside taking a cigarette break and a live DJ blasts pop music that spills onto the sidewalk seating. At one point on a recent Friday night, an elderly man pushed his walker



Mellow Berry

back and forth, staring in confusion.

The bar serves eight CBD drinks—four low-ABV cocktails and four mocktails—all of them laced with several cannabidiol droplets, theatrically squeezed from a plastic pipette by the server. The Stoney Negroni, with Cocchi Americano, dry sherry and a French aperitif wine, makes for a slightly minty, less bitter Negroni, while the Mellow Berry is a thick, fruity concoction served with a house-made blackberry shrub and orange bitters. If you're

staying dry, the Pear & Parsnip is "spiked" with Seedlip, a distilled nonalcoholic spirit, and mixed with a refreshing, citrusy shrub.

After hitting the bar's two-drink max, you may feel a sense of calm setting in, but not enough to wash away some very important questions: Is the CBD *really* kicking in? Or is it just one big placebo effect? Does all CBD taste this minty? Are they playing the Backstreet Boys? ■ *Alyson Penn*

→ Adriaen Block, Astoria, ([adriaenblocknyc.com](http://adriaenblocknyc.com))