

WEED WORLD™

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& Mendo Dope

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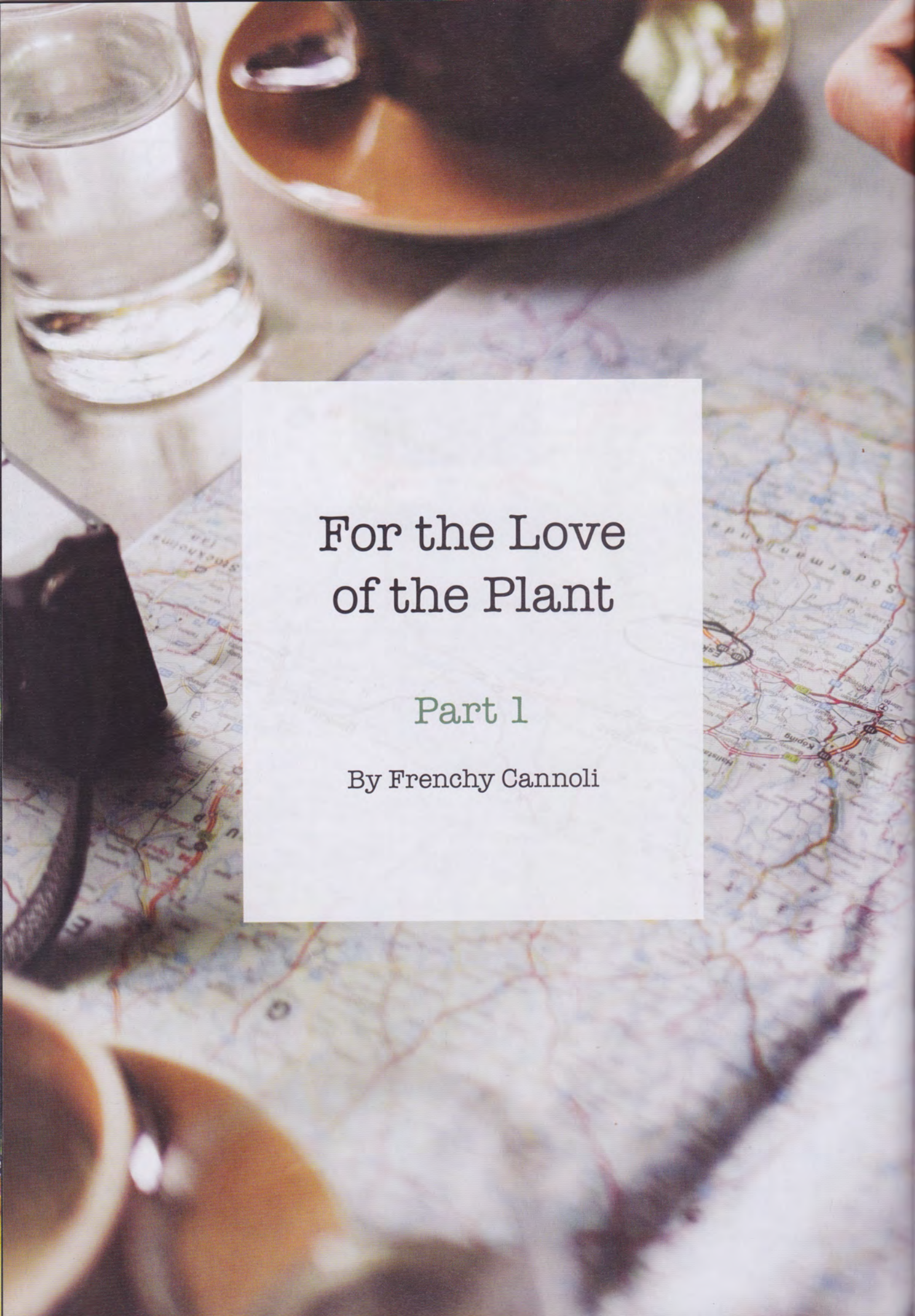
PART 3 **INDOOR
HYDRO**

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DISPLAY UNTIL END OF JANUARY 2018

A photograph of a table with a map, a glass of water, and a bowl of food. The map is the central focus, showing various roads and geographical features. A glass of water is in the top left, and a bowl of food is in the top right. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area in the center of the map.

For the Love of the Plant

Part 1

By Frenchy Cannoli

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a silver pen, pointing at a detailed road map. The map shows a network of roads in various colors (red, yellow, blue) and geographical features. The hand is in the upper left corner, and the pen is angled downwards towards the center of the map.

I must have been born a nomad at heart or maybe it was the influence of spending my early childhood years living deep in the rainforest of Gabon, Africa, with my family...or later, after our return to France, the time I shared with my little gypsy friends in Brittany during my early teens could also have been the spark that became a raging need to travel in my late teens. I thirsted for their freedom and dreamed to escape the bonds of modern society at a very early age.



FRENCH MALANA, 1989

I always had a vivid interest in far-away lands, foreign cultures, ancient history, life in the wild, adventures, exploration, and uncharacteristic but extraordinary role models. The French adventurer Henry De Monfried¹, who was inspired by the non-conformist life of Paul Gauguin and Arthur Rimbaud, left behind a comfortable western life to hand-build a dhow² in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa and prowl the waters of the Red Sea for over thirty years, diving for pearls and smuggling guns and hashish. The famous English explorer Sir Richard Francis Burton, the ultimate polymath, was a talented "geographer, linguist, writer, cartographer, ethnologist, spy, poet, and diplomat"³, he was the essence of manhood, adventure and culture who, more than any other childhood hero, influenced my life with his travels, love of diversity and thirst for knowledge.

The Flower Power Generation and the hippy subculture of the late 1960s and 70s, with its message of love and freedom, rang loud and clear the world over offering a bridge between generations and cultures. I was too

young to grasp fully the message, but I was nonetheless influenced by this older generation rebelling against a society lost in communist fear, post-World War prejudices and racism.

The semi-fictional stories of the Hippy Trail I was reading in my late teens were comparable in my young and very imaginative mind to the tales of the ancient Silk Road and the amazing journey of Marco Polo, another big hero of my childhood. The stories of these modern adventurers reinforced my fascination for Hashish country culture, which had always been powerful. I was without a real awareness of the Cannabis plant and its resin but I was nonetheless quite obviously primed for the experience so that the overwhelming flow of joy, energy and the exuberant love I experienced the first time I smoked Hashish⁴ was most certainly the catalyst of my wandering years and the beginning of a long relation with the Cannabis plant.

Cannabis resin had many mesmerizing aspects beside its psychoactive properties for a youngster dreaming of travel and reaching adulthood: it was the taste and smell of the foreign countries I had read so much about, it was sharing the essence of these far-away lands for the first time, and feeling the pull getting stronger.

The Mediterranean Sea has always been smuggler's territory: illegal trade between North Africa and Europe has a very long history, hashish, arms, tobacco and alcohol have been exchanged freely between the two continents for centuries, and the South of France with its large population of Lebanese, Moroccan, Iranian and other expatriates from North Africa and other Hashish producing countries is one of the most active hubs of distribution. My best friends were first generation immigrants, which gave me the chance to learn some tricks with their family



FRENCH KULU VALLEY

members and smoke Hashish that I thought greatly of at the time.

Finally, I reached the age of legal independence, and I became a total nomad, moving restlessly from country-to-country for close to twenty years, visiting ruins and museums, learning traditions and sharing the local life, never stopping for long, always seeking new adventures, feeding on the newness each culture presented. The world is an amazing school and my travels have shaped the person I am today, living among foreign cultures and being gifted with hospitality and friendship by total strangers is a life changing experience that brings acceptance and respect for diversity. I was appreciative, but oblivious nonetheless, of the deeper meaning of what was so generously given to me at the time, too young and so clueless that I wonder sometimes how I managed it all.

I did not truly visit the producing regions of the world to learn the local methodology but to simply have access to the highest quality of hashish, to do that you have no choice but to live alongside local Hashishins and make it yourself - the best is never for sale with connoisseurs.

I thought I knew quality as most Westerners do but we are a long way from the producing regions of the world and the personal stash of a Hashishin in the Rif Mountains of Morocco, the Hindu Kush or the Himalayas is not remotely close to what is available to the rest of the world.

I have been immersed in various traditional sieving and pressing techniques most of my adult life and the deep respect I have for this ancient art is born from personal experiences. Breaking open a ten-year-old Royal Nepalese Temple Ball is an event that profoundly altered all perception of resin quality, resin preservation and aging; smoking a narghile⁵ loaded with the personal stash of an Afghan Hashishin is a reevaluation of the potency of Cannabis resin. These experiences

had revealed to the novice I was the level of quality that could be produced and the depth of traditional Hashish methodology passed down from one generation to the other.

Hashish is produced from sieving and pressing resin that has been dried and cured for 3 to 9 months; most foreigners purchase pressed and packaged resin ready to go. Others prefer to acquire loose resin and do the pressing themselves over the course of a week or two, and some, like me, are buying bundles of dried and cured Cannabis plants to do the whole separation process themselves which can take months. The customer's presentation of the product is an established process, a bargaining dance and a way to define the buyer's knowledge of resin. The farmer will always present the lower resin quality first and they will show you a higher grade only when you show how underwhelmed you are by the resin offered. This bargaining waltz can take a whole day going through half a dozen levels of quality before the 'best of the best' is finally brought out for display.

As much as I had been devoted to dry sieving and Hashish, collecting live resin on the palm of my hands from wild Cannabis plants in the Himalayas was a revelation and brought me to a new level of appreciation and understanding of the plant. My first experience with living Cannabis plants was a massive sensory epiphany - there are no words that can describe the sensation of ripe resin gently layering on the palm of your hands, the explosion of terpenes overloading your senses or the feeling of pure freedom you experience high in the Himalayas so far away from civilization. I was relishing the experience and appreciating the beauty and diversity of the Cannabis plant, however I could not truly comprehend the complexity and rarity of the genetics that surrounded me due to my lack of education in botany, a fact I regret dearly. It is also in these



WORKING HARD



WAICHIN-ROLLING

valleys that I encountered Cannabis terroir for the first time. Every patch of wild Cannabis is an expression of its environment. Cannabis growing in a field of wild strawberries or in the shade of a hazel tree will convey a unique terpene profile, a glorious and magical expression of the plant's habitat, the terroir. I was also able through the course of a few seasons to appreciate the creation of genetic diversity solely guided by the characteristics of the land and by the climatic conditions of the Himalayan summer pastures by simply leaving fields of cultivated plants unattended over the course of a few seasons. We believed in the adaptive power of the plant and were blessed with a bounty far beyond our wildest dreams as a result.

The respect and love I had for the resin of the Cannabis plant also took a whole new dimension in India, it was the first time in my life that smoking was



HANDIT

a dedication to a God; before lighting a chillum⁶ the many names of Shiva are chanted as a form of communion with a higher plane of consciousness and being. Smoking Charas in India is partaking in the mythological gift of a plant that was born from a drop of the elixir of life that fell from heavens. There is so much power behind these beliefs, and the overall spirituality behind smoking Cannabis resin that you cannot but be deeply touched and transformed by the experience.

It was in India that I consciously stopped feeling like a social outcast, and that I became a Cannabis resin devotee with no shame for my choice in life.

I fell deeply in love with India and spent eight years discovering its beauty, diversity and culture; I became a Charsi, a Charas smoker. Smoking live resin is very different from smoking Hashish, it is more energetic, vibrant and intense



MALANA SUMMER PASTURE

which better suited my nature. I went back to the Parvati and Malana valleys season after season to experience anew the intimacy of collecting live Cannabis resin and only fatherhood took me willingly away from India and from my nomadic life.

In Part 2 of "For the Love of the Plant" I will share the greatest revelations concerning Cannabis that I was to encounter a quarter of century later, which have drastically transformed my life.

Frenchy can be reached through his website at:
www.frenchycannoli.com or seen on Instagram @frenchycannoli.

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 Dhow is the generic name of a number of traditional sailing vessels with one or more masts, with lateen sails used in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean region. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhow>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Francis_Burton
 It was actually the second time, the first time was hardly an experience worth mentioning A Middle Eastern tobacco pipe in which the smoke is drawn through water before reaching the lips; hookah. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/narghile>
 Straight conical pipe with end-to-end channel traditionally made of clay and used since at least the eighteenth century by sadhus in India. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillum_\(pipe\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chillum_(pipe))

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