CHAMPS SHOW MAGAZINE

ISSUE 86 - OCTOBER 2026

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INSIDE:

Pg 13: From Spooky to Sold
Pg 43 CHAMPS Vegas Summer Show

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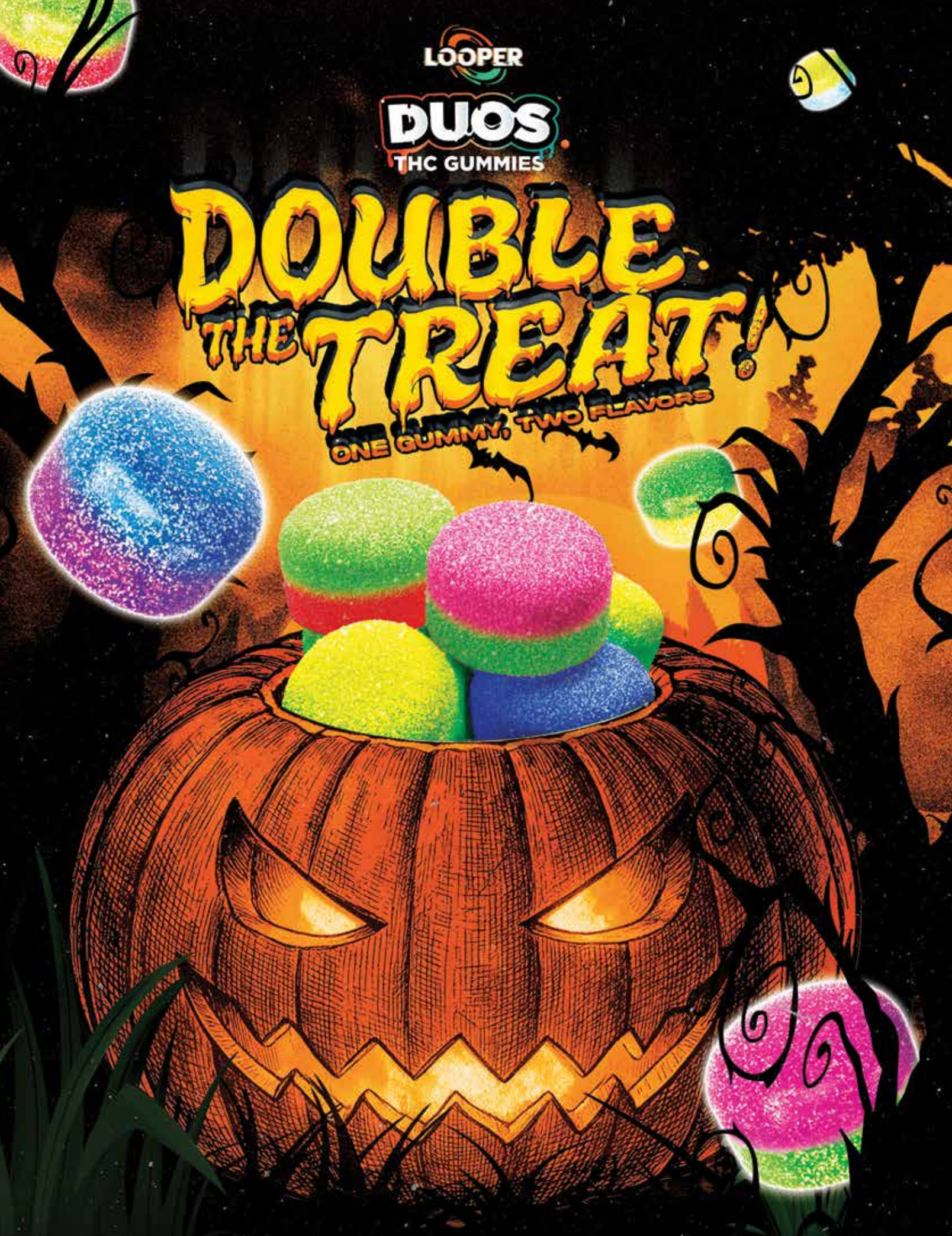
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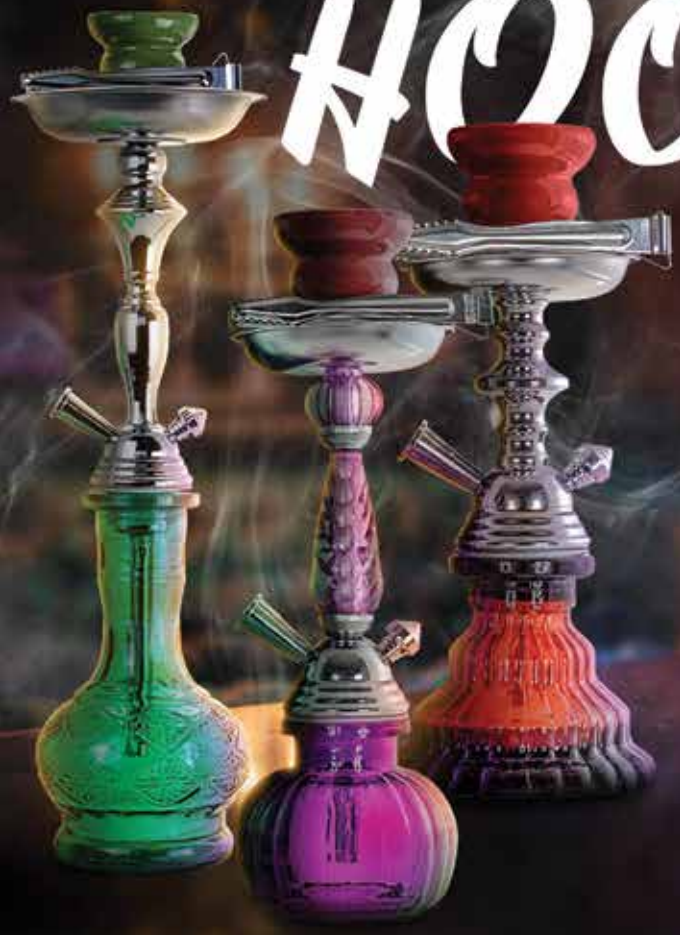
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FROM SPOOKY TO SOLD

How Halloween and Smoke Shop Retail Can Work Together for Better Sales



By Kevin Dankman

If there is one holiday tailor-made for specialty retail, it is Halloween. The season is visual, social, a little rebellious, and built around self-expression - all qualities that already live comfortably inside a good smoke shop. The opportunity is not to turn the store into a costume warehouse. It is to connect the products you already sell with the way adult customers celebrate October.

The size of the opportunity is difficult to ignore. The National Retail Federation projected a record $13.1 billion in Halloween spending for 2025. Its survey found that 78% of celebrants planned to buy decorations and 71% planned to buy costumes. That money will not all be spent in traditional Halloween stores. Customers are also looking for atmosphere, novelty, gifts, party supplies, and items that help make the season feel different from an ordinary month.

Halloween Is a Season, Not a Day

The first mistake retailers make is waiting until the week of October 31. Halloween has grown into a multi-week season of decorating, parties, horror movies, concerts, festivals and social media content. Your campaign should begin while customers are still planning those activities, not after they have already spent their seasonal budget somewhere else.

Start changing the store in late September or early October. Introduce the display, featured products and social theme together so each channel reinforces the others. Then build momentum with a new reason to visit each week: a featured category, a limited accessory drop, an adult costume night, a local artist appearance or a weekend bundle. That approach gives the campaign a beginning, middle and finale instead of relying on one frantic sales day.

Sell the Mood Before the Merchandise

Smoke shop customers already respond to color, lighting, glass displays, artwork and counter presentation. Halloween gives you permission to turn those elements up. A focused palette of black, burnt orange, deep purple or acid green can transform an endcap or front window without making the shop look like a children's party aisle. LED lighting, cobweb texture, vintage horror graphics and dramatic product shadows can create a strong adult atmosphere at a relatively low cost.

The display should lead the customer somewhere. Place a hero product at eye level, surround it with two or three logical add-ons and put a clear price message nearby. Seasonal apparel, horror-themed trays, ash-trays, storage, lighters, odor-control products, candles, pins, patches and locally made art can all help tell the story. Even ordinary core products can feel new when they are edited into a strong seasonal presentation.

Continues On Page 20

The central idea: A smoke shop does not need to become a costume store. It needs to become more relevant to what its adult customers are already doing in October.


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FROM SPOOKY TO SOLD

Build Baskets, Not Just Discounts

A percentage-off sign may move an item, but a well-built solution can raise the entire ticket. Think about the occasions surrounding Halloween and create product groupings around them. A horror-movie-night display might combine a tray, an ashtray, a candle or odor spray, and novelty apparel. A party-ready selection could bring together pocket storage, a lighter, and compact accessories. A collector feature might pair a themed glass piece with cleaning supplies and a display stand.

The products do not always need to be physically packaged together. In many stores, the smarter move is to present them together and give the combination a name. That keeps the offer flexible, lets customers trade up, and makes it easier to protect margin. The goal is to get shoppers thinking in complete setups rather than isolated purchases.

Turn the Store into an Adult Event

Halloween is naturally social, and that makes it an excellent reason to create an in-store event for your 21-and-older customers. A costume night, live art session, local glass artist demonstration, DJ set, or horror-themed product release can turn an ordinary October evening into a traffic generator. A photo wall gives customers something to share, while an apparel or accessory prize keeps the contest connected to merchandise.

The event does not have to be expensive. A two-hour after-work window with a strong theme, a few partners and consistent promotion can be enough. Invite a nearby tattoo shop, clothing brand, artist or food business that reaches the same adult audience. Cross-promotion introduces each business to new customers and gives the event more energy without forcing one store to carry the entire cost.

Make the Staff Part of the Campaign

A display cannot do all the selling. Before the campaign starts, give the team a one-page cheat sheet covering the five hero products, the best feature of each, the ideal add-on, the promotional price and any compliance note. If employees cannot explain why an item belongs in the Halloween feature, they will fall back on ringing up whatever the customer already chose.

Teach the team to open with an occasion-based question: Are you shopping for yourself, looking for a gift, heading to a party or building a movie-night setup? That sounds more natural than immediately pushing a sale and gives the employee useful information. Product knowledge turns the seasonal idea into actual attachment sales.

Use Social Media as a Countdown

Halloween content is easy to recognize and easy to serialize. Use the same colors, display style and campaign name across your storefront, email and social channels. A countdown can feature one product, one staff costume, one display detail or one event reminder at a time. Short videos showing the store transformation can be more effective than a static sale graphic because they give customers a reason to visit in person.

Encourage customers to share photos from the adult event or photo wall, then repost the best content with permission. Keep the call to action direct: visit this weekend, reserve a limited piece, enter the 21+ costume event or ask the staff for the featured setup. Every post should point toward a store action, not simply announce that Halloween exists.

How Halloween and Smoke Shop Retail Can Work Together for Better Sales

Keep the Promotion Adult and Compliant

Halloween can be playful; compliance cannot. Maintain age controls for every regulated sale, train employees to check photo identification as required and keep the campaign clearly aimed at adults. Current FDA guidance says tobacco products may be sold only to customers 21 and older and directs retailers to check photo ID for anyone under 30 who attempts to purchase. Federal rules also prohibit free samples of most tobacco products and impose warning requirements on many forms of advertising.

Avoid kid-oriented cartoons, candy-copying presentation or promotions that could blur the line between an adult specialty store and youth marketing. Put the creative energy into atmosphere, horror, art, fashion and collector culture instead. Because state and local rules can be stricter than federal requirements, review each offer before launch and keep regulated products separate from any giveaway whose legality is uncertain.



Measure What the Monsters Bought

When October ends, do not judge the campaign only by how busy the store felt. Compare average ticket, units per transaction, gross margin and sales by featured category with September and the previous October. Track event-night revenue, promotional redemptions, new customer sign-ups and leftover seasonal inventory. You are looking for the ideas that raised attachment rates or introduced customers to categories they had not purchased before.

Buy seasonal inventory with an exit plan. Limited-quantity designs create urgency, but core items in seasonal colors or presentations can return to the regular sales floor after Halloween. Move true holiday leftovers quickly in early November, document what sold and save the strongest campaign assets for next year. The second Halloween promotion should be easier and more profitable than the first.



The Bigger Opportunity

Halloween works for smoke shop retail because it rewards the things specialty stores can do better than big-box competitors: create atmosphere, curate unusual products, teach customers, support artists and build a local community. The holiday gives you a timely reason to refresh the floor and start new conversations, but the real payoff is bigger than one month's sales.

A successful Halloween campaign can reveal which lifestyle categories deserve more space, which events bring in the right customers, and which staff members know how to build a basket. Treat October as a retail laboratory. Make it visual, keep it adult, train the team and measure the results. Do that, and Halloween will become more than a decoration theme - it will become one of the most useful selling seasons on your calendar.



Sources consulted: National Retail Federation, 2025 Halloween Data and Trends;
U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Selling Tobacco Products in Retail Stores and Advertising and Promotion guidance.

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LONE STAR TAKEOVER:
CHAMPS HITS AUSTIN THIS OCTOBER

By Kevin Dankman

Hold on to your hats, retailers — CHAMPS is roaring back into Austin, and we're doing it bigger, louder, and rowdier than ever. If you thought our first run set a high-water mark for the Lone Star State, wait until you step onto the Palmer floor this fall. With the holiday shopping crush right around the corner, this isn't just another stop on the circuit. It's your prime launchpad for year-end dominance.

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Palmer Events Center

Continues On Page 34

SHOW DETAILS AT A GLANCE

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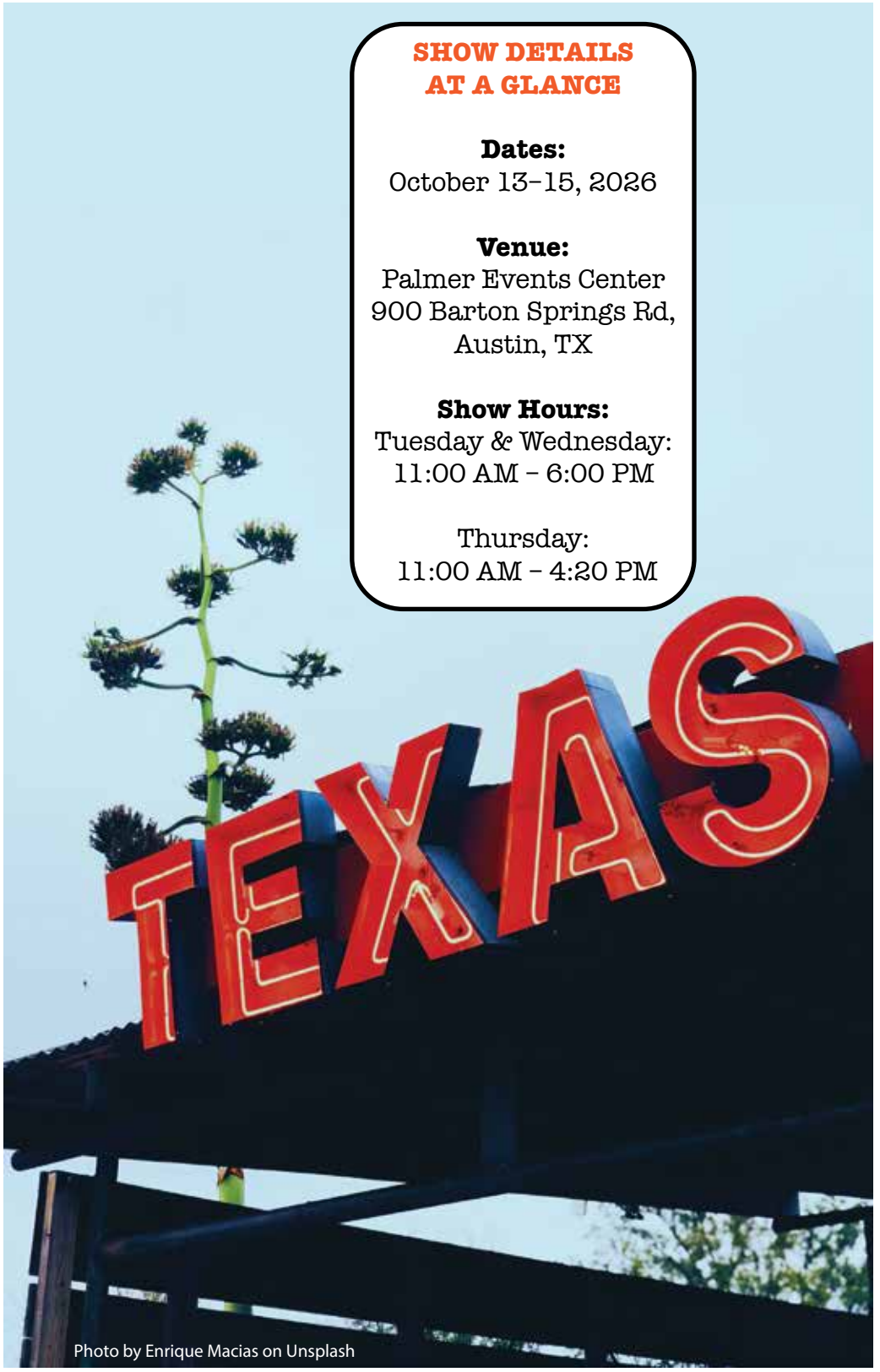


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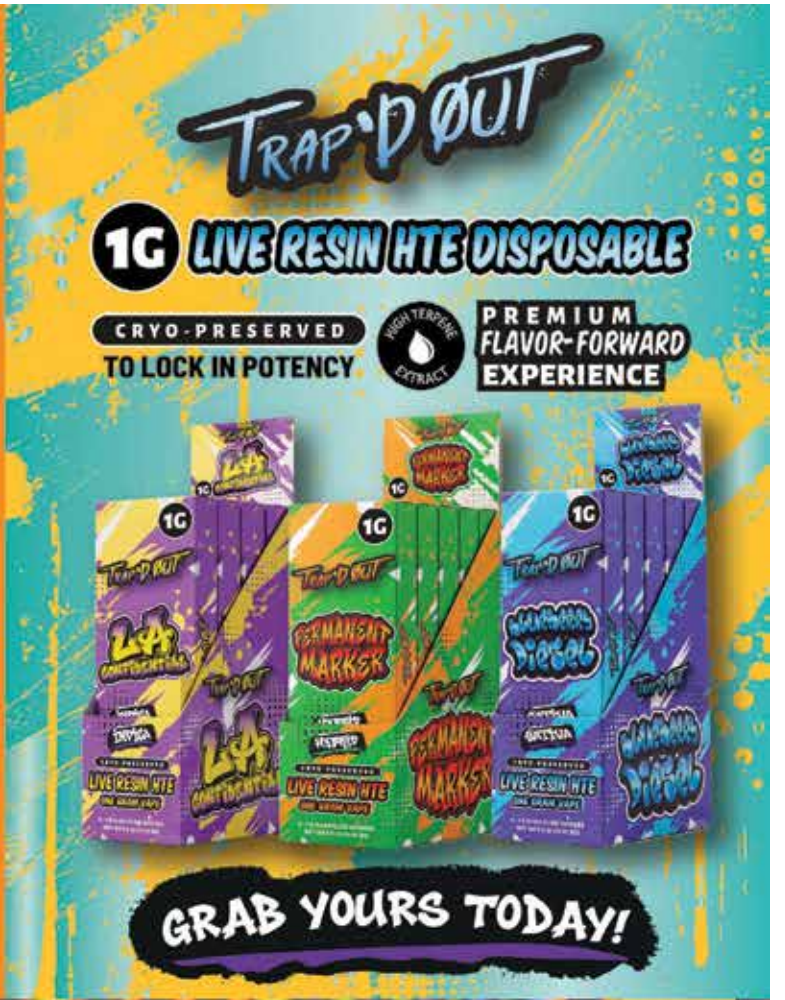
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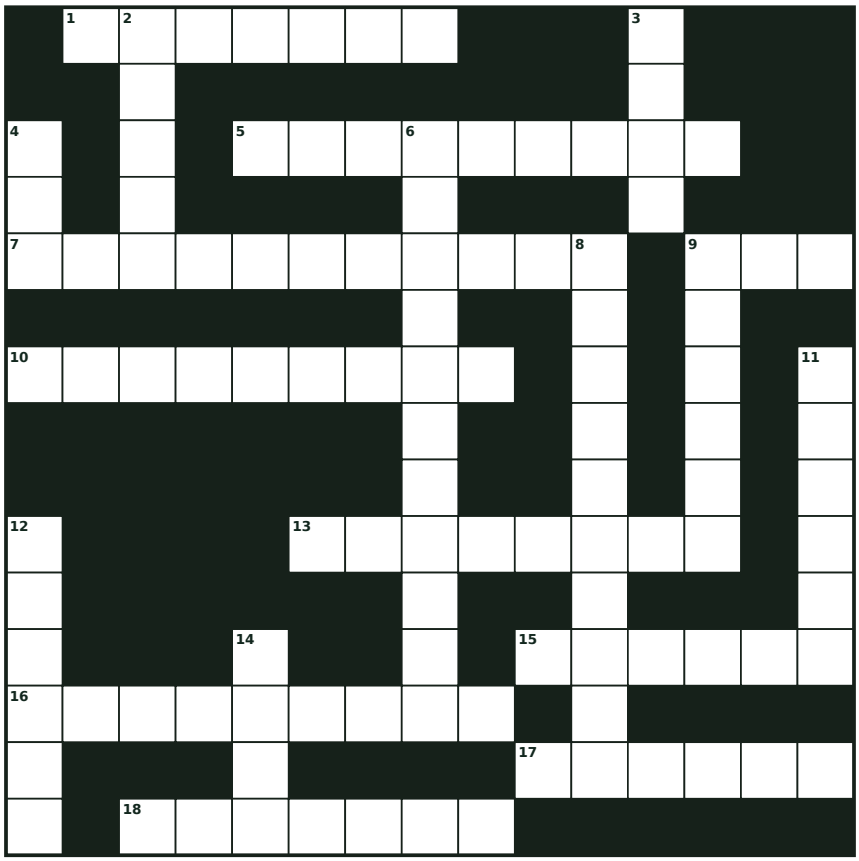

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8. Regulated retail outlet for cannabis products
9. Trade show behind this magazine
11. Familiar retail category paired with sativa
12. Cannabis product designed to be eaten
14. Cannabis crop category also grown for fiber and seed

ANSWER KEY ON PAGE 70

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LONE STAR TAKEOVER:
CHAMPS HITS AUSTIN THIS OCTOBER

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The heartbeat of functional art lives at CHAMPS, and Austin is turning the torches all the way up on and off the showroom floor.

The Goblet Grab Contest: The crowd favorite is back! Collectors, shop owners, and glass connoisseurs: keep your eyes peeled across the American Glass Section. When the call goes out, speed and strategy are everything if you want to walk away with top-shelf headies for pennies on the dollar.



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Continues On Page 37


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CHAMPS HITS AUSTIN THIS OCTOBER

CRASH IN THE HEART OF AUSTIN

If you're still locking in last-minute travel, aim for downtown or South Congress to keep yourself close to the hall. The Palmer Events Center sits right along the scenic shores of Lady Bird Lake, putting you minutes away from vibrant nightlife, world-class dining, and quick rideshare access to both the convention floor and the nightly Glassmith events. Check the official CHAMPS website for any remaining area hotel partner availability before rooms sell out citywide.

Continues On Page 38


South Congress


Lady Bird Lake

LONE STAR TAKEOVER:
CHAMPS HITS AUSTIN THIS OCTOBER

POST-SHOW BITES: WHERE TO HIT AFTER THE AISLES CLEAR

Closing down the floor and hashing out deals all day works up a serious appetite. When the badges come off and it's time to unwind with your crew, hit up these prime evening dinner spots around town:

El Alma: Perched right on Barton Springs Road just moments from the hall, this vibrant cafe and cantina is unbeatable for sunset dining. Head straight up to the multi-level rooftop deck for sweeping views of the downtown skyline while unwinding over duck enmoladas, hot queso fundido, and ice-cold spicy mangoritas or mezcal palomas.

Loro Asian Smokehouse & Bar: A quick skip down South Lamar brings you to this heavy-hitter team-up between Tyson Cole (Uchi) and Aaron Franklin (Franklin Barbecue). It blends Southeast Asian flavor profiles with classic Texas smokehouse technique under a massive canopy of shaded oaks. Grab a seat on the sprawling patio for char siu pork belly, Malaysian chicken curry, and signature frozen boozy slushees.




El Alma


24 Diner

24 Diner: Located right at 6th and North Lamar across Lady Bird Lake, this chef-driven landmark delivers farm-to-table comfort food late into the night. It's the ultimate stop after the nightly Glassmith sessions when you need serious sustenance—famous for their towering chicken and waffles, thick cut-hash bowls, craft smash burgers, and rich milkshakes.

SECURE YOUR PASS TODAY

Don't get caught empty-handed when fourth-quarter foot traffic surges. Pre-register for your buyer badges, download updated vendor floor maps, and get all the latest show updates today at **champstradeshows.com**. See you on the floor in Austin!

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CHAMPS SUMMER SHOW:

Defying Expectations and Delivering Results

By Editorial Staff

This year's circuit has been a wild ride. Between an altered schedule with unusual dates, looming regulatory shifts, and whispers of an industry downturn, skeptics worried the market was in free fall. The CHAMPS Summer Show proved them wrong. Buyers didn't just show up—they flooded the floor, wallets open, hunting for the industry's next big thing. From innovative vape alternatives by Code Red to fresh supplement lines like XUM and PLUR, active purchasing drove the energy all weekend.

The second-night Sample Mixer was the undisputed talk of the show. Vendors showcased product functionality and handed out samples indoors before the crowd transitioned to an epic outdoor after-party. Featuring full legal consumption—flower, dabs, and vapes—alongside a fully stocked bar, the drinks and vibes flowed freely. Multiple buyers called it the best buyer-appreciation event in trade show history.

Continues On Page 48



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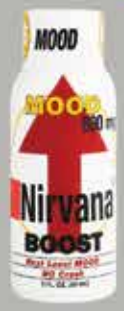
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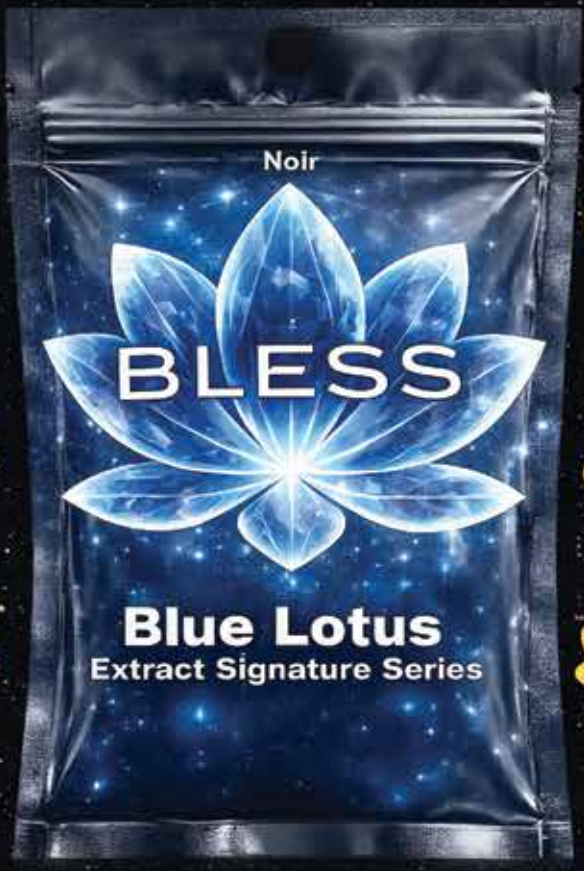
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CHAMPS SUMMER SHOW:

Defying Expectations and Delivering Results

Education was another massive draw, with seminars packed with attendees looking to navigate and grow in the current market:

The Wellness Shift: A focused look at emerging product categories and how to adapt purchasing strategies for the evolving show floor.

Understanding the Bills: A critical breakdown of how to access government information regarding impending legislation and directly understand its impact on retail business.

United States of Kratom: Sponsored by the American Kratom Association, this session outlined the ongoing push to protect the legality of the Kratom plant.

Continues On Page 52





























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CHAMPS SUMMER SHOW:

The Glass Games

Artists battled across six open competitions for a $1,000 grand prize and a trip to the Masters, with $500 for second and $250 for third. The events were overseen by an elite judging panel featuring Solfire Glass, Bobby Snodgrass, and Reed “Swiss Perc”.

The Dr. Dabber Team collaborated with the Glass Games team to host a trio of events that work with their line of vaporizers. These events were very well received, and the pieces came out amazing.

Dr. Dabber Sponsored Events

Dr. Bedazzled (3 Hours): Artists crafted eye-catching, highly functional tops for the Dr. Dabber Switch 2.
1st: Randohm Glass | **2nd:** Tony Kazy | **3rd:** Takoda Madrona

Ghost It (1-Hour Sprint): A high-pressure, 60-minute race to create a fancy, functional top for the Dr. Dabber Ghost.
1st: Tony Kazy | **2nd:** Eternal Flameworks, Noah | **3rd:** Randohm Glass

Bring It In To Fit It In: A no-time-limit showcase of pure craftsmanship to build a top-notch piece for the Dr. Dabber Switch Go.
1st: Eternal Flameworks, Noah | **2nd:** Biohaz Creations | **3rd:** Oddity Glass



Dr. Bedazzled 1st Place
Randohm Glass



Group Shot of Glass Games Contestants



Ghost It 1st Place
Tony Kazy



Dr. Bedazzled 2nd Place
Tony Kazy



Dr. Bedazzled 3rd Place
Takoda Madrona





Ghost It 2nd Place
Noah, Eternal Flameworks



Ghost It 3rd Place
Randohm Glass



Bring It In To Fit In 3rd Place
Oddity Glass



Bring It In To Fit In 1st Place
Noah, Eternal Flameworks



Bring It In To Fit In 2nd Place
Blohaz Creations



Glass Games Team

CHAMPS TRADE SHOWS

DEFYING EXPECTATIONS AND DELIVERING RESULTS



Cryo-Pipe 1st Place
Conversion Glass



Cryo-Pipe 2nd Place
Takoda Madrona



Cryo-Pipe 3rd Place
Cookie Makes Bongs



1st Place Harington
Cumming, Crapper Takoda Madrona



2nd Place
Harington, Cumming, Crapper Slob Glass



3rd Harington
Cumming, Crapper Nerv Glass



20-Minute Games 1st Place
Noah, Eternal Flameworks



20-Minutes Games 2nd Place
Kurtoo Glass

The Open Challenges

Cryo-Pipe (3 Hours): A free-style challenge to build a piece that delivers a chilled hit to beat the August heat.
1st: Conversion Glass | **2nd:** Takoda Madrona | **3rd:** Cookie Makes Bongs

Harington, Cumming, Crapper (3 Hours): A tribute to plumbing history (Google it!), tasking competitors with crafting a pipe built to stand the test of time.
1st: Takoda Madrona | **2nd:** Slob Glass | **3rd:** Nerv Glass

Famous In 20-Minutes Games: The fan-favorite elimination game. Artists brought their own tools and glasses to tackle a mystery bag of assorted glass and a theme. They had exactly 20 minutes to conceptualize and execute, surviving intense rounds for the crown.
1st: Eternal Flameworks, Noah | **2nd:** Kurtoo @ The Glass Smith | **3rd:** Tony Kazy

Continues On Page 56



20-Minutes Games 3rd Place
Tony Kazy


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CHAMPS SUMMER SHOW:
Defying Expectations and Delivering Results

Ultimately, the real winners were the vendors and the buyers. This show showcased the true resilience of the industry and proved exactly why CHAMPS Trade Show is the leading event in the market. While other shows have been ghost towns and flops for many, CHAMPS was still busy and remains the most fun show on the circuit.
































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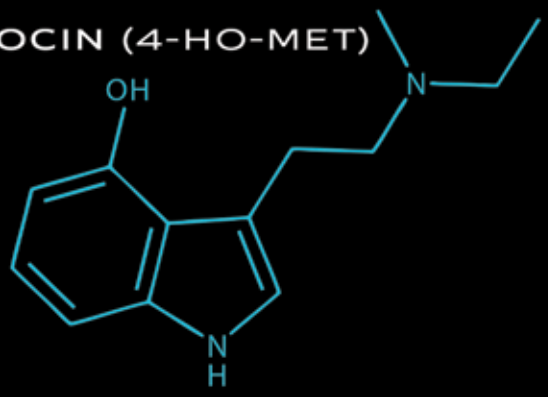
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- Less neurotoxic
- Not federally scheduled or banned



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5MAPB an unscheduled **empathagen** similar in experience to **MDMA**. Overconsumption can cause **dehydration, hyperthermia, and worse.**

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CHAMPS SUMMER SHOW:

Defying Expectations and Delivering Results


















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GLASS GAMES



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SUN, DEALS, AND NEON NIGHTS:

By Mick Burnwell

Forget freezing temperatures and stuffy expo halls. When CHAMPS lands in Fort Lauderdale this November, business meets high-octane South Florida energy. We're talking world-class networking by day and legendary nightlife by night, all wrapped up along the sun-drenched Intracoastal waterways.

Stock your shelves for the holiday rush, lock in premier wholesale deals, and rub shoulders with industry heavyweights—then trade the show floor for the hottest cocktail lounges, waterfront clubs, and after-hours spots Florida has to offer.

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CHAMPS Fort Lauderdale Goes Big This November!





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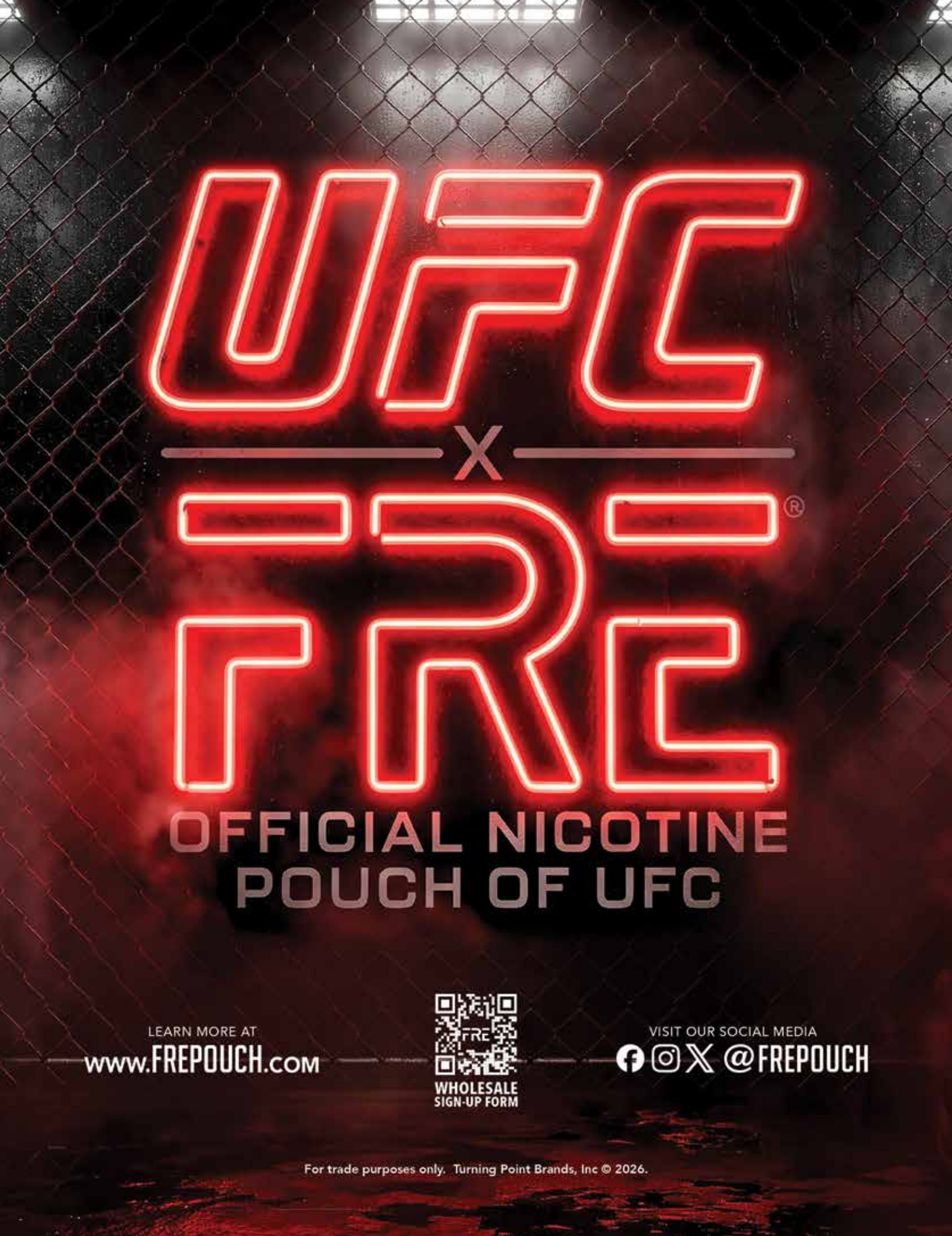
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Continues On Page 69


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SUN, DEALS, AND NEON NIGHTS:
CHAMPS Fort Lauderdale Goes Big This November!

When 6:00 PM Hits: Fort Lauderdale & Miami Nightlife

The closing bell on the show floor is just the warm-up. South Florida is world-renowned for after-hours entertainment, giving you the ultimate playground to celebrate big deals and connect outside the booth.

Las Olas Boulevard & Riverwalk (Minutes Away): Head straight to Downtown Fort Lauderdale's premier strip. Grab high-end steak and cocktails at **YOLO / O Lounge**, dive into the open-air riverfront party and DJ sets at **The Wharf Fort Lauderdale**, or hit **American Social** for late-night vibes right along the water.

Continues On Page 71

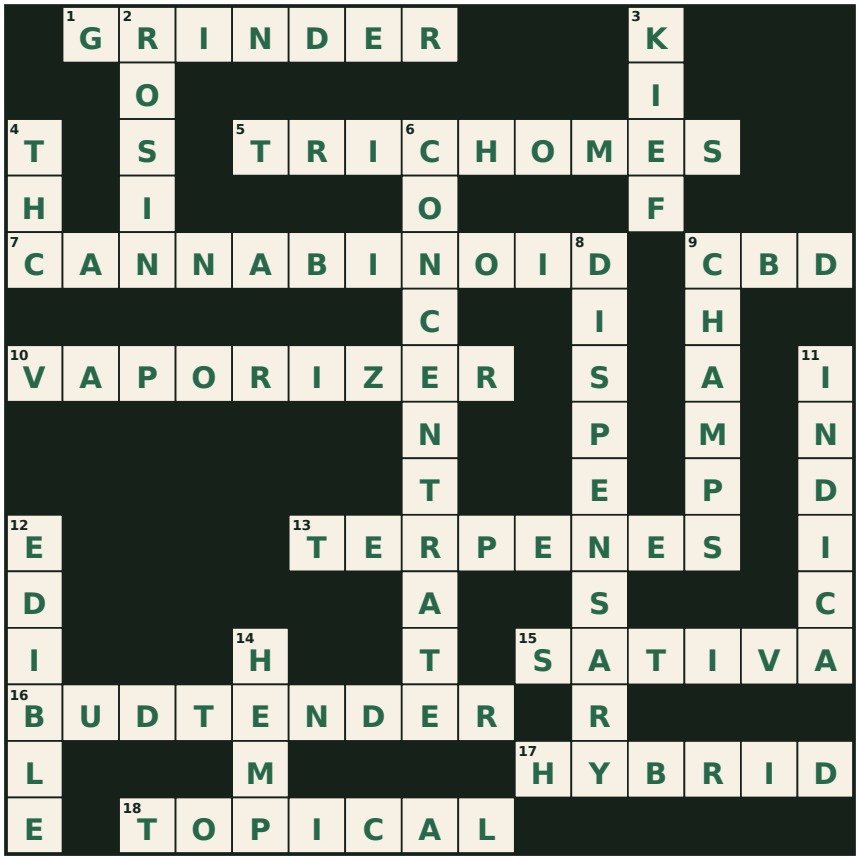


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ANSWER KEY



ACROSS ANSWERS

1. Accessory that breaks flower into smaller pieces [GRINDER]
5. Tiny resin-producing structures that give flower its frosty look [TRICHOMES]
7. One of the plant compounds abbreviated THC, CBD, or CBG [CANNABINOID]
9. Three-letter abbreviation for cannabidiol [CBD]
10. Device designed to heat material without burning it [VAPORIZER]
13. Aromatic compounds behind many familiar plant scents [TERPENES]
15. Familiar retail category paired with indica [SATIVA]
16. Customer-facing dispensary specialist [BUDTENDER]
17. Category associated with mixed genetic lineage [HYBRID]
18. Product applied to the skin [TOPICAL]

DOWN ANSWERS

2. Solventless concentrate made with heat and pressure [ROSIN]
3. Loose collection of sifted trichome heads [KIEF]
4. Three-letter abbreviation for tetrahydrocannabinol [THC]
6. Product category containing a high proportion of selected cannabis compounds [CONCENTRATE]
8. Regulated retail outlet for cannabis products [DISPENSARY]
9. Trade show behind this magazine [CHAMPS]
11. Familiar retail category paired with sativa [INDICA]
12. Cannabis product designed to be eaten [EDIBLE]
14. Cannabis crop category also grown for fiber and seed [HEMP]

SUN, DEALS, AND NEON NIGHTS:
CHAMPS Fort Lauderdale Goes Big This November!

Fort Lauderdale Beachfront Strip:
Cruise down A1A to iconic oceanfront hangouts like **The Elbo Room** for live rock and classic beachside grit, or sip elevated craft cocktails with skyline views at local rooftop lounges.

The Magic City Calling (Miami & South Beach):
Got fuel left in the tank? Take a quick 35-minute hop south or ride the Brightline train straight into Downtown Miami. Hit legendary nightlife staples like **E11EVEN**, dance until dawn at world-famous mega-clubs like **LIV**, or soak up the art, basslines, and mezcal bars across **Wynwood**.

Grab your crew, lock in your discounted hotel room before October 19th, and get ready for a trade show experience that works hard and plays even harder!



E11even


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TRADE SHOWS
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A COLLECTABLE PIN
FOR THE FIRST 1000
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CHAMPS TRADE SHOWS
THE PREMIER COUNTERCULTURE B2B EXPO SINCE 1999

GLASS GAMES



GOBLET GRAB & OFF-SITE ACTION!

It wouldn't be a CHAMPS show without the elite of the functional glass scene! This fall, the Glass Games arena returns with live showcases, competitions, and the fan-favorite **Goblet Grab Contest.**

THE PRIZE IS WRONG, BOB

A Plinko-style game where buyers can win free product for their stores!

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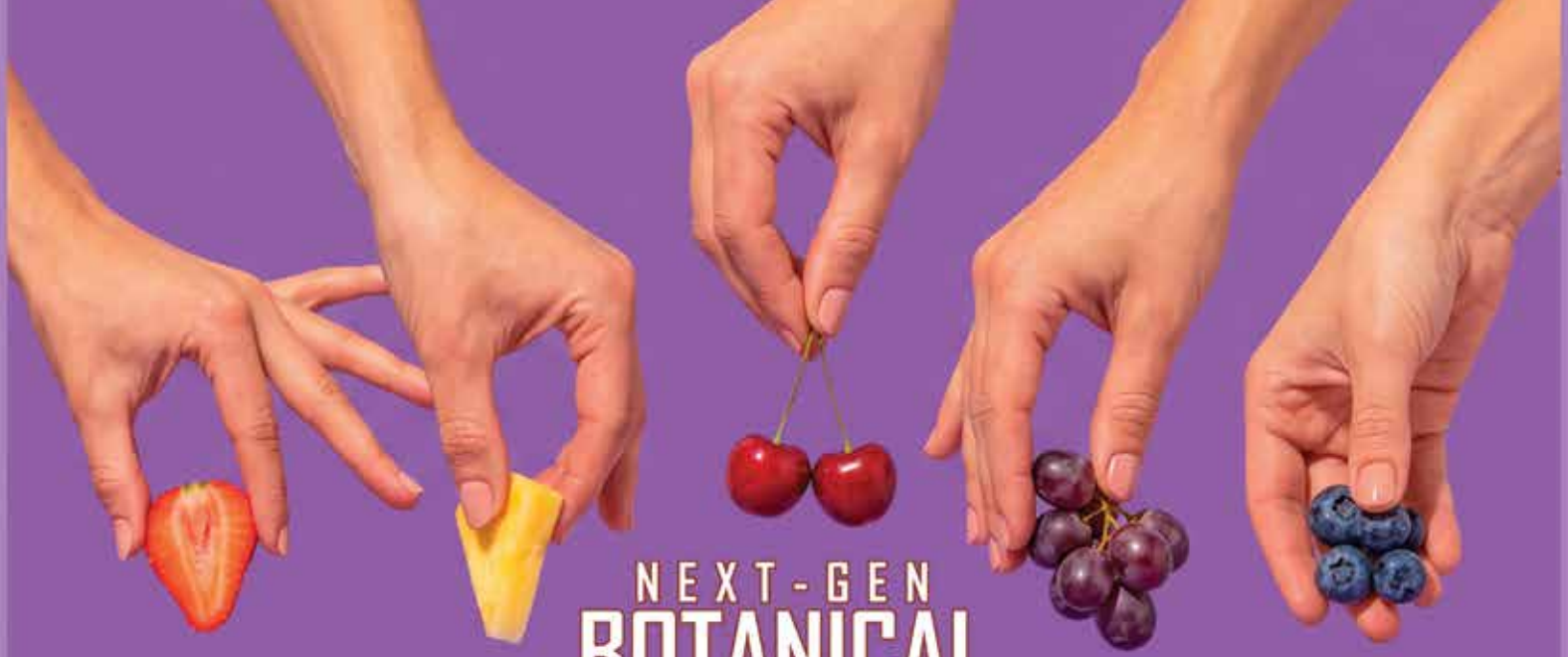
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