

BULLETT

Culture

From Weed Sluts to Hello Kitty Pipes: The Femme-ization of Getting High

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It's hard to believe that just a few decades ago, the girls lighting up in La Perla on your Instagram feeds, lived only in the fantasy of rap lyrics—they weren't real, and they definitely weren't visible to the mainstream. But fast forward to now, when what's popular can change with a single tweet and women have used social media to take ownership over the way they are presented, particularly when it comes to smoking weed. Even though she might be a major eye-roll, the girl in the thong blowing smoke rings on your feed is actually a mark of progress—the direct result of millions of raised fists and a generational shift in attitudes toward femininity, drugs, and girls doing well, whatever the fuck they want.

After all, in the digital age, presentation is everything. And the media has done a rather shitty job of illustrating women and their relationship to pot. In movies, the quintessential stoner girl is always a goofy tomboy, her own baked version of the Manic Pixie Dream. But even then, her status as a pothead is never really her own. It's always either a reflection of her political leanings, her aversion to adulthood or the type of guys she likes to bang—with smoking being an activity she only does to get near them. Mary Jane from *Half Baked*, Donna in *That '70s Show*, even the quirky girl from *Knocked Up*—these stoned secondary characters serve only as a trope, never a reality, fetishized and glamorized in the same way as every other on-screen girl.

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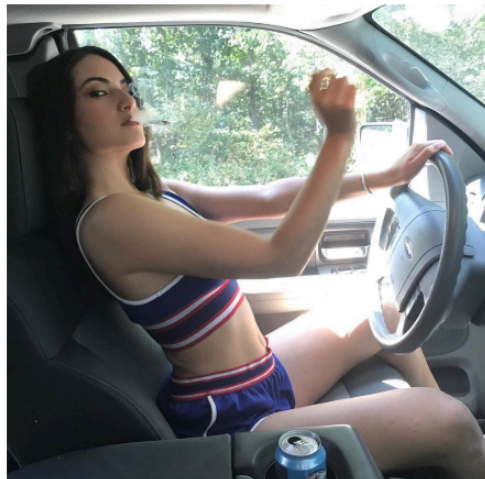
And it's not like the news has done much better. *The Today Show* recently aired a segment called "Stiletto Stoners," profiling professional women who smoke weed and felt the need to come out of the dispensary—err, closet. *How cute*. Of course, the anti-stoner stoner opted for a Deep Throat style disguise — an altered voice and black film over her silhouette. Matt Lauer's biting disapproval was palpable and the mystery woman found herself throw out lines of defense like, "I'm not like those young girls online!" But what these women fail to recognize is, that for those young girls, smoking weed doesn't equal being bad. Instead, these girls have grown up with a sense of ownership over their bodies and less desire to run their choices past men—even if that choice is to shamelessly get high.

But enough about the tote bag tokers who perpetuate the non-inclusive interests of some feminists and frankly, make smoking weed look bad. The unapologetic class of grass smoking women don't have time for that shit—they're busy engaging with the drug publicly and provocatively, in their underwear online. On image-heavy sites like Instagram and Tumblr, the cultural shift is clear—girls from all backgrounds are baked, and they're not afraid to show it. And because social media allows people to control and curate their own images, women are using it as a tool to show their complex connection to themselves and the drug. That's the point—this weed femme movement is a reflection of the deep and multifaceted modern female life.



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Take @weed_slut_420, one of the most popular weed girls online. She regularly posts about her smoking habits and sexual exploits, pole dancing for the camera just as often as smokes for it, while documenting her day-to-day activities with a sense of humor and glazed eyes. But she's also relatable, sometimes covered in makeup and other times, in an oversized t-shirt and Uggs. The message is: weed is something that she smokes, not who she is, and really, she doesn't give a fuck. That's one of social media's greatest gifts: its ability to capture and present people's many different layers, refuting the flat and one-note characterizations that society has placed on women, always.

The artist-turned-stripped-turned smoking (literally) sex icon, whose real name is Zoe Kestan, toggles between posing spread-eagle and not wanting to show her body, either choice an example of her autonomy—and it's a far cry from those *High Times* covers and '90s pop videos. Charlo Greene, another Instaleb who met the world's computer screens through the "Fuck It I Quit" viral video, hosts a weekly YouTube talk show about guess what? Pot. In it, she's contoured to God and debuts a new wig each week, but also delivers a deep and somehow approachable analysis on topics as diverse as mother-daughter smoke sessions, trans relationships and mental health. While sex appeal may be part of the attraction (at least for creepy dudes online), it's the unique way these women explore who they are that's so appealing, especially when that definition includes smoking pot.



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And it's that ability to craft a new identity that can be easily shared with the online community, that sets our generation apart. As millennials, we're obsessed with the idea of being 'unique,' from dyeing our hair to decorating our phones. It's no wonder we've brought that same attitude to getting high. With the rapid legalization of weed across the U.S., legitimate businesses have started to cater to young women and their love of THC. Milk Makeup, the beauty venture from cool-kid establishment Milk Studios, makes oil blotters that look like skins; Sweet Flag Shop sells pipes in Millennial pink and structures their site like a menu, allowing shoppers to pick accessories for the beginning, middle and end of their experience. Even Whoopi Goldberg has created a line of bud-infused products to help with period pain. And yeah, all of this probably has something to do with feminism going pop. But while there is a valid argument concerning who profits when hard-fought issues start trending online, the femme pot movement has created space for women entrepreneurs to start businesses, develop products and take control over their image in a historically male-dominated field. Plus, they're doing so in unabashedly cute and campy ways—so I'm never going to be mad about it.

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Of course, just because weed is all about peace and love or whatever, doesn't mean the new female-friendly era is without its own problems. Even though all kinds of chicks get baked, the ones who profit financially and get to host red carpets are the same kind who do everywhere else—the skinny, white and middle class kind. That's not to invalidate the beauty of seeing someone like Rihanna, who's as unapologetic about her smoking as she is about her blackness, it's just stating a fact: White Feminism persists everywhere—even in supposedly 'cool' spaces—and it sucks. So, while weed culture is helping to equalize things on the internet, it is having trouble translating IRL. Still, in the spirit of progress, it's only right we give society a soft palm clap for the advances it has made in the name of femme-ing pot. The rapid pace by which weed girls have been accepted into the cultural fold is celebratory, and if that's any indication where the country might be headed, it's probably a good sign. But until we get there—or at least, until Trump is out of office—you might as well get really, really high.