

Bethenny Frankel's Attempt at Appetite-Suppressing Skinnygirl Pot Draws Furor

By Juliette Fairley

Bethenny Frankel is reportedly joining the ranks of Bob Marley's family with her intent to launch Skinnygirl Marijuana that suppresses rather than activates the appetite during use. Critics are already slamming the reality tv star for being greedy and a bad role model.

"It is an outrageous, immoral, greedy money-making scheme that Bethenny Frankel is perpetrating," said Carole Lieberman, a psychiatrist and author of the 2010 book *Bad Girls*. "She is simply and literally capitalizing on the legalization of pot in some states and promoting it by making it seem sexy."

While Marley Natural has partnered with the private equity firm Privateer Holdings to offer Jamaican cannabis strains inspired by those the reggae singer Bob Marley enjoyed, Skinnygirl Marijuana is expected to be a specially engineered strain

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Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

designed not to give users the munchies.

Frankel tweeted her impressions of legal pot while visiting Aspen, Colo., in December, but the Real Housewives of New York star will have some legalities to uphold before launching a munchy-free brand.

“The Federal Trade Commission and Food and Drug Administration restrictions would seem to come into play in terms of representing what the end product is for and what result it can have,” says Robert Hoban, a cannabis attorney in Denver. “I doubt it would take hold among users but for perhaps one or two very boutique high-end pot shops.”

The closely knit legal-pot community could create significant barriers to entry for an upstart such as a Skinnygirl Marijuana brand.

“Bethenny can expect to see resistance unless she’s willing to learn, understand the process and get her hands dirty in the fields and farms to create product from scratch and organically,” said GFarmaLabs CEO Ata Gonzalez, whose edible brand Liquid Gold makes marijuana-infused chocolates. “If she has no passion for the craft, she’ll likely alienate industry growers by seeing cannabis as nothing but a quick cash grab.”

If Frankel can pull it off, a brand of pot marketed to women could be

lucrative.

The amount of pot bought annually by Americans is an estimated \$50 billion, according to Viridian Capital & Research. Only up to \$2.5 billion of it is bought legally.

“Bethenny is in this for the money and notoriety of doing something rebellious,” Lieberman says. “She apparently doesn’t care that she is becoming the pied piper who lures people into psychological and physical decline.”

Skeptics contend that Frankel is arriving a little too late to the pot party. “Strains that suppress the appetite already exist,” Gonzalez says. “Anyone who has a working knowledge of the different types of cannabinoids present in the plant will know that strains high in THCV are a known inhibitor of the munchy-causing effects of THC and will actively suppress the appetite.”

Tetrahydrocannabivarin is known to modify the effects of Tetrahydrocannabinol; the most commonly known strain among Colorado users that suppresses the appetite is Blue Dream.

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Other popular appetite-

suppressing strains include OGGhost Train Haze, XJ-13 and Doug’s Varin.

“Only time will tell how well Bethenny’s pot product will be received,” Alfiere says. “If a retail establishment sees favorable THCV numbers in a strains test data, I don’t see why they wouldn’t call it diet and directly compete with Skinnygirl Marijuana.” ■