

Judd Rench
Bula Kava House
3115 SE Division St.
Portland, OR 97202

Matthew Masifilo
Kavafied
PO Box 173247
Tampa, FL 33672

December 8, 2017

Dear Kava Enthusiasts,

Kava has a lot of room to grow as an industry, and the relationship between vendors and potential customers can be tenuous. As we know, kava doesn't necessarily taste good and isn't chemically addictive. Add in the prevalent hesitation to use kava due to the past liver scare and you've got a product that tends to be a hard sell. As vendors we feel that it's important to help foster the growth of the industry to move the relationship between customers and this magical plant forward. If a vendor is honoring kava history and culture, selling quality products with honesty and integrity, takes care of its customers, and shows others in the business equal respect, that vendor has our support in its endeavors. The last thing we need is attacks on vendors doing good things to grow the kava industry.

As vendors, Bula Kava House and Kavafied talk with each other and others in the industry about kava, opportunities, ideas, and we share industry insight. We know that there's room for mutual success, and that the success of others will contribute to our own. Unfortunately not every vendor, group, and person always "plays nice". Recently Matt, the founder of Kavafied, was contacted by Larry Newton. Mr. Newton is the online marketing coordinator for Gourmet Hawaiian Kava and is a member of the self-proclaimed consumer advocacy group known as True Kava. Mr. Newton reached out to offer marketing services to Kavafied. In an email he explained how he would promote Kavafied at the expense of other businesses. He named Bula Kava House specifically, but implied others as well. Here is a direct quote from that first email:

"The "boutique" kava vendor will be featured on a Web Site, reviewed, and a list of reasons why people should buy from him will be calculated and repeated over

and over again until our subscribers get the message. The campaigns are meant to bring the small vendor to the forefront but subliminally will also have “ideas” which hurt the competition. The competition is “any non-boutique kava vendor”. As an example, we sold the 250 lbs of micronized at the same time as BKH’s marketing firm put out his Black Friday/Cyber Monday promotion. In a word, ‘Ouch’. The Kava market is limited and there are going to be winners and at the expense of others.”

In a subsequent email, a post on an online kava forum that details the regular inclusion of stems in some Tongan kava, which decreases the quality of the powder, was referenced. Mr. Newton foresaw being able to "overcome" the information presented in the post, and use the post to attack Bula Kava House specifically. Another quote:

"I think we can overcome the post by Henry and turn it into a nitemare for your competitors (if you know who I mean). I’m ready to take that post to the hoop..."

Both of us, Matt of Kavafied and Judd of Bula Kava House, understand that we do in fact 'know who he means' in the above quote, and that is Bula Kava House. It's important to note that the Tongan Kava that Bula Kava house sells is free of stems. Turning a post about stems included in Tongan kava into a "nitemare" for Bula Kava House would necessitate implying inaccuracies and/or flat out lying.

Is there anything illegal about the marketing approach of Mr. Newton? As of now, no. Although if subsequent marketing details falsehoods about any vendor, that will cross the line and there will be legal ramifications. The problem that we have with all this is that it's bad for the industry and is not fostering a positive environment. People in the kava industry should be supporting those of us that work tirelessly to positively grow that industry. We have overcome many obstacles and will encounter many more. There should not be efforts to scare prospective customers away from vendors doing positive things.

Unethical and negative attacks on vendors that are positively promoting kava have no place in this business. Such negativity goes against the spirit and culture of our beloved root. Kava is a sacred plant. It's been used for millenia to bring people together and to celebrate. We see this from nakamals and kalapus in the pacific islands, to kava bars and back yard barbecues in the US. We hope to continue this tradition as the kava industry grows and hope that others that work in the industry decide to do the same moving forward. We encourage customers and kava enthusiasts to support vendors

who help improve the community. There are plenty of us out there. Many thanks to you all.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Judd Rensch in black ink.

Judd Rensch
Founder, Bula Kava House

Handwritten signature of Matthew Masifilo in black ink.

Matthew Masifilo
Founder, Kavafied