



CASE STUDY

Washington's Vashon Velvet Growing Craft Cannabis Under Illumitex LEDs



Photos taken by Vashon Velvet's Patrick Rooney show cannabis plants basking in the trademark pink light cast by Illumitex LED grow lights.

It's a rare endeavor that produces legal, hydroponically grown cannabis under LED grow lights in a horse barn on an island reachable only by ferry. Oh, and it's owned and operated by a mother-daughter duo.

It's real and it's called Vashon Velvet. It's the brainchild of Chief Operating Officer Susan Reid, her daughter Ivy Gress (Director of Marketing and Sales) and their Master Grower and part-owner Patrick Rooney.

Located on Vashon Island, a small land mass in Puget Sound near Seattle, Vashon Velvet produces a boutique-style cannabis that draws rave reviews up and down the Northwest Coast. Grown in small batches to ensure the finest quality, the hand-crafted product's devout fan base includes Seattle techies and baby boomers looking for quality product that harkens back to their youth.

With sustainability top of mind, The Vashon Velvet team knew from the outset that they wanted



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A choice for sustainability



to use LED lights to grow their crop, even though they were hearing over and over again from other growers that they wouldn't be able to produce a good product under LED lights.

Rooney says the Vashon Velvet team had talked to other growers who used "cheap LED fixtures from China" but weren't pleased with the quality of the lights or of the plants under the lights. "We were really disappointed," he says. Undaunted, the team continued the search and eventually found Illumitex. "We realized, after looking at some of the options, that Illumitex LED lights were at a different level," says Rooney. "It's a very well-made product, and we like the science behind the grow lights."

The Vashon Velvet growing facility, housed in a refurbished horse barn on the south end of the verdant island, now utilizes 60 NeoSol DS grow lights in its 200-plant operation.

Vashon Velvet cannabis "We set out to grow very high-quality cannabis with minimum environmental impact," says Rooney. "And we're doing that. Our electricity use is one-third what it would be using HID lighting. And we don't have to have expensive, energy-sucking cooling systems, either. We're proud of our small carbon footprint."

The VV team is pleased with the quality of the product the LED lights help produce. "The plants respond much better to the LED lights," says Rooney. "The plants branch out more, get more bushy – this allows us to produce more product in a smaller space."

CASE STUDY JOB SPECIFICS

Customer: **Vashon Velvet**
Sector: **Horticulture**
Plant/crop: **Cannabis**
Location: **Vashon Island, Washington**
Solution: **Illumitex NeoSol DS**
Results: **Reduced energy usage; excellent product**



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Superior bud density

“The bud density is superior, too,” says Rooney. “The buds tend to pack on more weight under the LEDs. The HID bud is fluffier and bigger, but not as weighty. If I’m getting the same or slightly more yield from the LEDs, and saving a ton of energy, it’s a no-brainer to go with the LEDs.”

“The working environment is so much nicer, too,” he adds. The heat generated from legacy lighting can make for an uncomfortably miserable workplace.

Rooney says he really likes the NeoSol DS’s dimming feature. “At first we thought HID would give us better internodal spacing during the flowering phase, but we quickly learned that the dimming ability on the DS allows us to control that.”

Vashon Velvet sells to a few select shops in Western Washington; customers appreciate the special attention Vashon Velvet lavishes on its plants. They know they’ll get a consistent and high-quality product. “We’ve had a really good response to our product,” Rooney says. “People love hearing that it’s grown with LEDs.”

Vashon Velvet works with Illumitex distributor North Coast Electric to secure and maintain the lights. “They have great customer service,” says Rooney.

Rooney says while Vashon Velvet doesn’t have definitive plans to expand just yet, “We’re always talking about what’s next. And we know that if we were going to install any new lights, they would definitely be Illumitex.”

