

Illuminating Dagmar

Modern function meets timeless beauty in Dagmar Design's one-of-a-kind lighting fixtures, antiques and furniture.

By Kelly Sweeney

Born in the late 1970s as Dagmar Lamps, Dagmar Design has grown into a Los Angeles trade secret. Started by European artist Dagmar and her husband, Dagmar Lamps was originally a lampshade atelier complete with wiring department. The company drew inspiration from the phrase, "Where modern function meets timeless beauty." When they retired in the '90s, Dagmar chose to turn the company over to her niece, Hana Zatloukal.

Zatloukal, born and raised in Czechoslovakia, emigrated to the United States in 1985 at the age of 25 and began working in Dagmar's workshop. She took evening classes in interior design while working and raising a five-year-old daughter. She

cites this as a challenging time in her life as she was also acclimating to a new lifestyle.

Focusing on the details of history and architecture inspire Zatloukal and she enjoys using her imagination to create something out of an overlooked piece. "I think that in today's modern architecture the lighting design industry focuses mostly on pure function." She feels that it is important to incorporate decorative elements into an interior to make the space more personal and unique.

Since taking over as owner in 1993, Zatloukal has metamorphosed Dagmar Design into a complete lighting workshop, antique gallery and, more recently, a line of reproduction furnishings. A wide



Featured lamps (left to right): Monterey (reproduction), Borgio (reproduction), Frammento (antique), Lorenzo (reproduction) and Renaissance (antique).



range of lighting options is available, from antique lamps and chandeliers to hand-carved, gilded reproduction lamps and lamps created from architectural fragments. "The biggest challenge," Zatloukal reflects, "was taking the little workshop to the next level and collecting my own inventory of unusual objects to turn into decorative lighting." She believes "pretty much anything could be turned into a lamp," and has succeeded in doing

so with stone balustrades, wrought iron door knockers, zinc roof finials and altar sticks. She mentions her all-time favorite is a fragment of an old French terra-cotta statue that she wired onto a simple, modern Lucite base.

The antique lamps, chandeliers and furniture are collected during Zatloukal's buying trips to Europe, which she tries to take at least twice a year. Her favorite destinations are the antique shows in the south of France where the dealers are from as far north as Sweden and as far south as Sicily. "The dealers bring their trucks loaded with 'treasures,'" she states and adds, "There is nothing more inspiring than driving off the freeway in France or Italy and finding a little antique shop or, even better, running into a local flea market in some random village."

All of the lamps available at Dagmar can be accessorized with custom lampshades that are crafted from parchment paper. Each shade is oiled, glazed, brushed and mottled before it is painted. The silver or gold leaf designs

Zatloukal's favorite piece – a fragment of a French terra-cotta statue wired on a Lucite base.

adorning many of the handmade shades are a Dagmar signature.

The workshop is located at the back of the showroom, which allows Zatloukal to communicate her creative ideas to her team and provide them insight throughout the day. She is happiest when she is designing and states that the most rewarding part is seeing the finished product and placing it in the showroom. Her hope is that all the lamps that come out of the Dagmar workshop contribute to the uniqueness of their new homes.

Zatloukal states that some of the trends in home furnishings today are modern, retro and minimalist. "I don't really like going too ex-



Dagmar Design's first furniture creation – a cocktail table with an acrylic top and antique wood fragments for legs.



Dagmar Design owner Hana Zatloukal at the showroom.

treme either way." Her answer: combining unique and authentic designs with acrylic. Her newest venture is transitioning from lighting design to furniture. After joining forces with French furniture designer Françoise Paris, her first piece was created – a cocktail table that features a combination of acrylic and antique wood fragments.

The secret of success according to Zatloukal? "To be a buyer and seller in one person." She believes this is the only way to fulfill her clients' needs. As such, she has no plans to open additional showrooms in the future. Her goal is to have the Dagmar Design line of reproduction furnishings represented in showrooms nationwide.

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