



# Full-Color Prague

*A design scene blossoms  
in the Czech capital.*

BY JOANN PLOCKOVA PHOTOGRAPHY BY NANNA DÍS

**N**OW IS THE TIME TO BE IN PRAGUE," Zorya jewelry designer Daniel Posta declares. "The people who went abroad in the 1990s [following the fall of communism] came back with a new energy." He adds, "Now there is life on the street, with cafés and cultural events. Prague is not as gray as it once was."

**Lucie Koldova (left)  
and her studio.**

"There is a big design boom in Prague," furniture designer Helena Darbujanova concurs. "Sort of like a flood, as if a dam had opened up. Just five years ago, it looked like there were no designers here." In 2014 Darbujanova set up her first showroom, just down the hill from Zorya, on Veverkova street – an area that has recently come to life with venues that include Bistro 8 and Page Five art and design bookstore.

The design scene has spread throughout the rest of the city too. I've called Prague home for close to a decade and, lately, nearly every time I venture out, I stumble upon a new showroom, shop, or studio. Blending renowned Czech craftsmanship with a wholly original modern aesthetic, the country's designers have attracted attention at the major international design fairs and at Prague's annual Designblok, which marks its 18th year this fall.

## *Style & Design*

Clockwise from left:  
Prague's Old Town, Lavmi  
wallpaper, and a Helena  
Darbujanova "Macaron."



Here, a few local favorites to check out on your next visit.

### **LUCIE KOLDOVA: Glass Master**

Lucie Koldova made a name for herself with her Muffin lamps, which combine hand-blown Czech glass and oak. (Look for them lighting up corners of Prague's Mandarin Oriental hotel.) She created the lamps for Czech glass manufacturer Brokis, continuing the country's centuries-old glass-making tradition.

Koldova also designs furniture, including a two-tiered writing desk (around \$1,900) with gently curved back edges, plus a series of carpets and, this year, vases for Brokis. Find her work at Prague shops, such as Qubus + Krehky, and at her frequent gallery shows throughout Europe. *Qubus + Krehky, Ramova 3; luciekoldova.com.*

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handicraft amongst the  
designers here.”***

### **KLARA NADEMLYNSKA: Fashion Innovator**

In 1998 the city's fashion scene was confined to Parizska street – home to Louis Vuitton, Tiffany, and Prada – and the mainstream brands of Na Prikope street. That's when Klara Nademlynska established her label and opened her boutique in between the two, just off Prague's Old Town Square on Dlouha. With Nademlynska leading the charge, the area blossomed as the city's hub for high-end Czech fashion.

Nademlynska spent ten years honing her skills in Paris before returning to Prague,

where she collaborates with local producers. “There is a base of handicraft amongst the designers here,” she says. Pieces from a recent line include a classic tunic with billowing sleeves and a distinctively cut neckline (\$900) and a long, bright-blue coat in a cozy faux fur (\$1,100). She also produces a line of “amulet” necklaces with animal and flower pendants, a limited-edition animal-print hat designed for legendary Czech hat manufacturer Tonak, and leather gloves embellished with rabbit fur from a local one-man atelier. “I am happy to cooperate with people who are still doing things in the

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Zorya designers Zdenek Vacek (left) and Daniel Posta and their "Virus" line (at right).



### *tip*

"Prague's incredible architectural heritage also includes modern constructions such as the **Dancing House** by Vlado Milunic and Frank Gehry. Visit its top floor, where **Ginger and Fred**, one of the city's best restaurants, offers exceptional views of Prague's landmarks. (Be sure to make a reservation.) And don't miss the rooftop terrace and Glass Bar in summer."

– **Natalia Khoshchynka**,  
Virtuoso travel advisor,  
Hollywood, Florida

traditional way," she says. *Dlouha 3; klara.nademlynska.cz.*

### **LAVMI: Wallpaper Wizards**

Jan Slovak and Babeta Ondrova's Lavmi wallpaper has brightened spaces in Prague and beyond since 2009. "Czechs' memories of wallpaper are associated with the difficulty of scraping it off the walls during communism," says Slovak. "At that time, the quality was quite poor and it was all the same." Lavmi's clean, simple graphic patterns reflect Ondrova's modern, bright aesthetic and eye for color.

The pair have expanded their brand to include interior accessories, from tea towels and table runners to clocks, cushions, and paper pendant lights, as well as kids' collections in colorful, playful motifs. What's more, other shops have opened on the

streets surrounding Lavmi's flagship showroom in Prague's center, adjacent to Petrske Square. *Zlatnicka 12; lavmi.com.*

### **ZORYA: Jewelry Duo**

From their studio and showroom on a quiet backstreet next to Stromovka Park, Daniel Posta and Zdenek Vacek craft necklaces, bracelets, rings, and earrings, employing traditional goldsmithing techniques with experimental twists. "We work with geometry, the elemental," Posta says.

Zorya jewelry mixes steel, precious metals, pearls, black diamonds, and textiles in pieces that range from delicate to daring. The pair's "Virus" collection, a series of thick necklaces and bracelets made from linen rope and cultivated crystals (\$360 to \$1,170), won the prestigious Czech Grand Design Award in 2011. Beyond their open-

by-appointment showroom, find Zorya pieces throughout Prague in design shops and galleries, including the new Cihelna Concept Store. *Jana Zajice 40; zorya.eu.*

### **HELENA DARBUIANOVA: Furniture Architect**

With a whimsical French aesthetic and a story behind every piece, Helena Darbujanova's furniture designs take inspiration from her girlhood and "the smell of summer." For example, the architect by training designed the Lola Women's Boudoir (\$3,539), a partially enclosed settee, to appeal to everyone from little girls at play to

## Style & Design

grandmothers sipping tea.

Except for the carpets, all her pieces are made in the Czech Republic, from the My Dear floor lamp (\$1,971) with hand-blown glass and intricate rocaille beadwork to the Macarons collection, which includes stools, tables, and bowls (\$851 to \$1,729). Darbujanova's new Audrey Hepburn-inspired line introduces a dresser (\$3,656) with a pink lower portion, a black velvet bow, and a space for love letters. *Veverkova 7; helena.darbujanova.cz.*

Klara Nademlynska's  
bellwether boutique.



## CZECH IN

*Where to lay your head in Prague.*

United by a contemporary building, the 161-room **Four Seasons Hotel Prague** is housed inside three historic structures in baroque, neo-Renaissance, and classical styles. Its riverside location affords views of Prague Castle and Charles Bridge. *Doubles from*

*\$310, including breakfast daily and a \$100 dining credit.*

In a quiet corner of the city's quintessentially Prague Mala Strana district, the 99-room **Man-darin Oriental, Prague** houses the world's only spa located in

a former Renaissance chapel. *Doubles from \$335, including pralines on arrival, breakfast daily, and a \$100 hotel credit.*

The 101-room **Augustine**, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Prague, occupies a thirteenth-century

former monastery ten minutes' walk from Prague Castle. Don't miss the property's own Saint Thomas beer – which it also incorporates into one spa treatment. *Doubles from \$290, including breakfast daily and a \$90 dining credit. VI.*

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