

# HIPPY GARDEN - a Brand of Creative Freedom and Challenges

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## **Interview**

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The fashion market today comprises numerous brands, designers, collections, stores, concept stores and loyal customers. This figure is higher than ever in the history of fashion which has become an integral part of life, and shopping has become just as entertaining as going to a theatre, the gym or a concert. When it comes to fashion professionals, their circles are not closed as they once were, nor are they an island unto themselves. Some remember those times with great nostalgia, others believe that a bigger industry provides more opportunities. There are more young people who want to attend fashion universities, more upcoming designers, more founders and more brand owners. There are several factors that influence building a brand, but the most important is to establish a close relationship with consumers.

Hippy Garden is a Croatian fashion and lifestyle brand that believes in innovative design and quality production. Hippy Garden's story began in the late '90s when Durdica Vorkapic came to the idea of creating a fashion brand which would express her vision and strong desire to offer products that were much needed on the market. The brand quickly expanded and nowadays Hippy Garden is a household name standing for a great team of experts and professionals in the creative industries. It is not only a top fashion line but a comprehensive lifestyle brand that encompasses every part of the creative sector including ready-made and couture collections, fashion accessories, shoes home decor, food design, cosmetics, and more. Hippy Garden manages to delight its loyal customers and fans, as well as appeal to potential ones, with every new collection, by adding a new dimension to creativity and innovation. HIPPY GARDEN collections are inspired by the world apart, the creativity, the sense of beauty, the warmth and the energy of their own creation. They are made in high-quality materials and are characterised by technical perfectionism.

We talked to Durdica Vorkapic, Hippy Garden's creative director, about their outstanding success and future plans.

### **Hippy Garden – what is the story behind the great brand, who created it?**

The brand was created 18 years ago, but how – well, that is different question (laughing). It was made by Divine Providence, nothing more. We started with sketches and we're a right little empire today. Maybe the easiest explanation of the brand's creation is its name, "Hippy Garden", which represents our true idea of a brand that will continuously grow and create in its own world, be unrestrained and wild, and a unique place where we can be our true selves.

### **You told us that the brand exists for 18 years. Was it hard to maintain a good, quality brand and keep up with the fashion scene?**

Hippy Garden turned 18 because I have never let any obstacle jeopardize my vision and my creativity. I am nothing if I can't create and that is why my brand started with just a few clothing items. Today, it is a big brand standing side by side with the world famous brands and offering almost all fashion and lifestyle

products. Thanks to the same brand, out of love and desire to promote Croatia, we founded a sister brand, "From Croatia with love", which is a real success among foreign and domestic audience. Nowadays, when you can buy almost everything online, it's really hard to launch a brand especially in the fashion industry due to its specific work conditions and interpersonal relationships. So, when you own an eco-friendly business which doesn't use animal fur and you are not following trends, you have to make an extra effort to succeed in Croatia. But, even after 18 years, we are still successful and we continue to believe it will only get better.



**Hippy Garden's first professional runway show happened in 2005. Did you imagine this level of success back then?**

The Croatian fashion industry as we know it today just started to form at that time. I can rightly claim that we were at the forefront of our fashion scene. Back then, we didn't even think about the situation we have today. We didn't have big expectations then and we don't have them now. We just enjoy creating and continue to do so every day. Success comes with hard work and complete dedication to your work. I enjoy each challenge that comes along and that is true success to me.





**What does Hippy Garden offer to their customers besides clothes?**

Besides clothing and accessories like footwear, bags and jewellery, we started our cosmetic line a few years ago because we were aware of a huge impact of the beauty industry. As with everything we do, we began from our own desires and wishes as cosmetics users. This is the reason why our beauty line is made of natural ingredients like Croatian herbs and oils. The main vision is to develop a cosmetic line that will impose itself with quality and price on both domestic and foreign market. I can proudly say that we are achieving great results and have even greater expectations for the future.

**Tell us more about your project called “Wild Children of Hippy Garden”.**

The project was created and implemented as a completely new fashion project. The concept we introduced at HAZU’s Gliptoteka is an innovative project of „live scented pictures“. In other words, the audience had an opportunity to walk through the gallery, stop by every picture and enjoy the scents and the view. The pictures of nature motifs were installed on the gallery’s walls completed with Croatian native herbs: Lady’s-slipper, Checkered Lily and iris. In front of every picture, there was a massive, 3x4 m, frame that was made just for the occasion, and the models in Hippy Garden creations were in the frame thus bringing the pictures to life. We added a special touch with the intense fragrance of rosemary which really woke up the senses.



**You showed the magic of untouched nature in that project, and recently you have developed and launched an organic cosmetics line called „Hippy Garden Pure & Natural“. How did you make the decision to branch out into cosmetics??**

We are creating something new every day. Most of the big fashion names have both make-up and care cosmetic lines besides clothes. This isn’t the case in Croatia, but Hippy Garden is always one step ahead, so „Hippy Garden Pure & Natural“ line was just a matter of time. I can say that we are completely satisfied with this big project of producing organic cosmetics. The products we launched are at the top of the bio-cosmetics spectrum and I wouldn’t settle for anything less. The fragrances that we use in our products are from native Croatian herbs - rosemary, chamomile and marigold.

**Tell us more about the development process for these products.**

We needed a lot of time to create these magical products, one of the reason being we didn’t want to make any compromises. Our wish was to offer our clients and buyers the best that nature offers, so every product has 0 % paraben, 0 % mineral oils, 0 % artificial colours, 0 % synthetic fragrance, 0 % silicone. In other words



- pure nature. We didn't want to launch until we were able to achieve this type of product. That is a story behind „Hippy Garden Pure & Natural“ cosmetics line.

**Do you have any future plans for expanding the range of “Hippy Garden Pure & Natural” products? What are your plans in general when it comes to natural cosmetic?**

Thank you for asking. We have already taken the next step of expanding our “Pure & Natural” cosmetics line. Soon, we are presenting a new product and you will be among the first to know when. This is a new world we are discovering and we want to show that we are ready for creating new things.

**Among all the fashion shows and participation in various projects, what was your biggest challenge to date and what left the biggest impression on you?**

I approach every new project with care, but in the last 17 years, I can single out two of the most challenging projects. One was at the Garden Festival in Petričani where I created a runway in the sea. I wanted to achieve a levitation effect, as if the models are walking on the sea surface. We hired the army and used floating docks. Another extremely demanding project was the one at Esplanade Zagreb hotel. It was the most exclusive fashion night ever to be presented in Croatia. It was magical, unforgettable, and had the most memorable ending when a completely white horse, Maestoso, entered the Emerald Ballroom of the hotel.

**What is your opinion of the Croatian fashion industry? Which is your favourite fashion event and what are the differences between Croatia and the rest of the world.**

Croatian fashion is so versatile which is why it is so special and its greatest value lies precisely in its versatility. It is extremely difficult to create and produce something in Croatia, especially in the fashion industry. It is really hard to survive in a climate that has always given greater value to foreign creations rather than

domestic. So, to be able to survive in such conditions is a bigger success, in my opinion, than to be a world famous artist. It is really simple, world market consists of millions of customers, the competition is huge, but it also offers great possibilities if you work the only way I consider right – being original. Only then will you be recognized and people will be able to see your work. It's easily possible that some of the millions of people will like your work and you can conquer the market. When we talk about the fashion industry in Croatia, all of my colleagues who created a new brand and made it successful in the last 10 years are real magicians. If we were to look outside the self-imposed borders, we would realize that the individuals creating Croatian fashion can work shoulder to shoulder with the world famous names. It's not a platitude, I really mean it. However, there are so many bureaucratic obstacles in our small country that it makes it really hard to create something and be different.

**Do you follow the work of young designers?**

I have to admit that I'm more of a passive observer but I'll support anybody who has a will and courage to enter into this business. I try to be supportive of our young hopefuls and I will always help as much as I can. I know a lot of them personally and I will always support them, privately and publicly if I recognize their work as having quality and potential.

**In the last 18 years of your journey in the creative waters you have developed numerous fashion collections, a home décor collection, an innovative bag holder and a natural cosmetics line. Do you have more innovative surprises for us?**

Creative universe knows no limits. It doesn't matter if it's fashion design, product design, cosmetics, innovation or music. It all stems from a limitless source of creation. The only thing that matters is whether you're free and opened to new possibilities. Of course we are always thinking of something new and completely different!