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A New Season of
ELEGANCE



Here & There

DESIGN DISCOVERIES FROM AROUND NEW ENGLAND



The creative team behind Dumais Made: Charlie, left, and Kevin Dumais in their Bantam, Connecticut, studio.

Slab Happy

A thoughtful gift spawned Dumais Made and its collection of unique ceramic lamps and accessories.

BY MARIA LAPIANA

It isn't every day that you get to reset your GPS, take a path you missed the first time around—and find out you're exactly where you're supposed to be. That's what happened to lighting designer Charlie Dumais when, in 2014, he rediscovered pottery—in large part thanks to his now-husband, interior designer Kevin Dumais.

Charlie had taken a pottery class at Pratt Institute, where he earned a degree in interior design in 2004. Soon after they started dating, Kevin wisely gave Charlie the gift of studio time, and his path became clear from there. "I've always been intrigued by hand building, by slab pottery," he says. "I love being able to plan it out."

Soon, he was making one-of-a-kind lamps, "a little rugged, with texture. I like them to feel architectural," he says. At first, most were rectilinear, and then gradually he added curves, built a cylinder, and using an old Danish rolling pin, created a waffle-like texture. In time, candleholders, trays, and vases joined the mix.

Fast forward: the couple married, bought a house in Litchfield, Connecticut, turned their garage into a studio, and in 2017, launched Dumais Made. That year, Charlie created four signature lamps: the Litchfield, the Washington, the New Preston, and the Juliette. They launched a 1stdibs storefront in January 2018, and by fall were filling custom orders. And last spring, the couple opened a studio in a refurbished factory in Bantam, Connecticut.

Both men still hold down day jobs (Kevin owns Dumais Interior Design, and Charlie is a principal at BOLD lighting design). They spend three days a week in Manhattan and four in Connecticut, working in a spacious studio that's filled with natural light and uncommonly neat. There's the



ABOVE: Potter Charlie Dumais uses a technique called slab construction to create lamps, candlesticks, and more. He gravitated toward more solid forms in the beginning, but of late has been experimenting with more inventive shapes like those shown here. **LEFT:** A sampling of the variety of textures and glazes that Charlie applies to rolled-out clay.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Thira lamp with a black terra sigillata glaze; Torchiere lamp with a white gloss glaze; Rectangle Slab Tray with matte black over chalk-white glaze; and Round Nesting Slab Trays with white, bottle-green, and lead glazes.



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clay side, with Charlie’s tools, tables, sink, kiln, and shelving (“I finally got a slab press,” he says, “and I think the first time I used it, I cried.”). There’s Kevin’s side, from which he also manages his interior design practice. In between is an inviting, midcentury-inspired sitting area.

The work is highly collaborative. “Kevin influences my aesthetic,” says Charlie. “He has a refined eye, helps me navigate the design, inspires me, helps curate the look.” And Kevin handles the business side of the business, which happens to be booming. Little did Kevin know, when he gave Charlie that present of studio time, he was offering a gift that truly keeps on giving.

*Dumais Made, Bantam, Conn.,
dumaismade.com*