

TRANSWORLD Business

Catching Up with Dusters' Creative Director Nano Nobrega

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By [Hayley Helms](#)



John Van Hamersveld, Gary Wong, Chaz Bojórquez, Dusters Creative Director Nano Nobrega, Dave Tourjé, and Norton Wisdom

DUSTERS' CREATIVE DIRECTOR NANO NOBREGA IN ON WHAT'S NEW FOR THE BRAND, INCLUDING COLLABORATION WITH CALIFORNIA LOCOS

Dusters is a brand that sticks in your head. Once you see the boards, it's hard to forget them. This could be attributed to one of a few things: the intricate designs featured on each board, the reputation of the brand that precedes its one-of-a-kind product, or the brand's co-founder and creative director, **Nano Nobrega**. Nobrega has more than twenty years of experience with brand development, and has worked in fashion, art, marketing and more. His extensive experience in the industry was the perfect formula for the rise and success of Dusters.

Dusters was founded in early 2012, as a part of the larger **Dwindle Distribution**, and since then the heritage-inspired brand has gone on to produce quality product of their own, as well as iconic collaborations with peers and fellow brands. One such collaboration, Dusters x **California Locos**, features influences from art, music, and five hugely influential artists that make up the collective that is California Locos: **Chaz Bojórquez, Dave Tourjé, John Van Hamersveld, Norton Wisdom, and Gary Wong**.

Transworld Business sat down with Nano Nobrega to discuss Dusters, where he finds his influence and inspiration, and what makes the Dusters California Locos collaboration so special.

Interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What was your vision for Dusters when you co-founded it?

Dusters was born inside Dwindle Distribution, one of the largest skateboard distributions in the world. Dwindle houses thirteen different skate brands, including: **Almost, Enjoi, Cliché, Blind** alongside skateboarding legends such as **Rodney Mullen** and **Daewon Song**.

All of these brands are grounded on a competition level, and I thought we were missing the lifestyle side of skateboarding. Raised in a big city like São Paulo, Brazil, I would skate the whole week and drive two hours on the weekends to the coast to surf and when I moved to California, I was able to do both, every day! For me and many others around me, that was the perfect lifestyle. When the opportunity came up, I plugged both of these passions into one brand, Dusters. Dusters was created based on the same spirit that was born and bred in Southern California in the 60's and 70's when skateboarding, surfing, and music defined themselves against establishment.



The Dusters California Locos collaboration boards

How has your background and experience in design, creative and business helped in making Dusters a stand-out brand?

I've always been the curious type and ended up studying different disciplines within the creative field. I received my first degree in marketing in Brazil, and in California I completed a degree in multimedia design with an extension in fashion business. I have worked in all sorts of fields, from surf magazines and radio stations, to snowboarding brands and I also had my own clothing line in LA.

Being able to emerge myself, for 20 years, in all these different elements of the creative process, from product development, to branding and marketing, has given me a very diverse experience, which I am able to apply at Dusters today. All that, combined with a powerful manufacturing and distribution foundation at Dwindle, has helped Dusters become what it is today in less than four years in business, making it the largest and fastest growing brand at the distribution.

We don't only sell skateboards; we sell dreams, stories, knowledge and true California vibes!

What is Dusters' point of difference in the market?

Quality, price and identity. Our manufacturing capabilities are truly impressive and allow us not only to push the boundaries on our fits and finishes but also produce one of the best products in the market with a very aggressive price point. Brand identity is really something that stands out. We have embraced the Californian surf/skate heritage from the early '60s and '70s, and we back that up by working on amazing collaborations that help us tell that story in a very fun and youthful way that kids can relate to and learn from.



Does Dusters have a focus on details and finishes?

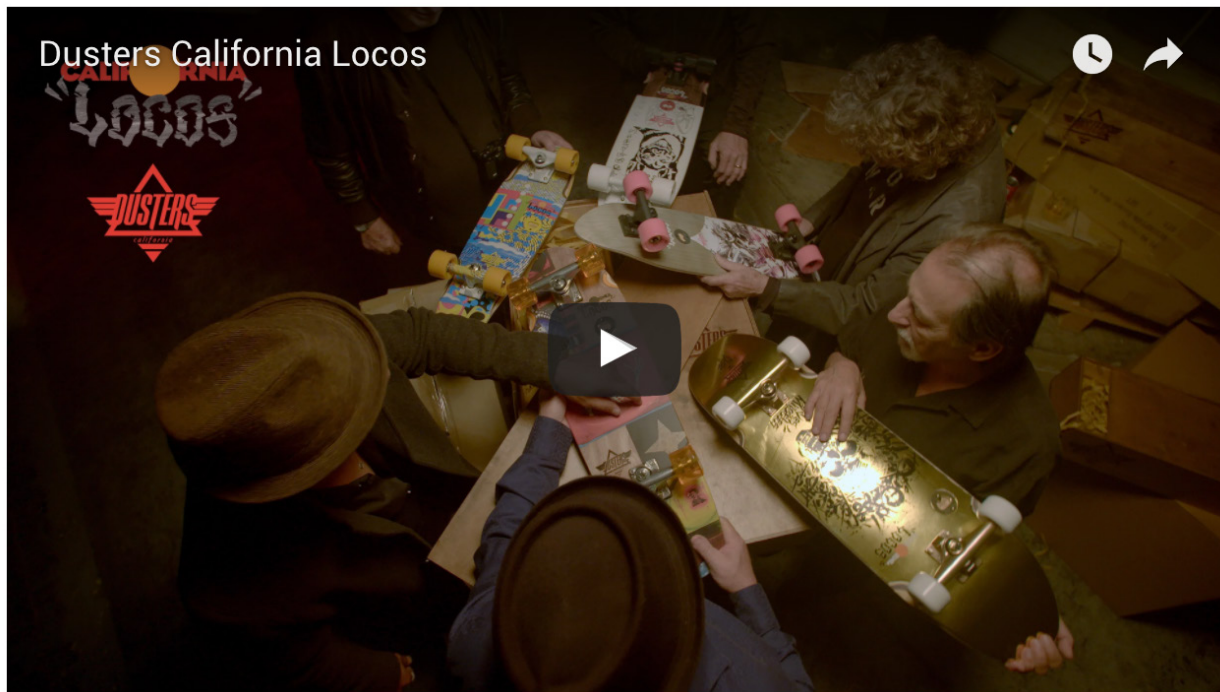
Most definitely. Our own manufacturing was built under the supervision of professional skateboarders like Rodney Mullen to create an environment where ideas and technology can be explored in the most fertile and creative ground for innovation. At Dusters, we don't only create our own veneers, but we've also developed our own unique resin epoxy formula, which is entirely different from the standard glues, making our decks extremely durable and responsive. That, combined with our unique single deck press machinery, special deck curing rooms, and our 14 stages of QC during the manufacturing process, will guarantee that you have one of the best skateboards in the market.

How has Dusters' growth been over the last three years?

Dusters quickly became the fastest growing brand for our distribution and our biggest sales opportunity since its start in 2012. Aside from the sales perspective, we've also had exponential growth in our social media engagement and global awareness. Today, we see people posting images of Dusters skateboards from Indonesia to Dubai, Spain, Brazil, Japan, and many other countries. It is certainly an honor to be able to spread the diversity of our culture and lifestyle in California to the entire world.

How did Dusters get connected with The California Locos?

It is quite a long story, but the short version is that I was meeting with the Endless Summer crew in regards to a collaboration we were working on and I saw **John Van Hamersveld (JVH)**, the designer behind the famous Endless Summer movie poster. JVH was holding an interesting matte black book in his hands with a California Locos logo that seemed to be designed by two different artists. The word "California" was very vibrant and "Locos" had a more underground urban style. When JVH handed me the book, I saw the name of **Chaz Bojórquez**, an incredible graffiti artist, known as the king of the Cholo style writing. Coincidence or not, as a huge fan, I had spent weeks trying to figure out how to get a hold of Chaz for my next collaboration, and there he was, along with four other incredible artists, including **Dave Tourjé, Gary Wong, Norton Wisdom** and of course, JVH! JVH put me in touch with Dave Tourjé, curator of the group, and instead of only working with Chaz, I was blessed to work with the entire group on one of the best projects I've ever worked on in my life, the **Dusters California Locos collaboration**.



What inspired you to create the collaboration with The California Locos? Do you see your partnership extending beyond this collaboration?

It started off with me chasing Chaz Bojórquez, but after I met Dave Tourjé and the crew, and spent hours on the phone listening to all of their stories and the philosophy behind the California Locos, I just couldn't think differently, it was an instant connection!

I should actually stop calling this a collaboration and start calling it a joint venture! We will certainly not stop here. Stay tuned!

...We hope to share stories, sending out profound messages that will help kids understand that everyone is equal regardless of the type of skateboard you ride, the type of music you listen to, the religion you follow, or country you live in.

What opportunities do you see for Dusters in the next year, and beyond?

One of my biggest plans for Dusters is to continue with these amazing stories told through our collaborations, and I have quite an intense list of future collabs that are already under works for the next couple of years. I look forward not only to getting these collabs going but through them, being able to give back to our fans, the industry and community.

Any closing comments?

Dusters was born as a lifestyle brand. We're here not only to spread the California vibes to the world but also to break any competitive or preconceived judgments that we see in our industry and in our society. Through skateboarding, surfing, music and art, we hope to share stories, sending out profound messages that will help kids understand that everyone is equal regardless of the type of skateboard you ride, the type of music you listen to, the religion you follow, or country you live in. We are all one big tribe, so we need to make sure that we unite and progress with a lot of fun, hard work and peace.