



Nils De Montgrand:
VP LED lighting



Rémi:
R&D Manager



Sandra De Montgrand:
Operations Manager



Thomas:
Sales Manager



TUTTI-FRUTTI

By John Keedwell GBCT

“Rosco is also a great cultural fit and its name opens doors”

DMG Lumière is a now familiar name around the world, yet the original creation of the LED lighting company came from small beginnings. Acquired by Rosco in 2017, we take a look five years on at how DMG Lumière has become Rosco Lyon in this Q&A with Nils De Montgrand.

How did DMG Lumière start life?

DMG started small. I had a business supplying LEDs to the medical and dental signage business. My older brother, Mathieu, is a working DP. He was building his career and doing some interesting stuff. We both worked with LED, but in very different ways. Mathieu was shooting in Paris back in 2008-2009. We met up and said we have got to do something together to build a better LED light for filmmakers.

I was like, 'OK, I know nothing about your business, so draw me something and I'll try and make it happen'. Literally. I asked which light he used the most. He said the 4-foot, 4-bank Kino Flo was the most beautiful soft light, and there was no real good LED version of it. So, this is where we started, with the single colour SL1 in 2010. That was really the start of DMG Lumière.

We built the DMG business with our own funds. We never raised any capital of any sorts, our profit-margin paid for our product development, and our very low wages, like any start-up enterprise.

In 2014 we developed the Switch Bi-colour Daylight/Tungsten fixture. Then the ARRI Skypanel came out in 2015. The jump from single colour to bi-colour hadn't been easy for us from a technical

standpoint. We'd just struggled to jump from white to bi-colour white. How were we going to make another jump to compete in the global marketplace?

Our business was growing fast, but it was not easy. If we were to do this alone, it would be years of struggle. I was 38 years old, no longer a kid and with three kids of my own. We knew it would be better for the business if we got some help.

How did you link-up with Rosco?

Rosco was moving into the LED business, having launched the original LitePad and then the Silk soft light, but they wanted to invest further and quickly into LED technology.

They were interested in what we were doing, but they did not want to be minority investors in the business. It was all-or-nothing. We had a family reunion with my wife, Sandra, and my two brothers, Jean and Mathieu. What should we do? The timing was great for us, but our intention wasn't to sell our business. It really wasn't. Our intention was to find a company that could bring us money and markets.

Rosco were also looking at another couple of

businesses at the time, so we knew the pressure was on. So we made the jump. Rosco acquired us in 2017. If I had to do it again, I would do it the same way.

What did Rosco bring?

Rosco gave us the support we needed to continue our development, and we've grown the business tremendously since the acquisition.

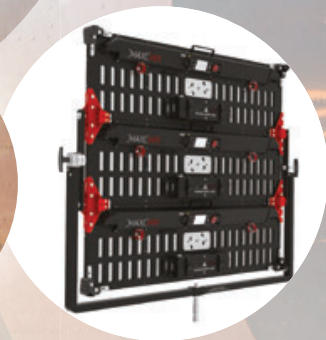
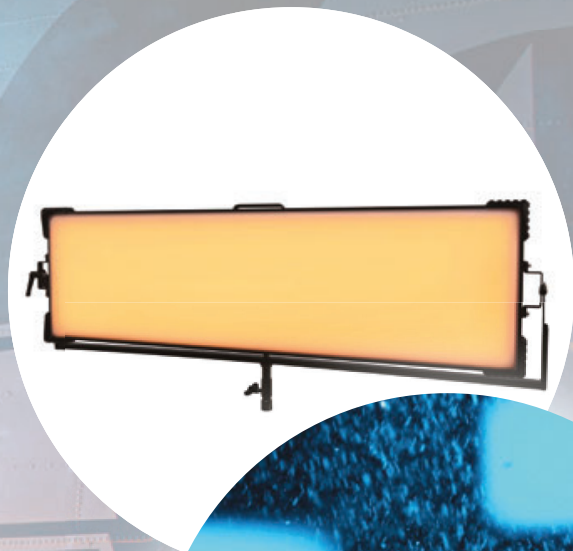
Rosco brought money, a strong brand, a history of colour expertise and an established distribution network. The Rosco name opens doors anywhere on the planet. Walk into any studio in Dubai, Tokyo or Sydney with a Rosco shirt and the door will open for you.

Rosco is also a great cultural fit. The people are great, and the strategic alignment is strong. We brought product and technology expertise to Rosco that they didn't have, and that was a great strategic fit.

Tell us about the growth of DMG's facilities and team?

DMG Lumière had a 300sq/m facility in Lyon, France, with an R&D office, a handful of engineers and a small warehouse. We had six employees including the directors. There are now 17 of us. We had two engineers when Rosco showed-up, and they helped us recruit world-class engineers, an electronics engineer, an optical engineer, and three in-house mechanical engineers. We are fully-autonomous in our product development. We have two repair technicians, and we handle after-sales and repair for the whole of Europe.





In March 2022, we moved into 1,100sq/m premises, more than three times the size of the original facility. We now develop, design and engineer all of Rosco's LED products in Lyon. We have strong supply-chain and manufacturing capabilities that support the business.

Rosco is investing to bridge the old gel into the new digital gel. The MixBook digital swatch book is part of this. Rosco is transforming, and it's pretty exciting to be at the leading-edge of it.

Now you are Rosco Lyon. But how was losing the DMG Lumière name?

It was always a mouthful, and nobody could pronounce it properly. The original name came from the Lumière brothers from Lyon. They invented the first movie camera in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Our friends called us the DMG brothers, so we became DMG Lumière.

I have zero regrets about losing it. I don't look in the past and I'm not nostalgic. I'm happy we're keeping the DMG name for our film lighting products, because we built a significant brand value. We need to do what's right. Branding is a tough one. It needs to be simple for the customer. You know the Apple geniuses came up with Apple iPhone, Apple Mac... we have DMG Dash for example... boom!

Tell us about your approach to light and colour?

It's a very complicated to make high-quality coloured light. How a camera sees colour is different to how a how your eye sees it. We tend to push people looking at the spectrum shape and how it renders colours.

DPs like to have the choice of multi-colours. We think X&Y is a great, easy tool, because it's just two coordinates. It's a very easy language. The problem is that you can have a DMG X&Y output that reaches the same X&Y as a fixture from another manufacturer, but they have a drastically different spectrum. Our mindset behind X&Y is that it only gives you part of the story.

Our six colours are red, green, blue, lime, amber and white. We have a 4,000K white in the middle of the BBL. It really helps us with efficiency on both sides of the spectrum. Without the lime and the amber our spectrum would not be as nice.

The future is X&Y, HSI, RGB, or whichever one suits. But there's also an established language of gel colours with names and numbers. Some think gels are just references, but the name also gives it an emotion that ties the name to the colour. Pick one, such as R2 Bastard Amber. You can never replace an X&Y value with Bastard Amber. And there's a brilliant story that explains how the name was created, please ask me about it when you see me next!

How did lime and amber come about?

RGB only gives three directions. RGB and two whites is great, but cameras need more. The spectrum of a wide LED has failures in the reds you need to see, the lime and amber with phosphor coating help to solve that challenge.

Which project have the products been used on?

We have plenty of lighting credits: *Remember Me: The Mahalia Jackson Story* (DP Eduardo Ramirez ADFC); *Le Mans '66 (Ford vs Ferrari)* (DP Phedon

Papamichael ASC); *A Star Is Born* (DP Matthew Libatique ASC); *Game Of Thrones* (DP David Franco); and *The Witcher* (DP Romain Larcourbas), and just a few that come to mind.

How about the future?

My vision is that I want our products to last for 20 years. We're not here to sell a product then see it thrown away after two years. Cheap gear often stops working and it gets thrown away. We're engineering our products with a view to quality and longevity. We design durable and reliable products. This is one of our key differentiators for customers.

There are now so many lights on the market that fill a room or light a subject. We are concentrating on creating more shadows, mood and depth for the final image. We are currently in development on lights that will give different looks and qualities. There are some very exciting next steps for us.

“ We are developing lights that will give different looks and qualities ”

