

24 hours
WITH... MONICA DUROU

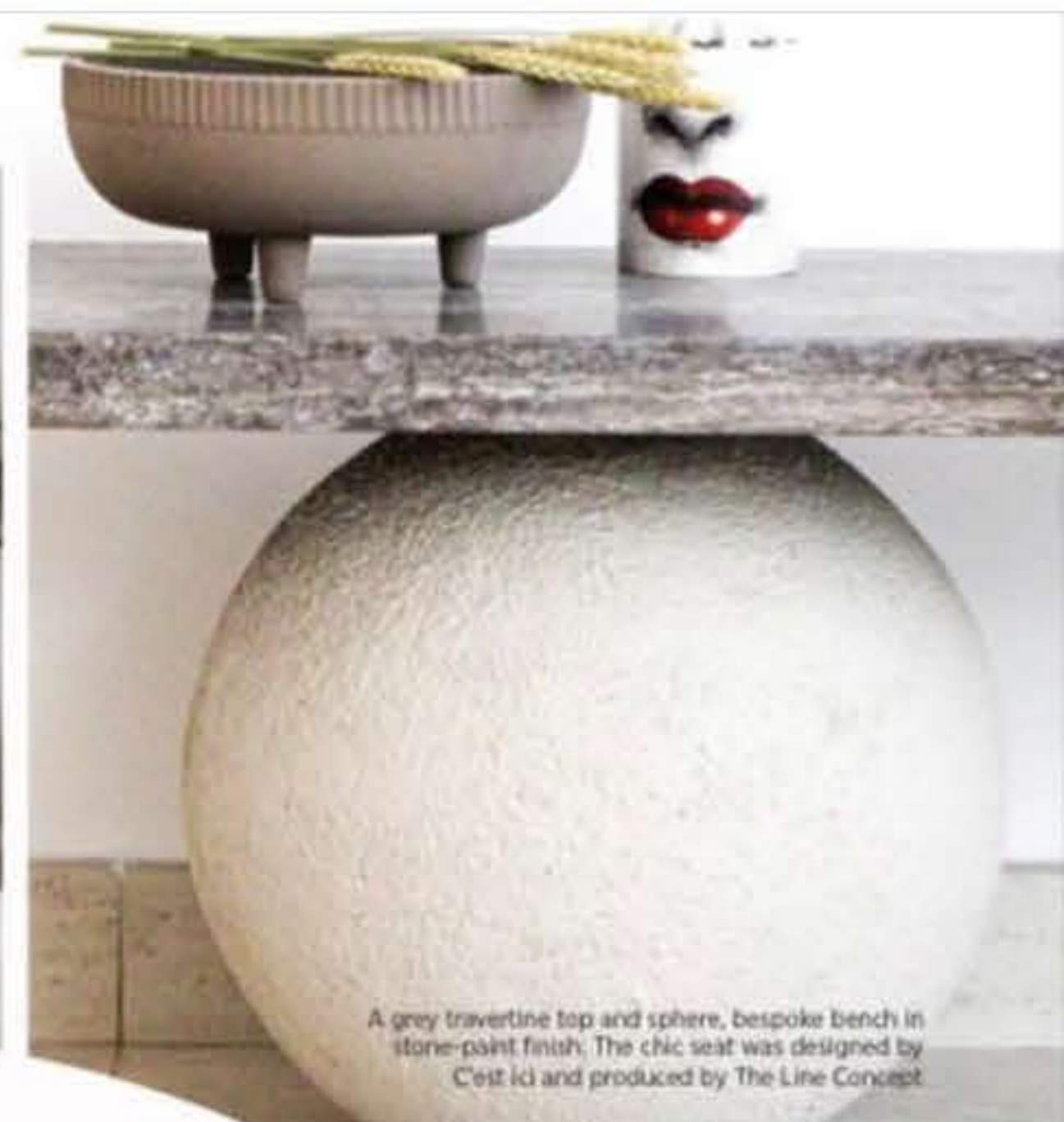


The Dubai-based co-founder of homegrown interior styling studio C'est ici walks us through an ordinary day around the clock.

ictured here: Monica Durou.
Photo by Natelee Cocks



Subtle tones of olive and vanilla combined with leather and bespoke pieces add textures to C'est Ici's Manhattan project



A grey travertine top and sphere, bespoke bench in stone-paint finish. The chic seat was designed by C'est Ici and produced by The Line Concept

6:00am: The alarm is set but I wish I had 15 more minutes every day. I start my day with cayenne pepper and hot, lemon water which has been my ritual since I had my boys. I then hit the gym for a run, or a scheduled class. I always workout while I listen to my famous 'workout list', which is a mix of dance, pop and Latino tunes. Once done, I return home to wake up my children, Matheo and Gabriel. The family prepares breakfast together and meanwhile, my husband and I plan our day and any activities, while listening to the news. **7:40am:** It's time to get ready and prepare my outfit for the day. My personal style is aligned with the interior design of my home and is a mix of brands. I always love something from my beloved Colombian designer and it makes me happy to wear fashion from such talented designers. **8:10am:** I, or my husband, drop off the kids. After that, my sole focus is on C'est ici. I will respond to all my WhatsApp messages, groups, teams and clients, and then set out my to-do list. I am pretty old-school about this and so I have the book, the highlighter and all the rest, and it makes me feel organised. **10:30am:** My days vary quite a bit but I usually have meetings from this time onwards for projects and site visits, installations, clients, suppliers, team meetings and interior consultations. I allocate different timings to different projects and prioritise within the week. When I'm not in meetings, the design mode is usually turned on and it's my favourite time. This is mostly when the team and I strategise our concept designs, ideas, products and everything related to interiors. It always starts with an inspirational image or experience. This is one of my favourite parts of the job and I am currently loving our Palo Alto, Paros and Manhattan projects which have recently been completed. **12:30pm:** Usually I have my branding and business-development calls where we discuss potential opportunities and next steps. We also outline new suppliers and brands and the team is always focused on the procurement of new products worldwide. I often sneak in a mani-pedi if needed or catch up for lunch with my ladies. I try to come home for lunch at least three times a week. If not, I am a regular at Wild & The Moon in Alserkal, just next to our co-working space. **2:30pm:** I start to wrap my day up and have final reviews of concept designs, tweaking around and revising the team's work. I often give my feedback before pick-ups. I work around my kids' schedule so the team is pretty good in getting the timing right. **4:00pm:** Mummy-mode kicks in and I put my phone on charge and keep it away from me. I let the kids rest for 40 minutes before we do afternoon activities, which are only three times a week. I manage home errands and we spend most of the time either cooking or doing something different. Both my kids love science, so I have a collection of science experiments printed and ready to cover every imaginable activity. They also love their new play area which I recently designed for them, so we spend most of our time there.



Left and right: The Palo Alto project features neutral shades. A hand-painted side table with three organic shapes made by The Line Concept

IMAGES COURTESY OF MONICA DUROU

6:30pm: Mimos, our Westie begs for a walk so together with the boys we enjoy this time and then start prepping for dinner. My husband is usually finished with work by this time and we have our dinner together, where we all discuss our day and sneak in a bit of playtime, followed by bedtime stories and prayers. **8:30pm:** Before I am back online, I follow my regular facial routine as I am obsessed with skincare. I'm currently obsessed with The Honest Company products by Jessica Alba. My other favourites include Kiehl's and Tata Harper. Then, it's time to catch up with my Instagram feed and family in Miami. **9:30 to 11:00pm:** This is time for my husband and I, and we usually catch up over Netflix. If it's not that, I unwind with a relaxing bath and a book. I'm currently reading *Largo pétalo de mar* by Isabel Allende. We tend to sneak out for a dinner at least once a week or go for a late-night walk in the moonlight. ■