

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

issue 15 . volume 02
JULY/AUGUST 2008

Are you resident in the world's top liveable city?

MONOCLE ranks the **25** most alluring places to live and **5** more that require a bit of imagination

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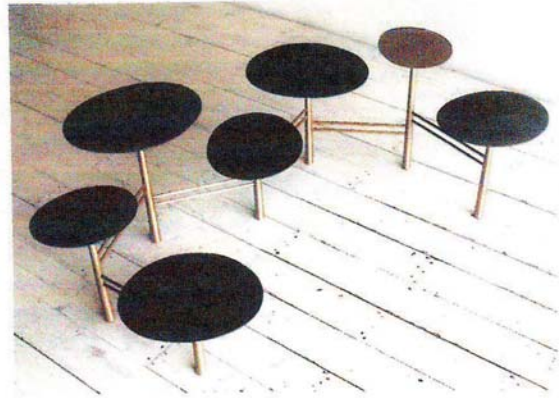
**THE MONOCLE
GLOBAL QUALITY
OF LIFE SURVEY**



UK £5
USD \$10
EUR 12.00
DKK 122

SEK 100
JPY ¥2,310
AUD \$12.95
SGD \$19.90
CAD \$10.00

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04 NADA DEBS

Beirut

When Lebanese furniture designer Nada Debs moved to Beirut in 1999, local craftsmanship was pretty much dead. It took a trip to nearby Damascus to realise that a revival of mother-of-pearl, wood and glass production was needed. With strong Japanese influences, the result of a childhood spent in Tokyo, Debs moved away from the opulence of Middle Eastern furniture, to a minimalist and modern collection called East & East.

"I'm a firm believer that less is more," explains the designer, who opened her first store in Beirut in 2004. Her mother-of-pearl inlay furniture is instantly recognisable and has been widely imitated in the region. The same goes for her Plexiglas Floating Stool collection, which uses a number of oriental motifs. Her latest designs are a series of tiles, the patterns of which recall the geometry of classic Islamic art, yet the material used – concrete – makes them decidedly modern.

"While our lifestyle has changed, emotionally we still

want to relate to our Middle Eastern heritage," she says. And though the situation may be unstable in Lebanon, (Debs's shop is a stone's throw from where Hezbollah staged its sit-in in downtown Beirut, and she was stuck in Dubai due to the closure of Beirut's airport in May), Debs makes the best out of a bad situation by exporting her name to the Gulf and Europe. Customers include the Jordanian royal family and Selfridges in London. She has expanded with a new outlet in Kuwait and is ready to explore more venues. "I have yet to work with glass and I also want to design wallpaper." — CC nadadebs.com

Why it works: investing in craft While many designers spend too much time and energy sourcing the cheapest manufacturers in far-flung corners of southeast Asia, Debs spends considerable energy finding local craftsmen to manufacture her products – both maintaining ancient traditions and sustaining local design culture.

What we're buying

- 1) Mother-of-pearl consoles
- 2) Concrete table with mother-of-pearl inlay
- 3) Decorative concrete tiles
- 4) Coffee-bean table
- 5) Plexiglas or wood and resin tea boxes



PHOTOGRAPHER: DALIA HEMLESTY