



DVIRA OVADIA: Designer put to test on decorating guru Debbie Travis' show *From the Ground Up*.

She's got designs on top new TV gig

BY MICHAEL POWER
Staff Writer

Quick, what's the most creative design idea you can think of using a piece of paper or a cardboard box?

Think fast, you've got scant time to come up with a concept that beats out 13 other design experts.

That's the type of (but not necessarily exactly the same) challenge Thornhill native Dvira Ovadia, 27, faced during filming of the second season of design personality Debbie Travis' show, *From The Ground Up*.

Each episode of the show, which airs on Global Television Thursdays at 9 p.m., gives the contestants a challenge they

See **CONTESTANT**, page 13.

Contestant mum about winner

From page 1.

must finish. The challenges are designed to test contestants' adaptability, ingenuity and ability to translate a concept into reality.

Last season's show focused on encouraging young people to take up careers in skilled trades. This year, the goal is to find Ms Travis' new chief designer, a title bestowed on the show's winner.

"This time she (Ms Travis) is clearly doing something different," said Ms Ovadia.

"The challenges would really test us and see if we could think fast and problem solve, as well as that creative ability that would come to us instantaneously."

That process wasn't easy, Ms Ovadia said, noting many of the challenges the show's contestants had to perform were very vague.

Participants were given a few days to complete each task.

Although this season's show focuses on design, the concept is more than simply producing a well-decorated room.

"It was more of a skill test on how to create something from nothing," Ms Ovadia said.

The show started filming last November — largely in Ottawa — and has already been completed.

"But, of course, I can't discuss any of the outcomes," Ms Ovadia said.

Ms Ovadia applied online in September to the show and got a call to set up an interview the next day. Ms Ovadia met Ms Travis, along with the show's producers, during the interview.

'For me, it was a life-changing experience. I was constantly challenged and was amazed at how well I was able to cope.'

Dvira Ovadia
Designer, TV show contestant

Ms Ovadia was asked about her design background and ability to work with others. She was also asked how she would be able to handle stressful situations and think on her feet.

"I feel that (Ms Travis) was very confident of what she was looking for," she said.

"I thought she was a very strong person, I guess you could say she was very friendly but confident in who she was looking to cast."

Ms Odavia majored in architecture at the University of Toronto and has earned diplomas in technical design at Sheridan College.

She works as a freelance designer and hopes to eventually start her own design company, she said. She lives in downtown Toronto, but plans to move back to Thornhill soon.

All 14 contestants lived in one house during filming and the tasks were emotionally and physically draining, Ms Ovadia said.

"For me, it was a life-changing experience," she said. "I was constantly challenged and was amazed at how well I was able to cope."