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NICOLE HADDOW
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THERE IS a leadlight window in Shayna Blaze's house that's a constant reminder of her relationship with her late father involving many conflicts of taste - Blaze's minimalist versus her dad's gaudy.

The window, which he made himself, is so emotionally significant that she ripped it out of her old house when she moved and will take it with her and re-install if she moves again. "Dad hated doing this window, but he did it for me with love," she says with a smile.

The newest judge on The Block certainly knows what it means to decorate your home with pieces of your own personality and history.

Sitting on a plush teal-coloured couch at Hermon & Hermon in Richmond, the charismatic blonde says now is the time to inject personality into your home.

"We're in a cycle of personality, hunkering down and being enveloped by your home," says Blaze, who's worked in interior design for more than 20 years and says interior trends are usually a reflection of what's happening in the economy.

But she cautions that plastering your home with your chosen aesthetic is a double-edge sword.

Balance is the key to making your interior a reflection of yourself, Blaze advises. Choose statement pieces that stand out among subtle, classic furniture.

Blaze gave this year's The Block contestants the same advice. "There are strong personalities that people will love or hate," she hints, and adds that there'll be a lot of discussion about the impact on personal taste and selling a home.

"We told them, it's not about you. But their personalities were so strong they kept coming through." The result is four very different homes.

After working on the television show Selling Houses Australia, Blaze also knows what matters when it comes to selling.

You don't have to be a contestant on The Block to nab the big bucks at auction, she insists. Vendors on a budget would be wise to splash out on a bit of fresh paint and "scrub the house within an inch of their lives", because personality can only add so much value when the hammer comes down on your own block.

The Block will premiere on Channel Nine at 7pm on Monday, April 16.



Shayna Blaze. Picture: Teagan Glenane

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