

# Makeover queen hits The Block

KATIE LEE, The West Australian Updated April 29, 2012, 8:00 am



The Block judges Neale Whitaker, John McGrath, Shaynna Blaze.

With a style she describes as dramatic, bold and theatrical, makeover queen Shaynna Blaze is the perfect fit as the newest judge on reality TV series The Block.

Best known for helping hapless homeowners on Selling Houses Australia on Foxtel's LifeStyle Channel, she also runs successful Melbourne-based interiors business Blank Canvas Interiors.

Blaze, who joins Neale Whitaker, editor of design bible Belle, and real estate guru John McGrath as the third - and only female - expert on the reality hit's judging panel, said her experience with Selling Houses Australia would tie in perfectly with her new role.

"I have done five series of Selling Houses and I think the two shows go hand-in-hand because I think my experience in doing houses up for sale on Selling Houses really plays (as) an advantage with what The Block is all about," she said from Melbourne where she is busy filming The Block.

Blaze joked that she would play the "nice judge".

"I'll bring a female perspective to the fold and focus on the practicalities of everything," she said.

"I'm going in with the angle of OK, it's great to have the wow factor but when that's all over how does the space actually work?"

Blaze said juggling her television roles with being a wife, mum, teacher and blogger (not to mention a talented jazz singer) might prove "interesting".

"But I'm not nervous because I do so much hard work in the renovations on Selling Houses Australia that at least now I can sort of stand back and watch people doing it this time, which is great."

Blaze's love affair with interiors started young.

"I have always been artistic, I was always painting and moving a bedroom around but it was only when it came to choosing subjects for Year 12 that I realised I could turn what came naturally to me into a career."

It was then, on a "day of procrastinating" in her Melbourne studio, that her TV break transpired.

"I was in my design studio and it was one of those days where I just wanted to avoid all of my work so I was checking through my emails," she said.

"A newsletter came through. I hardly ever read them but that day I read to the bottom and there was an ad for an interior designer for a new TV show.

"So I sent through a little spiel and three minutes later the phone rang and it was the producer. Before I knew it I did a few auditions and we started filming Selling Houses six weeks later."

Describing her own home in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne as personal, relaxing and made for entertaining, Blaze said it epitomised her interior style.

"I like to make statements and I like to walk in my home and I like to feel excited and I like to think 'Yeah that's pretty cool'," she said.

"My style is constantly evolving but I've got a constant base on classic lines of blacks and whites; then I'll mix up all of the other bits.

"I love theatrical contrasting so I have dark blue-black walls and white contrasting shutters and couches.

"It sounds a bit dramatic but it is offset by personal pictures and accessories that bring it down and make it more comfortable."