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When asked the biggest highlight of her modeling career so far, Avril doesn't hesitate. "Being named the ambassador of the Brisbane Fashion Festival," she says. Modeling has also opened up travel opportunities, with Avril visiting New Zealand to model in fashion week. Being the outdoorsy type, she also loved shooting a campaign for an adventure clothing range while there which had her rock climbing and flying in a helicopter. "You meet heaps of really nice people and have heaps of fun." Avril raved about her job. She names Gail Somada, George Wu, Shilo, Juli Grbac and Sass as some of her favourite Australian labels.

While the modeling industry is rife with controversy over underweight models and pressure to remain slim, Avril has not felt this pressure. While she's cut back on her junk food binges, she keeps in shape by playing lots of sport, particularly basketball and netball. After school Avril hopes her modelling work will take her overseas. But she has a back-up plan. "If that doesn't work out I want to work in marketing or advertising," she says.

The Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival Brisbane (MBFF) 2007 will take place from Sunday 26 to Friday 31 August. Log on to www.mbff.com.au for more details.

Juli Grbac,
28, Fortitude Valley, Designer, Grbac (left)

Designer Juli Grbac is a real girl's girl. With three days left in London after a two year working holiday and £600 to her name, she faced a tough decision: £590 pound Miu Miu heels, or food? Like any sensible fashion fan she went with the shoes and subsisted on a sandwich a day until her flight home. Such is this designer's love for fashion, a passion she developed in early childhood while watching her mother sew.

While Juli has produced her eponymous label for five years and is stocked in Kisses and Natalie



Denning, this year marks a big step for the designer. Thanks to the vision of Brisbane fashion identity Lindsay Bennett, she is one of the seven talented young designers chosen to participate in the TCB 'fashion hub' project. The designers have each been given their own shop front for a year in Fortitude Valley's redeveloped TC Beirne building, rent free and with marketing supplied.

With a penchant for all things glam and girly, Juli names Collette Dinnigan as her idol and dreams of one day being stocked in Paris. Opened in April, her store perfectly embodies her feminine design aesthetic. Lilac banquettes are studded with crystals and her pastel toned confections adorn the racks like ornaments.

But behind the glamour are many hours of sweat and tears. "I work every day," she laughed. When she allows herself the rare moment off, Juli likes nothing better than dining at one of Brisbane's fabulous restaurants, with Isis and Era among her favourites.

While Juli hopes to be stocked nationally in the not too distant future, she is perfectly content with the pace of Grbac's expansion. For the moment she's focused on servicing her adoring customer base in Brisbane and ensuring the success of her store.

As for the style of Brisbane women, Juli is impressed. "Brisbane women are getting more educated about fashion," she says. "I just love it because we've still got that Queensland relaxed feel...they know exactly what they want to wear and they do wear it really well." Log on to www.grbac.com.au

Amber Long,
35, Highgate Hill, Director and curator, Jean Brown (above)

As Director of Jean Brown, Brisbane's recently opened luxury accessory gallery, Amber Long is quite possibly the new queen of Queensland retailing. Located within Emporium in fashionable Fortitude Valley and housing covetous designs from Miu Miu, Chloe, Lanvin, ▶

