

# Festival opens doors



IN the spotlight . . . star designer Juli Grbac, right, and model Carmen James from Vivien's wearing one of Grbac's designs. Picture: Derek Moore

SHE is one of Queensland's hottest emerging talents, but until a year ago Brisbane designer Juli Grbac was barely a blip on the fashion radar.

That all changed when Brisbane hosted its first fashion festival last year in a bid to shove Queensland fashion into the national spotlight.

Thanks to the exposure, the 28-year-old has since opened a store, increased sales by more than 20 per cent and become a recognised label.

So it is no surprise Ms Grbac

has jumped at the chance to show off her spring/summer collection again at this year's festival.

The official countdown to the 2007 Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival Brisbane began yesterday, with the announcement that 28 local designers, six national designers and eight retailers will be taking part in the six-day fashion spectacular in August.

Festival director Lindsay Bennett said more than 90 per cent of the designers who took

part last year had signed up again, as well as new participants.

The festival will open on August 26 with a showcase parade at Government House.

Ms Grbac said the festival was the only event in Queensland that enabled designers to showcase their full collections to the public.

"I've been doing the same thing for five years now, but nobody really knew about me before (the festival)," she said.

Elizabeth Tilley  
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