

lifestyle makeover

‘Survivor *changed my life*’

Reality television as therapy? The top female Survivors tell us what the show taught them about themselves. by KIM BELL

the phone rings – it’s your agent saying that he has a gig for you. Only thing is, you’re going to be very isolated, and probably won’t be eating very much. Oh, and you won’t be able to tell your family and friends where you are. The good

news, though, is that it’s for a good cause – you’ll be raising funds and awareness for a charity of your choice. This is the invite that 18 local celebrities – some famous, some infamous – received: the chance to go on *Celebrity Survivor SA: Santa Carolina*. Shortly before the big reveal reunion show, we caught up with Ashley Haden, GiGi and Sade Giliberti, the three top female survivors.

“I’m a nice person.” It’s the first thing Ashley says, as she reaches out her hand in greeting. “Truly, I am.” GiGi and Sade just laugh. Loudly. There is an easy camaraderie among the women, but, I can’t help but wonder what exactly happened on that deserted island just off the coast of Mozambique. There are a few sideways glances, and an apologetic tip of the head.

It is a few weeks before the live announcement of the winner of *Survivor* (which took place 21 April) and the women are tight-lipped. They look healthy, tanned and relaxed as they sit in a garden in Johannesburg’s northern suburbs, although GiGi surreptitiously scratches at her arms. “It’s what I brought back with me,” she mutters lightly. “Anything and everything that could possibly bite, used me as a buffet. I’m still itching.”

The three are celebrities in their own right – Ashley a presenter, actress, businesswoman and shortly, an author; GiGi an actress, exotic dancer and owner of a strip club; and Sade, model, presenter and actress. They are also all so different, yet they have one thing in common – they entered into a reality television show, and it wasn’t anything like they expected.

As they explain, it is one thing to have a script, put on make-up and follow direction – but living in front of cameras 24/7 is something completely different.

Sade describes how they were isolated from the *Survivor* crew for three days at one point, as storms swept over the