

Stripped of pretence, Gigi performs victory dance

CANDICE BAILEY

SHE WAS competing against musicians, TV stars, radio jocks and comedians. But in the end it was the little known former stripper, who proved to be the ultimate survivor.

Gigi, the owner of the popular Randburg strip club The Lollipop Lounge, this week became the fourth winner of M-Net's reality TV series *Survivor: Santa Carolina*.

Beating well known TV face Ashley Hayden in the live finale this week, Gigi walked away with R500 000, the *Survivor* title and another R500 000 for a charity of her choice.

She was one of 18 celebrities chosen to participate in the show. Each would raise money for a chosen charity while they were on the island. Of the R1 million prize money, half would go into the celeb's bank account and the other half to the charity.

Aside from Hayden, she was competing against models Christina Storm and Cindy Nell; fashion designer Craig Jacobs; comedian Darren Maule, musicians ProVerb and Jub Jub, among a host of others.

The celebs all gathered this week for the finale. But Jub Jub, who has since been charged with murder, attempted murder and drunk

Unlike Hayden who had made several clandestine alliances throughout the show, Gigi did the exact opposite, keeping a relatively low profile. The only alliance she had formed was towards the end with Hayden and fellow TV personality Sade, where they decided to make it an "all girl" final.

Since winning the title, Gigi says her whole profile has changed.

"Moms come to me and ask me to take a picture with them and their daughters.

"Old grannies meet me in the pharmacy and tell me that they voted for me in the show."

She said being a former exotic dancer gave her an edge.

"I am a showgirl. At the end of the day these women are the true survivors of society. They are a piece of civilisation that we forget about. They are professional dancers in a club."

She explains that exotic dancers often have a difficult job as patrons at strip clubs can be very cruel.

"I don't weigh my girls and sometimes the girl who is not the prettiest is up against the top earner. It's hard."

For a long time Gigi's mission has been to demystify the stigma around strip clubs. She has had a popular

