



ULTIMATE SURVIVOR: Strip club owner GiGi, whose real name is Pearl Sippel, won the Survivor South Africa: Santa Carolina competition.

GiGi to tell all about strip industry

The *Survivor* winner is to write about the striptease business and how it matches SA's transformation, writes Edwin Naidu

SEXY strip club boss and exotic dancer Pearl (GiGi) Sippel, the winner of M-Net's *Survivor South Africa: Santa Carolina*, had no idea she was being invited to audition for the reality show when she got the call from the television station.

"I thought they were looking for girls from my club to feature on their billboards for *Survivor*," she told *The Sunday Independent* on Friday.

Still amazed by her stunning success, GiGi said she wanted to catch her breath and - after the World Cup - write a book on the striptease industry.

"I was surprised when they told me they would like me to try out for the show. I was a wild-card entry and wondered what they must have been thinking.

"Perhaps they thought I would be dancing topless around the fireplace, or seduce the men.

"Whatever their reasons, I just

went there and embraced the challenge," she said.

"On the island one has no expectations. You are hungry most of the time, all you think about is the next meal.

"Most of us looked really grubby, except Izak Davel and Gys de Villiers, who looked good always."

GiGi, 42, who owns the Lollipop Lounge, dubbed the "sexiest strip club in the heart of Randburg", was announced as the winner on Wednesday's reunion show at M-Net's studios in Randburg.

Although filming took place in Mozambique last November and contestants took part in the tribal council to vote for the winner in December, they had to sign strict confidentiality clauses.

"Over the past four months several contestants came to the club. I used to look at their eyes and body language to gauge whether they had voted for me, but I got no inkling," she said.

GiGi said the competition was by no means a breeze. "It is not fun when you are doing it, although on television it looks like we had fun.

"I slept on the sand for 27 nights, and was bitten by insects everywhere - my eyelids, hairline and my wrists were swollen," she said.

Midway through the contest, when partners visited the island, her husband, Media 24's award-winning motoring journalist Egmont Sippel, was taken aback when he saw her.

"They warned spouses that we did not look as we did when we came on to the island. He (Egmont) thought we were taken to a hotel each night, but when I showed him my lodging was a zero-star sand bed, he was stunned," she said.

GiGi said she was glad to have taken part in the show.

"It was not about strength but survival. I resolved to enjoy the experience, not irritate anyone and not form alliances until the end

with Ashley (Hayden).

"I fetched water, looked for food and did my chores, without being a threat to anyone," she said.

She did not expect Sade Giliberti, who she had voted out, to vote for her in the end.

"I thought to myself she is young and will have more chances, this was my only one. I am glad she understood."

Fellow contestants ditched strongly fancied Hayden, who betrayed her mates on the island, for which she was not forgiven.

Having won, GiGi, who gets R500 000, with another R500 000 donated to her chosen charity, said she wanted to renovate her club for the World Cup and afterwards write a book titled *Nipple Caps and G-strings* about her life story and how the exotic dancing industry's transformation had matched that of the country's since 1990.

Survivor has drawn a lot of attention to her club, with several movie

companies using the location for filming.

Contestant Gys de Villiers was recorded on air joking that he had sent GiGi on a reward he had won for a spa treatment so that he could get lifetime membership of the Lollipop Lounge, where the slogan is "We aim to Tease".

GiGi said she was thrilled to have won and planned to use the experience to create a better life for her friends at the club.

This week she is hosting a Miss Erotica Island competition featuring high-profile judges whose names she would not reveal. "I had lots of positive feedback from people in the industry, with the owners of several striptease and dance clubs calling me, except Teasers boss Lolly Jackson. "I called him and said Lolly, what's the matter, I received congratulatory messages from everyone but you.

"He wanted to know why, saying he does not watch television."