

# ESSENCE



**YOU'VE GOT  
THE LOOK?  
THIS SUMMER'S  
FASHION  
ESSENTIALS**

**GOURMET FOOD  
BY DESIGN**

**WREATHS  
MADE SIMPLE**

**DRESSING UP  
YOUR HOME FOR  
CHRISTMAS**



Beauty pageants are about glamour. But what onlookers seldom see is all the commitment, self-discipline, sacrifice, long hours and plain hard work put in by each contestant. In the week to come, our own contestant to the 57th Miss World pageant, in Sanya, China, will spend hours on stage being scrutinised by the contest's judging panel.

Stephanie Dods, a 17-year-old Year 12 student at Auckland's Diocesan School for Girls, says she knew from past experience the competition would test her stamina. She already has a couple of beauty pageant titles: Miss Teen Asia Pacific and Most Beautiful Smile at the Miss Tourism Queen contest in Malaysia last year.

There's far more to the business of beauty queens than wearing tiaras, stilettos and silken sashes.

Stephanie has had to skip school to prepare for Miss World; at coaching sessions, media interviews, fittings for gowns by designer John Zimmerman accessories by Urban Turbans and jewellery by Madame Fancy Pants. With a television audience that is expected to reach two

billion for the final on December 1, every stitch, every spangle, every shoe must be perfect. And all the while smiling, smiling, smiling.

Stephanie is up against ambitious beauty queens from 120 countries, but she's not losing any sleep over the responsibility of representing her country.

With considerable maturity for her age, she says she is confident her strengths and her mixed parentage of a Kiwi father and Filipina mother have "given me the ability to fit in easily into any culture or backdrop. I can adjust and adapt to a variety of situations and people, which is my strong point".

The man who groomed Stephanie for Miss World, model, actor and choreographer Colin Mathura Jeffree, believes Stephanie's got what it takes to win in Sanya. "She exudes energy and chutzpah that come naturally to her," he says.

Our young representative will also make an eloquent statement of pride when she steps out on stage in an elegant black gown embellished with New Zealand's silver fern in crystals, the handiwork of Stephanie's 80-year-old grandmother. ■