

# From George Brown College to Milan

**RAFAEL BRUSILOV**  
for Metro Canada

**For a first-time fashion designer, having your work shown on a Milan runway is not a bad start to a career indeed.**

Seeing your design featured in Italian Vogue the next day is even sweeter, but you won't find recent George Brown College graduate Andrea Tucker, 38, gloating about it. The fledgling designer gave up her previous career to pursue a fashion design dream that nearly never made it to light.

"This is something I've always wanted to do and I figured now was my time. I almost missed my chance at a fashion career because I wasn't sure I could be a designer," Tucker said.

Tucker created a bra-and-panties design for the Triumph Inspiration Award competition, which invited fashion design students around the world to create inspired lingerie designs. She won the Canadian leg of the nominations in April and represented Canada at the finale in Milan this past September. While she didn't win the final prize, her creation rocked the runway and got huge exposure when it was published in Italian Vogue magazine shortly after the competition.

Tucker's eye-catching design was inspired by the art-deco style of famous 1920s designer Erte and features a sleek bra with a long silver tassel, underwear with pleating around the waistband and thigh-high stockings painstakingly sewn



Andrea Tucker

with 40 buttons each down the back seam. A black and silver kimono with boas sewn around each arm completes the visually arresting look.

Tucker learned how to sew from her grandmother and always loved designing clothes but spent a decade working as a network administrator because it

**"This has always been my dream."**

Andrea Tucker

seemed like the safe choice at the time.

"When it came time to choose a career, I chose computers because it was practical and fashion wasn't. After 10 years I decided I didn't want to work in computers anymore.

Marilyn McNeil-Morin, chair of the School of Fashion Studies and Performing Arts at George Brown College, says Tucker's outstanding design really made an impact at the Milan show.

"We're extremely proud of her. She pushed herself to really do something that

was above and beyond — it was about creating something that was truly beautiful," McNeil-Morin said.

Tucker's design has not only garnered her some crucial industry recognition, it has shed light on the strength of George Brown's fashion design programs which focus on the business side of the industry.

"Fashion is a business and obviously we need to provide graduates with the skills to thrive in that business," McNeil-Morin said. The recognition means Tucker plans to continue designing lingerie professionally.

"This has always been my dream and to have my creation shown on the runway in Italy, that's a dream most people don't get to live," she said.



Andrea Tucker's lingerie design.

# Ready, set, brew! Canadian Barista Championship rolls out

**ANDREA WOO**  
for Metro Canada

As a relatively new barista, Rob Kettner trained extra hard for the 2009 Western Regional Barista Championship in August.

"I'd be making 100 cappuccinos a night," said Kettner, a Victoria, B.C., resident who worked as a coffee

roaster for three years before becoming a barista in May. "I'd say I was drinking 20 to 30 espressos a night at the peak of my training. The pressure of learning how to do this competition ... and drinking that much caffeine turned me into a bit of a crazy person."

The hard work paid off, though: Kettner placed

fourth, and was bumped up to third after that barista had to pull out of the competition. Kettner will now compete in the 2009 Canadian Barista Championship, taking place Oct. 14 and 15 at the Vancouver Convention Centre as part of the Canadian Coffee and Tea show.

A total of 16 participants — 12 regional placers and four randomly-selected wild cards — will have 15 minutes to make 12 beverages: four espressos, four cappuccinos and four signature drinks of their own creation. In addition to taste and presentation, judges will look at technical skills and station cleanliness.

The winner gets flight and hotel to London, to compete in the 2010 World Barista Championship. Chris Tellez of Collingwood, Ont., took first place in the Central Regional Barista Championship. He says station cleanliness and

**"It's an interesting dichotomy between incredibly nerve-wracking and a lot of fun."**

Chris Tellez, barista

staying calm were among the harder challenges for him. "Making sure you're comfortable with what you're doing is probably harder," he said.

"I mean, you're putting on a bit of an act, but if you can make it feel as natural as possible, that definitely comes through." He adds that while there's a strong sense of camaraderie among the baristas, the competitions can be tense.

"It's an interesting dichotomy between incredibly nerve-wracking and a lot of fun," he said.

Vancouver native Sammy Piccolo is the winner of last year's national competition. He says the event is

## Don't miss the final

These regional winners and wild cards will compete against each other at the 2009 Canadian Barista Championship at the Vancouver Convention Centre on Oct. 14-15.

### Wild cards

- Josh Hockin, Transcend Coffee (Edmonton)
- Michael Tam, Phil & Sebastien (Calgary)
- Luc Spicer, Café Neve (Montreal)
- Sameer Mohamed, Toi, Moi & Café (Montreal)

### Central

- Chris Tellez, Espresso Post (Collingwood, Ont.)
- Sam James, Sam James Coffee House (Toronto)
- Momiji Kishi, Dark Horse Espresso Bar (Toronto)

### Eastern

- Anthony Benda, Café Myriad (Montreal)
- Cliff Hansen, Bridgehead (Ottawa)
- Alex Scott, Café Myriad (Montreal)

### Western

- Kyle Straw, Caffè Artigiano (Vancouver)
- Spencer Viehweger, JJ Bean Coffee (Vancouver)
- Rob Kettner, Fernwood Coffee Company (Victoria, B.C.)

### Prairies

- Ben Put, Phil & Sebastian (Calgary)
- Joel May, Fratello Coffee (Calgary)
- Chad Moss, Transcend Coffee (Calgary)

what each competitor makes it. "If all you care about is winning, then it's not going to be fun," he

said. "If you're loose and prepared, it can be fun and exciting, with a lot of joking around."

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