



Rissikat's not happy with her makeover



Tyson Beckford offers moral support



Elle helps style Jennifer's new shorter 'do



# MODEL *behaviour*

Tears, tantrums and an Elle of a lot of bitching. We go backstage at BRITAIN & IRELAND'S NEXT TOP MODEL BY ANTONIA HOYLE

**T**he air is heavy with burning tension and the stench of peroxide. Clusters of nervous girls nibble self-consciously on crust-less sandwiches. A couple are in tears while another sits alone, mouth opening and closing like a shell-shocked goldfish.

Pots of pink hair dye litter the surfaces and a half-eaten birthday cake wilts unappetisingly in the heat. In the middle of it all prowls Elle Macpherson, twice the height of everyone else and, frankly, 10 times as terrifying.

Welcome to the new series of *Britain & Ireland's Next Top Model* – the reality television show that plucks one lucky winner from thousands of wannabes and hands her a modelling contract. The show is bigger, the competition hotter and the judges higher profile than ever, and *Fabulous* has been invited backstage to see what really happens when the cameras stop rolling and the perfectly manicured claws come out.

This year, head judge Elle and fashion designer Julien Macdonald have been joined on the panel by male model Tyson Beckford and former *The Hills* star Whitney Port. So far, the 20 models who started the series have been whittled down to just 12. Viewers have already seen them do a catwalk show for Elle and a swimsuit shoot in Dubai. Four days ago, they all moved into their four-bedroom home in south London.

Today we join the hopefuls for what, in previous series, has always been the most emotional episode of the entire run – when judges overhaul each girl's look with a new hairdo, without offering them a smidgeon of a say in the process.

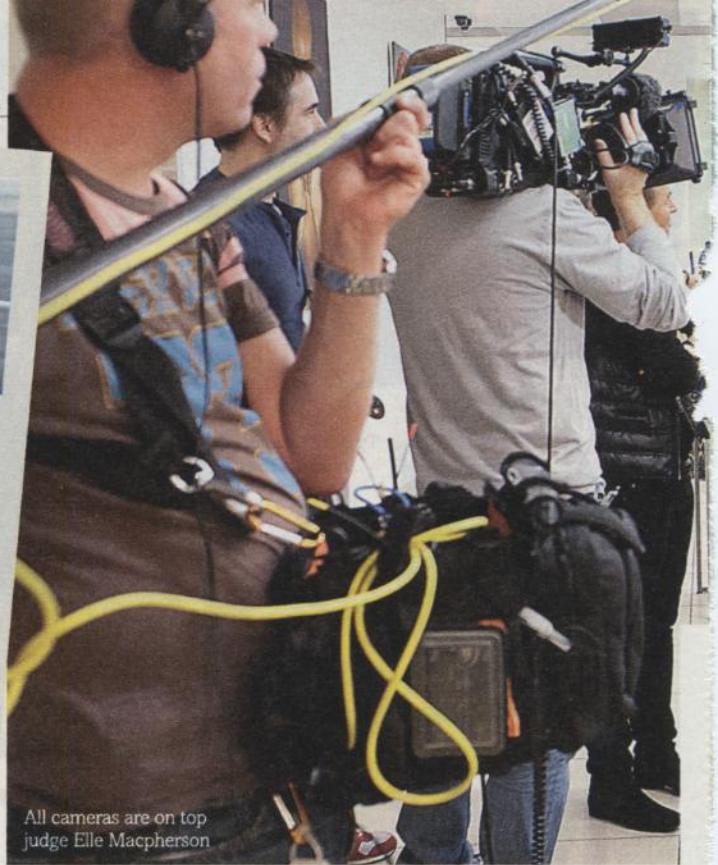
To say the changes haven't been well received would be something of an understatement.

Rissikat Oyebo, 22, is in floods of tears after her shoulder-length locks are lopped off into a gamine crop, flecks of hair still scattered over her tiny ears. →





Judge Whitney Port keeps an eye on Rissikat's transformation



All cameras are on top judge Elle Macpherson

"I'm so drained and I don't want anyone to try to comfort me," she sobs. "My fiancé loved my long curls. I don't dare show him. Tyson told me there would be no drastic change."

If Tyson, 41, feels bad, he's doing a pretty good job of hiding it. He saunters round the swanky Daniel Galvin salon in London in a skintight black T-shirt, exuding the sort of raw sex appeal that renders everyone (um, us included) simpering idiots in his wake.

Julien Macdonald is especially smitten.

"Tyson is gorgeous, athletic, sexy and hot. Women and men go crazy for him. He's added a new energy to the series."

### Ruffling FEATHERS

Julien, 41, has certainly created his share of controversial headlines in the two years he's been a judge, not least when in 2010 he branded plus-sized models a "joke".

Today he's determined to set the record straight.

"I was misquoted," he sighs, rolling what look suspiciously like blue-kohl-lined eyes. "I think we need *more* bigger models. My clothes lines go up to a size 22, which is the same size as my mother and sisters."

Pint-sized and wearing more fake tan than strictly necessary, Julien clearly enjoys the Mr Nasty reputation that his withering put-downs have earned him.

"I'm not here to make people cry, but I'm honest. What's the point in telling girls that they can be a model when they clearly can't?"

Perhaps he's got a point, but Whitney Port prefers a gentler approach. "The girls look at me like an older sister," she says.

Although it was her 27th birthday this week (the uneaten cake is in her honour), she doesn't look a day over 15. Wearing Doc Martens, a baggy jumper and pleated miniskirt so short it barely covers her bottom, she has impossibly skinny legs and eyelashes so long it's a wonder she's able to blink.

She is a mixture of American psycho-waffle – "I've been telling the girls they must harness their inner beauty"

– and refreshing honesty.

"Most girls their age lack confidence," she says. "I still have personal and physical qualities about myself I don't like. I can be shy and worry my boobs are too big."

Luckily, confidence is something aspiring model Madeleine Taga, 20, has by the bucketload. She's been having waist-length hair extensions applied to her pixie crop for the last four hours and, unlike the other girls, she's delighted with her new look.

"I'm already the most confident model in the room, now that I have long hair I feel like I can fly," she says.

Unsurprisingly, her high self-esteem has already been ruffling some feathers.

"Some of the models think my confidence is arrogance," she admits. "It's been sweet and sour in the house so far."

She is referring to the squabble she had with the equally feisty Anita Kaushik in Dubai.

## 'I'm the MOST confident model in the ROOM'

"Madeleine and I had a fight which was uncomfortable and cringey," admits Anita, 19. "I didn't like her attitude, and she didn't like me. But we're fine now. The toughest part of this show is being surrounded by other models. It's not like I stand out any more."

In truth, the only woman who really stands out in here is Elle, her 6ft frame made even taller with stilettos. Dressed in shimmery green trousers, her long, blonde hair itself worthy of an ad campaign, at one stage she dips her finger into Whitney's birthday cake (so supermodels do eat! Sort of...)

and hugs the girls in a concerned manner.





Elle and Tyson with Julien Macdonald

Roxanne gets a new red Afro

Tamsin isn't sure about her fringe

Madeleine loves her new hair extensions

Hmm. She might have to get used to that.

With no gym and the kitchen in the girls' communal home in Putney, London, stacked full of chocolate and pasta, many of them have been doing aerobics in the garden to keep fit. There

won't be any Frankie Cocozza-style drunken

escapades either.

"There is alcohol in the house, but we never have time to drink it," sighs Kelly Forde, 21. "I certainly don't want to make enemies, but I'm the youngest of six kids so I'm not worried about squabbles."

It's early evening now and, after 12 hours and the efforts of five stylists and five colourists, nearly all the girls are coiffured. Julien cuts a slice of cake to console model Roxanne O'Connor, 22, who is reeling at the size of her new bright-red Afro. Everyone is tired. Even Elle has taken her stilettos off.

"It's hard for me when the girls get upset," says executive producer Cheryl Price, who has worked on the show since it started.

"Sometimes I take them away from the cameras to give them a hug. This is the defining episode that tests their emotions and their trust. But it's not gratuitous. It's a genuine process and the girls come out stronger."

Judging by today's meltdowns and mayhem, they've got a long way to go. **f**

● Britain & Ireland's Next Top Model *airs on Sky Living HD on Mondays at 9pm.*

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She does seem to genuinely care – even when the cameras stop rolling. But the girls still treat her with cautious awe, the crew with polite deference. You get the impression there's only room for one queen bee on this show.

### Emotions TESTED

Unfortunately, she's not quite so friendly towards *Fabulous* and this means we're not permitted to speak to her.

But we *can* look. Up close, she is even browner than Julien, her Bambi eyes and white smile barely bothered by a single wrinkle, despite her 48 years. Her beauty leaves you dumbstruck.

Meanwhile, 21-year-old Tasmin Golding is sitting, stoney faced and trance-like, repeating: "My name's Tasmin and I've got a fringe," on a loop.

"I had one when I was 10, but it stuck out so much that it put me off for life," she wails.

"I'm not used to it at all – it's all 'modelly.'"