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DEPARTMENTS

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## media

### FACING REALITY

**We asked these Orlandoans about their reality TV experiences—and what happened after the cameras stopped rolling.**

Come on down! You're the next contestant on the game show called reality TV! Ever wondered if you could do it? Come on . . . it looks so easy, right? What's easier than screaming, eating bugs or romancing your next amoré in front of millions of viewers? Actually, it's not for the faint of heart. In fact, if you don't have a thick skin, leave your application in a drawer. For the viewer, though, it's fun. In the world of reality TV, it's all about the drama and the excitement of rooting for your favorite contestant. Here in Orlando, we have more than our fair share of TV hopefuls. In fact, Orlando has become one of the top cities for TV casting agents to find new cast members for their next big hit.

Even if you've never watched a reality TV show (and we know you have!), you'll probably recognize some of these local celebrities. We wanted to find out if they were able to return to the "real world" after the cameras stopped rolling.

#### The Ex-Wife

Rebecca Bredholt is a force to be reckoned with. This 31-year-old attractive brunette has a mean left hook shot in kickboxing. And did I mention she loves drama?

Bredholt grew up in Orlando and attended Keith Elementary and Lyman High School before graduating from Oviedo High (class of '94). After getting her degree from Point Loma Nazarene University in sunny So Cal, she returned to O-town to work for several media companies.

This summer, Bredholt starred in the debut of ABC's *The Ex-Wives Club*. Starring famous ex-wives and ex-lovers Angie Everhart, Marla Maples and Shar Jackson (think Kevin Federline), the show helped other divorced people cope with the painful breakup. But during one of life's most emotional hurdles, how could someone share their pain with millions of viewers? Bredholt says she left her seven-year marriage because of an abusive relationship. For her, it was an opportunity to let other women know what she went through and hopefully serve as a lesson to others. "I just wanted to hear from one woman out there who was like, 'My husband treated me that way and I didn't know how to handle it,' or, 'My boyfriend did that and I didn't know what to do and I felt weak.' I think if I would have been inspired by someone else's story then it would have given me strength. So what I wanted to do was to provide strength for other women out there that were going through what I went through," says Bredholt.



The show gives contestants a chance to go after their life's dream and undergo a makeover—both emotionally and physically. Contestants surrendered for two days to life coach Debbie Ford, who focused on letting them release their anger and sadness. Bredholt underwent a makeover that included eyelash extensions and a fabulous new, chic hairstyle and color, and a shopping excursion on Rodeo Drive. She also got a chance to rebuild her confidence by going out on her first date since the divorce.

But the show's most memorable moment came when Bredholt got a chance to get even with her ex who, Bredholt says, made her play second fiddle to his prized car collection during their stormy marriage. The ladies of The Ex-Wives Club had a surprise for Bredholt. She was blindfolded and met up with Maples, Everhart and Jackson in the Arizona desert. That's when Bredholt saw her nemesis face-to-face: a one-of-a-kind, custom-antique car—the kind her ex-husband loved to collect.

"They bring out the car and took the blindfold off. How many women out there come in second place to a car or a motorcycle? Here's a chance for me to lead the way. I felt awesome!" she exclaims.

In typical TV drama fashion, Bredholt got her chance to get even by tossing the car out of a C-130 plane while flying at 10,000 feet. Viewers watched as the car tumbled over and over, and the final moments were captured on a mounted camera inside the car.

After taping the show for six weeks, Bredholt returned to Orlando with her confidence restored. "I had a conversation with Angie Everhart . . . [and she asked], 'What would you do with your life if you could do anything?' I think if Angie had not asked me that question, I think it would have taken me months to do what I actually did. I always wanted to be a writer," says Bredholt.

Now armed with a new laptop given to her on the show, Bredholt set into motion some dramatic steps to reach her goal. "I came back and gave my two weeks notice [at her job] and decided to write a novel because that's what I always wanted to do. I took the money that ABC gave me, quit my job and moved in with my parents. I had enough money to live off of for two months," Bredholt explains.

When Bredholt announced her plans to family and friends, not everyone was convinced that this new local celebrity was pursuing her writing goal for altruistic reasons.

"Everybody was like, she's been star-struck and fallen off her rocker.

Everybody—except for my mom. My mom was the only person who was absolutely thrilled, because she was like, 'You should have done this when you were 14 years old. I'm so glad to hear that you're finally going to do it. I've known you were a writer since you were four.' Everybody else was like, 'Are you nuts?' I had just gotten a raise and promotion. I was poised to become a local celebrity. I had a great apartment. I had great friends. My career was aspiring. Everything in my life was reaching in a pinnacle," Bredholt says.

After writing every day for two months, she ended up with a rough draft of her novel. Now it was time to put phase two of her plan into action. She and a friend drove 2,700 miles across the country and settled into an apartment in Los Angeles. Using a contact she made on the show, Bredholt started peddling her manuscript. She also wrote a screenplay for the San Diego 48-Hour Film Festival called *Wing Woman*. "The woman who was my hairdresser on the show worked at a salon in Los Angeles. I told her my book was done and [she said she] had a fellow colleague whose client was an agent looking for new novelists," explains Bredholt.

After living several months in Los Angeles, Bredholt decided to move back to the East Coast. On the eve of her move, she mailed her manuscript to the agent. The next month, she had a signed contract. Tentatively titled *What Doesn't Kill You*, Bredholt's novel is scheduled to come out in 2008. The fictional story tells how one woman found her way out of an abusive marriage to an international criminal.

Her contacts formed during the San Diego Film Festival also rekindled. This summer, Bredholt's screenplay for *Wing Woman* is in development to possibly become a feature film. She flew out to San Diego to view the casting session for the four, one-minute episodes that went online in August to generate funding. She also partnered with Gary Fabiano, a Newsweek photographer, to co-write a short film based on Fabiano's photojournalism experience in Bosnia, which they entered in the competition for the Vancouver Film Festival.

Bredholt says she hasn't stopped to look back at her old life since the show ended.

"[People say] look at how much you've done in a year and a half," she says, laughing. "If you stop moving you'll die."

### The Bachelor

Lorenzo Borghese may carry the title of prince, but his life is anything but a fairy tale. The Borghese name has been around for thousands of years and Lorenzo is considered Italian nobility. His family's name can be found on landmarks throughout Italy, including the famed Villa Borghese, the largest park in Rome. The Borghese family includes renowned entrepreneurs: Lorenzo's grandmother, Marcella, created Princess Marcella Borghese Cosmetics, which later became part of Revlon. Lorenzo, along with his father, runs GT Partners, a private-label Italian cosmetics company whose products are carried in major department stores. And the former Rollins College graduate (class of '95) also founded his own line of luxury bath and grooming products for pets called Royal Treatment.

With two successful businesses and a legacy, what is the one thing left to do? Find a wife.



Borghese appeared as the ninth bachelor on ABC's *The Bachelor: Rome* that aired last fall. The show featured Borghese and 25 women vying for his affections. In the finale, Borghese made his choice and presented the winning bachelorette with a family ring his mother had created during the show. Borghese told his intended—Jennifer Wilson, a South Florida schoolteacher—that he wanted to spend time with her in the real world so they would get to know each other better. Unfortunately, fans later found out that this "TV marriage" would not continue happily ever after. While he didn't want to talk about specific moments from the show, Borghese did say, "I thought the show was a great experience and I met great people. People always ask me if I'm glad I did the show. Absolutely."

Since the show ended, Borghese has been hard at work with his pet product line and cosmetics

companies. He's also started a new networking site for pet lovers called NuzzlePlanet. In January, he returned to Orlando and spoke at his alma mater. During his visit, Winter Park Mayor David Strong proclaimed January 23 as "Lorenzo Borghese Day." Borghese said he felt it was "almost like a weird dream that I was actually invited to come back and speak to the students."

He talked with the business grads about how he built his company and the struggles people go through to enjoy the benefits of success.

"I believe we have a duty and obligation to pass on what we know to others," Borghese explains.

He also talked about the glare of the media spotlight. Borghese says he doesn't consider himself a celebrity, but that didn't stop fans from telling him what they thought about the bachelor and his looks.

"People feel they know everything just by watching the show. I've gotten letters saying 'Well, you made it my business by going on the show so here's my opinion.' Truthfully, I feel sorry for these people. If you guys don't like me then you don't have to watch. You don't have to talk so negatively about me just by my appearance without even knowing me," he says.

Borghese says he's writing a book about his experiences. The book's theme is that nobody sues a homeless man because there's nothing to gain. "What I found interesting is how the media reacts to stardom," explains Borghese. He points out how the media dogged Oprah after her \$25-million donation to build an all-girls school in South Africa. People asked why the billionaire TV mogul didn't spend that money on disadvantaged students here in the United States. "It's always the crash that makes the highlights," says Borghese. "It's funny how we're trained to watch for it. I just wanted to share my experience with the media, not related to the actual show, but just related to the press . . . to my life in general and the reaction I got from people when I came back."

Before *The Bachelor*, Borghese confessed that he did read all the gossip magazines and always believed the items in print. "Maybe I was dumb to think that, but suddenly you are thrown into the spotlight and they [the media] don't want to write [positive news]. If I'm at a charity event, that doesn't sell newspapers. But if I'm doing something bad at a charity event, that's what's interesting."

The newbie reality star got his share of ink in gossip magazines this year. For several weeks, he was the favorite item on "Page Six" of the *New York Post* when he attended several not-for-profit events.

Borghese says one gossip mag turned his appearance at a paraplegic event into a new romance with former '80s teen pop singer Deborah Gibson. Borghese said the magazine claimed he looked Gibson up and down, ogling her breasts and telling her he wanted to hang out the next time he was in L.A.

"Instead of focusing on the event and the cause, they have to spin it. That's what sells," Borghese says. It's that tawdry gossip that Borghese says is one of the downfalls of the media's coverage of any celebrity—reality TV star or not.

Now living in Manhattan and back at work, Borghese still has his hand in reality TV. He is pitching two show concepts to networks, but says these shows are good-hearted and a positive experience for viewers. One is about how people treat their pets like family. The other features families competing to win a trust fund to send their son or daughter to college. "It's what they do to make sure their child gets a better life," Borghese explains. He adds, laughing, "I'm not saying they won't be embarrassed. They will do crazy games to win."

As for this prince, he says his crazy ride on reality television was something he "would absolutely do once in my life. It's like college: You wouldn't do that again. You've done it. But it was a very positive experience," Borghese concludes.

For complete story, pick up the September 2007 issue of Orlando Magazine.

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