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by published in issue #1511

**Orlando****Dapper Dani: Shot at Love lesbian heartthrob Dani Campbell charms at Girls in Wonderland**

By Edie Stull

**Fort Lauderdale** | At age 29, Fort Lauderdale firefighter Dani Campbell's life has gone to a place she could never have imagined. And it all started on a whim.

Campbell was featured on the first season of MTV's bisexual dating game, A Shot at Love With Tila Tequila, where she competed to beat out 16 straight men and 15 other lesbians to win the heart of the reality-show's star, Tila Tequila.

The audition, held in a bar, was a little different. "A couple of beers and I was in front of the camera giving an interview," Campbell says. "I guess I just had the attitude that I really wasn't trying... I really didn't care. A lot of people were there because they had heard of it, and they wanted to be on it. But I had such a lackadaisical attitude about it, and I guess maybe that's why I stood out from the others." She must have done something right. Campbell made it to the final two on the show, although Tequila ultimately chose a guy (whom she ultimately broke up with, and a second season of the show is now airing). She didn't win the top spot, but she did win the hearts of lesbians across the country, amassing a huge fan base.

Campbell has been criss-crossing the country ever since the show ended, appearing at numerous events for adoring fans. She's been to the Dinah Shore Weekend in Palm Springs and Aqua Girl in Miami. During this year's Gay Days Weekend, Campbell will be featured at Girls in Wonderland events geared toward the lesbian crowd.

"This year I will be hosting," Campbell explains. "There is a pool party and the nighttime parties. So I'll be on the mike, talking to the crowd, meeting people, taking pictures. I'll have a booth set up there for Futch Apparel, my clothing line; I'll be selling that. The weekend is going to be pretty busy, I'm sure of that."

Campbell's popularity stretches far beyond her South Florida roots. Although Campbell's family moved to New Orleans, Campbell herself still calls South Florida home. She began to understand her sexuality when she was in high school and came out at 17, when her mom caught her kissing her girlfriend. Campbell tended bar while she trained to become a firefighter, a career she loves, although she admits she really enjoyed the Shot at Love experience.

"It was so much fun—like summer camp—just meeting the people. There wasn't anything I didn't like," Campbell says. That is, except for one of the show's challenges.

"It was all fun, but I would rather not have eaten the bull cock and balls. Like I said, it's an experience. I'm glad I did it, but that's probably the one thing I would change," she laughs.

The exposure of Campbell's Futch clothing line came with her newfound fame. The name, a cross between "femme" and "butch," defines Campbell's own comfort zone, somewhere in the middle. The clothing line was launched at this year's Dinah Shore Weekend.

Campbell recognizes that the TV show opened opportunities for her. "People seem to like me and it's benefiting me. I am able to do some of the things I have wanted to do my entire life. Like one of my dreams was starting my own clothing company. So now I can do that. Success is coming quicker than having to start from the bottom up."

The strategy seems to be working. "It's doing great. We have a MySpace page for Futch Apparel, and we also have FutchApparel.com. We have our first set of shirts up and selling. We have tank tops coming out for our pool parties and we are just building onto it."

Campbell says it's not easy to balance her firefighting career with her other projects.

"It's difficult," she says. Her firefighting shifts are 24 hours on, then 28 hours off. If she can't

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schedule her appearances around her shifts, she asks her co-workers to cover for her. "And then I have to come home and work for them," she adds.

Campbell has been a little surprised at the reaction from her lesbian fans. "I see how we as a society act toward people on TV, but I guess I wasn't expecting so much of a response." She's taking it one day at a time but is open to what the future may bring. "I have my career. Firefighting is what I wanted to do. I am pretty outgoing. I love the entertainment industry. If some kind of opportunity were to arise, I definitely would take it if it were beneficial. That's just in my blood. I definitely have an entertainer's heart in my body."

Would she give up firefighting altogether? "Sure," she says. "Life changes. You have to face life with open arms and anything at any moment can change. I have definitely experienced that, and I'm living it."

Campbell may have to make that decision. Up next, she's working on a new TV show for the LOGO network.

"We're working on a travel show where I'll actually be hosting, just traveling around and sharing with people the great spots to travel, where to go, where to stay, where to eat when you are in these places," Campbell says.

And it's safe to assume that her fans will tune in, if for no other reason than to see the woman who didn't win Tila Tequila's heart.

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