

Alisha Wheeler is a country girl through and through. The 16 year old loves nothing better than getting on her horse and riding around her family's Karaka property, where numerous calves and lambs from Calf Club days at Ararimu Primary spend a contented retirement in the company of dogs, cats, chooks and a turtle. Alisha is the eldest child of a very close family – mum and dad Angela and Mark and siblings Kristen (14), Kent (12) and 10 year old Helaina. Not to forget grandparents George and Rosalie. George, commonly known as Opa, was the one who urged Alisha to enter the elocal Covergirl competition.

“My family were so encouraging,” says Alisha. “Dad sent emails to all his friends to tell them to go online and vote.” Every vote counted during the competition, with the four leading contestants constantly swapping pole position as the contest heated up. Votes increased by 2-300 every 30 seconds during the final hours of voting, reaching an overall final total of 66,158, with Alisha securing the top spot and coveted title of Franklin elocal Covergirl.

This year, Alisha is in Year 13 at Strathallan, where she says she “loves art, painting in particular.” She is looking at a career in family or criminal law, so may decide to take a BA in Arts and Law to keep up her painting. Why law? “I am a very independent person and stand up for what I believe in,” she says.

This talented young woman has many choices for her future, including dance – her ‘passion.’ Her eyes light up as she talks about dancing.

“I’ve been dancing Jazz Ballet since I was five and just love performing onstage at shows. Of all the things I do, I get the greatest fun out of dancing.”

Taking part in the Covergirl competition has also been a lot of fun. Alisha: “It is such a great opportunity that a local magazine would hold a competition where local girls can be recognised. It’s different and very special.” ■

Editor Mykeljon Winckel: “elocal looks forward to running another ‘Covergirl’ competition in 2010. The response was truly amazing. For a smaller rural area such as Franklin, it just goes to show Franklin is a patriotic populace who know what they want. A special thanks to the Covergirl sponsors Jocelyn Nixon (Images Medispa), Kerryn Chaplin (Diosa Hair), Brendon Hamill (David Reid Homes Counties), Bob Ranchhod (Robert Harris Café Pukekohe and Ormiston), Paul Brighthouse (Brighthouse Design).



Ralph and Alisha

The winning shot. Alisha Wheeler
photography www.speedshotz.co.nz



“Two of my passions, piano and painting”