

says Freemantle. However, she adds that with young sons, a husband and her own business, she has far more responsibilities to juggle now. She says she's delighted that her children are boys, since she can just "get on with it", and she aims to inspire them and inculcate in them the same work ethic she and her husband share.

"It was young love," says Freemantle about meeting Jonathan at an Oxford art fair where he was exhibiting and she was serving tea, when they were both still teenagers. A gentleman to the core, he wooed her with love letters. Since then they've started a business, originally called Noir but now renamed Zwart, which is a consultancy on various projects all involving the things they both love: art and creativity. Their latest project, sparked by the same desire to surround themselves with people driven by aesthetic values, emerged as the EIFF.

"We wanted to create an intellectually inspiring, visually pleasing and philosophical platform," says Freemantle. Heavyweights like Amanda Harlech, Hussein Chalayan and Pam Hogg became involved and lent considerable clout to the festival. The next phase includes a potential festival in Istanbul and another one in Cape Town. However, Freemantle insists that her biggest inspirations are her husband and children – and she's far too grounded and humble to take credit for being their muse.

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

Thabang Molefi's sassy entrepreneurial mind, honed in her early teens, has helped her weather volatile storms, theft and sabotage to take her business to new heights

Having begun her entrepreneurial dealings as a boarder in high school selling coloured popcorn (or *ama kip-kip*, as it's known in the township) at a 1 000% mark-up (buying it for 50c and selling it for R50 a packet), 37-year-old Molefi knew she was cut out for business.

She was the first black woman to establish a health centre in Soweto. Named The Roots, it specialises in iridology, a diagnostic technique which detects signs of organ weakness in the iris. Since she was targeting this service to township residents, many of whom were unfamiliar with it, she operated at a loss during her first two years. Yet it was a valuable learning curve, she says.

With R250 000 start-up capital saved up while working as a somatologist on cruise ships for five years, Molefi used just R70 000 to establish the business and spent the rest on staff salaries and other operational costs.

With her nest egg quickly depreciating, Molefi entered the SA Breweries KickStart regional competition in 2003, in which she came third and earned R40 000 – just enough to buy the latest and most sophisticated iriscopes on the market. She went on to open nine branches by 2005, including one in Lesotho, but with inadequate control systems in place, her business empire was plagued by theft. Hundreds of thousands of rands were stolen by managers and friends she'd trusted. Clearly, Molefi had bitten off more than she could chew.

Yet this, too, taught her important lessons. "There's a great deal of excitement involved in opening a business. You should grow it, but do so gradually and not stretch yourself too thin," advises the 2008 Shoprite/Checkers Woman of the Year business winner.

After being forced to close down three of her health centres, Molefi reinvented the business through franchising – a decision she hasn't regretted and strongly advocates to other entrepreneurs. "I was no longer running a business, but acting as a police officer, always involved in hearings and confrontations. It just wasn't worth it. With franchising, you still make your money, but without the stress," she says.

Her business, she says, isn't "just another wellness centre. It takes a holistic approach to wellness, with the firm belief that organic cleansing needs to take place from the inside out." The Roots celebrated its 10th birthday in 2012 and, moving forward, Molefi says she plans to open a boutique hotel and hydro in Drumblade, Midvaal. – **THANDI SKADE**



MOLEFI'S MANTRAS

- "Avoid the temptation to make a quick and ill-considered buck: you could lose everything for which you've worked very hard. Exercise good judgement and restraint in your decisions.
- "Know what your rights are as an employer. I was often on the wrong side of the CCMA because I didn't understand our country's labour laws extensively.
- "Marketing is just as important as start-up capital. If you don't have money for it, don't start a business.
- "When your business is doing well, don't try to grow it too fast. Sustainability is key."