

Fledgling Vancouver fashion designer Su-hui Chu's chances of succeeding in her chosen field just skyrocketed.

Chu was named Generation Next Designer for Spring 2010 after showing her label, Ella Peru, at a runway show with the two other finalists for the award, flora&fauna and Pure Magnolia during BC Fashion Week.

She scooped up an invaluable assortment of prizes that will make establishing a business much, much easier. The package includes a sponsored show in next year's BC Fashion Week, a photo shoot with Vancouver photographer Angela Fama, a session with an accountant, free PR with Honey Mustard Fashion and Media Services, a booth at Portobello West, consignment at twigg & hottie and a branding session with Buddha Branding.

When her name was called, Chu leapt into the air, her tiny frame almost reaching the height of the model standing next to her.

"I am so happy," she said later. "This means so much to me."

Her win is especially impressive because of the stature of her competitors. Pure Magnolia bridal designer Patty Nayal creates dramatic eco gowns that are both wearable and unique. Flora & fauna designer Pauline Sui's designs are both green and wearable.

"We felt her [Chu's] collection was the most rooted in fashion and in what she'd be able to do going forward," said judge Glencorra Twigg, owner of twigg & hottie, a shop featuring Canadian designers on Main Street. "She had the most promise."

Chu also impressed the judges with her "go-get-'em attitude" Twigg said. "We wanted to give the package to someone who has longevity. We felt she would have that."

A recent graduate, Chu is just launching Ella Peru. While she always cared about what she was wearing, she never dreamed she could become a fashion designer and had never sewn until she travelled the world and saw how much people can do with very few resources.

"After that, I figured I could do whatever I want to do," she says. Her line features well-tailored garments, easy-to-wear separates, and quirky colours and patterns. Pieces cost from \$45 to \$200.

"Winning this competition was really important to me, I feel like I went to hell and back trying to make sure everything was perfect for today, and I guess it paid off," says Chu.