

[Home](#) ► [Comment](#) ► [Backstage Pass](#)

Lights, camera, awards

► Shot in Edmonton, Blackstone continues to rack up the accolades ► But few know it's here



Backstage Pass

METRO EDMONTON

Published: January 05, 2012 2:00 p.m.

Last modified: January 05, 2012 12:12 a.m.



DEAN BUSCHER

Blackstone is probably one of Edmonton's most under-rated achievements.

Shot mostly in Edmonton, season two of Blackstone premieres Jan. 11.

Despite racking up Gemini and Rosie awards, very few people seem to know this show is predominantly shot in Edmonton and is slated for a very successful second season, which premieres on APTN Jan. 11.

"If there's one thing I can say about the show it's how phenomenal it is to have this in our city," says Blackstone producer Jesse Szymanski.

"I mean, we hear about all these shows coming out of Vancouver or Toronto, but here we have a Gemini award winning production out of Edmonton. That's something we can be really proud of."

Szymanski goes on to explain her expectations after the show took off after just one season.

"I really feel with season two we made the show even bigger and better. Now, I'm really excited for people to see that."

The excitement hasn't come without a cost.

As producer, Szymanski is often the first to arrive on-set and the last to leave.

She says having her mind race constantly about the show is the biggest thing that keeps her up at night.

"As a producer, you have to handle every facet of the production."

But Szymanski knew this was what she wanted to do with her life from a very young age.

At just 10 years old, she would make home videos and commercials using her grandparents' camcorder.

"When I was in high school, I took an aptitude test and it pointed to broadcast. That was all the affirmation I needed. By 19, I was in the business," she says.

Szymanski hasn't looked back, much like many of her ground-breaking colleagues including actress Michelle Thrush, who plays recovering alcoholic Gail Stoney.

"At first I wasn't sure if I wanted to act because not many aboriginals were doing it," she says.

But after a little coaxing from the late Gordon Tootoosis, Thrush knew she had found her true calling.

"Even though I am nothing like my character, it's such an honour to play her and have the production company trust where I am going with the character."

To see how it all plays out, tune in on Wednesday's or visit blackstonetheseries.com.