

Outdoors girl
Julia glams
up for her
new TV role

My unexpected twist

Countryfile's Julia Bradbury tells us why she's moving indoors to present an ITV quiz show in which Italian pudding rice plays a crucial role...

NEW TAKE ON THE TWISTERS
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Julia Bradbury is one of the last people we'd expect to see fronting a new ITV quiz show. Over the years, we've grown used to her donning wellies and a cagoule to host shows such as *Countryfile*, *Wainwright Walks*, *Planet Earth Live* and *Julia Bradbury's Canal Walks*.

But now she's swapping hills for heels and flocks of sheep for a posh frock as she steps up to present *Take on the Twisters*, a fast-paced, big-money teatime show hoping to emulate the success of *The Chase* and *Tipping Point*.

'The contestants need good general knowledge, but they also have to be good at multi-tasking and have quite cool nerves,' she tells *TV Times*, 'because while they're being asked general knowledge questions, they're also facing a bank of giant twisters.'

The twisters,

she explains, are 'giant egg timers' which are rapidly running out for the four contestants competing to make it through to the final.

'They have to try and answer as many questions correctly as they can,' continues Julia, who turns 43 this week. 'Every time they get a question right, they get to turn one of the twisters and keep it in play. Does that make sense?'

Yes, sort of. Julia then tries a further explanation on us: 'If you had a row of egg timers running along the kitchen table and I was asking you questions, you could turn each egg timer when you get a question right so you can keep them all in play!' We've got it.

All shiny and new

Julia, who is mum to two-year-old Zeph, her son with partner Gerard Cunningham, admits that when she agreed to present *Take on the Twisters*, she initially felt out of her comfort zone.

'I've worked really hard throughout my career not to be pigeon-holed and I've always mixed it up with the variety of programmes I present, and this is taking it to a new level. But I love a challenge, and that's why I wanted to do it. I've done studio shows before but this is my first TV quiz. It was always one of my ambitions to present what they call a shiny floor show. And there aren't many women doing it, so that's doubly exciting.'

One bizarre fact that Julia



The hi-tech *Twisters* set is a world away from rural rambles

she grew up, has just finished filming 30 episodes of the show when we chat to her. She describes herself as a 'massive fan' of quiz shows, citing *Deal or No Deal* as having a brilliant format and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* host Chris Tarrant as 'the quizmaster extraordinaire'. 'He's The Dude. He really is The Dude.'

It has now become almost a rite of passage that TV quiz shows are given their own celebrity editions.

Julia, who also presents BBC1 health special *Long Live Britain* on Monday this week, has already considered which famous faces she'd like to see take on the twisters.

'It would be fantastic and so funny,' she laughs. 'I think Eddie Izzard would be brilliant because he has great general knowledge, I'd have Johnny Vegas there just for the fun, and Sarah Millican would be great value. And the fourth contestant I'd like is my mate Christopher Biggins.'

But before *Take on the Twisters* can get its own star-filled spin-off, the original show will need to be a big hit. 'It really does deserve to be,' says Julia, 'because it's a clever format and the contestants seem to be enjoying it so much. I hope the viewers at home love it, too, and that the whole nation will want to take on the twisters!'

FRANCES TAYLOR

Take on the Twisters is previewed on pages 50-51

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'If people get too frightened seeing me in a pair of high heels in a studio, it's all fine – there's a farmed product!'

is eager to drop in about *Take on the Twisters* is that the egg timers are actually full of rice.

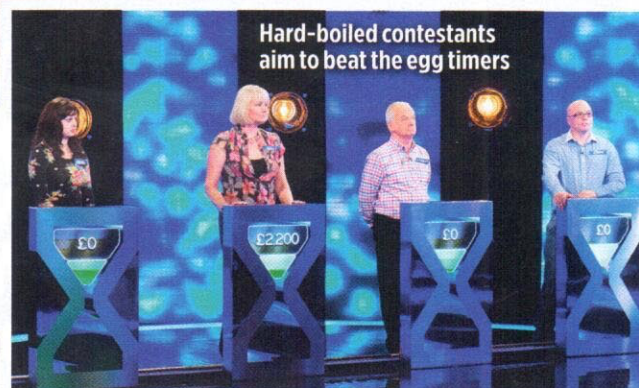
'The producers tried everything!' she smiles. 'They tried plastic balls, sand, and then six different varieties of rice, including long grain and basmati, before they got to the perfect component, which was Italian pudding rice. It runs the smoothest and is the purest in colour.'

Massive fan

'Obviously, being the *Countryfile* girl, I like the fact that I have a foodstuff in my quiz! If people get too frightened seeing me in a pair of high heels in a studio, it's all fine because there's a farmed product!'

Julia, who has homes in London and Rutland, where

Giving it some welly with *Countryfile* colleague Matt Baker



Hard-boiled contestants aim to beat the egg timers