



TV Guide NZ
 08/11/2008
 Page: 16
 General News
 Region: National
 Circulation: 195072
 Type: Magazines Lifestyle
 Size: 565.31 sq.cms
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TV reality

The Italian job

If you have watched **Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares**, you will know what to expect from TV3's new series **The Kitchen Job**. But restaurant trouble shooter John Palino (right) is no Gordon Ramsay.



Italian-American John Palino has a mouth-watering recipe for running a successful restaurant – and it involves spaghetti and meatballs.

“I have a country Italian-themed restaurant in Mt Albert (Auckland) called Sal Rose, named after my parents, and my favourite dish is my mum’s spaghetti and meatballs. It’s a very busy restaurant and is full pretty much every night,” boasts the New York-born-and-raised presenter of new TV3 series **The Kitchen Job**.

With more than 20 years in the business, and a string of successful restaurants behind him, what better man is there to help rescue local eateries from the brink of disaster?

John started in the industry when he was 13, working in his father’s restaurant and by age 20 he was running a restaurant with 150 staff.

The straight-talking foodie’s formula is simple. He assesses each place and then using his instinct for what he feels is right, comes up with a plan to drag the establishment out of the fire and into the frying pan.

The series is similar to **Ramsay’s Kitchen Nightmares**, but the Kiwi version is far more family friendly.

“His show is more about the food

and mine is the whole theatrics of the space,” says John.

“You want it to be an experience right down to the greeting you get. If I come to your house for dinner and the meal is bad, it’s not like I’m not going to come back again, not if I had a great time,” says John who worked in and established some of New York’s finest eateries and arrived in New Zealand in the mid-90s after meeting a Kiwi girl.

“She had to move back so I checked New Zealand out and within two months I sold my restaurant in New York and moved here.” And his verdict on the quality of food here?

“Originally I thought we were lacking a lot because you couldn’t even get cranberry juice here. The only thing that really bugs me is that we are selling all the best stuff overseas and I don’t think that’s fair. I could buy kiwifruit in New York City cheaper than I could buy it here – and it’s the best.”

Story: Andy Wallace

The Kitchen Job
TV3 Tuesday

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