



Don't be shy to tell it like it is

HAD enough of television chefs? Don't get your checked trousers in a knot yet, because here comes the Kiwi version of *Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*.

The format comes to New Zealand minus Gordon Ramsay – phew.

Called *The Kitchen Job*, TV3's version of the popular United States' show is typically low-key – as is its host John Palino.

An Italian-American who hails from a family of New Jersey restaurant owners, Palino probably hasn't ever felt the need to use many F words. A genial smile and a nod in the right place seems to be all that is needed.

The fact that he has a vague resemblance to Henry Winkler probably helps, as does the fact that the restaurateurs he is trying to help are desperate enough to take every word he says as gospel.

How desperate are they?

The first episode screened this week on TV3 on Tuesday night. It featured Andrew and his Helensville restaurant,

TV WATCH **DIANE McCARTHY**

River View.

Despite having no competitors, great staff and a large balcony with a view to die for, Andrew's restaurant is haemorrhaging \$3000 a week and has more staff than customers.

After a talk with Andrew, it turns out the main cause of his problems is that, despite having years of chef experience in Australia, he has no knowledge about running the front of house. He bought the restaurant with the intention of running it together with his partner who decided at the last moment to stay in Australia.

A sad story and Andrew has since passed all chef's duties to young Shane who, god love him, tries.

Shane, it turns out, has a penchant for creating his own extraordinarily ambitious concoctions.

His best-selling dish is fillet steak

skewered with prawns and drowned in an exotic sauce of questionable origins.

"But everyone tells me it is very nice," cries Andrew.

"Have you ever tasted it yourself?" Palino asks.

According to Palino, this is punishment in culinary form on all New Zealanders for being too polite to complain about bad food.

As in all so-called reality television these days, this show had a happy ending.

A new, simplified steakhouse menu, new decor, putting Andrew back in the kitchen where he belongs and a bit of marketing saw River View completely turned around.

Hopefully, New Zealanders will have taken on board a message about telling it like it is. Bad food? Bad television? Don't be shy is this show's message.



KNOW YOUR FOOD:
Chef John Palino
 puts Kiwi restaurants right.