

# The Kitchen Job Well Done

THE Kitchen Job's restaurant-fixer John Palino has helped one of the TV show's participants to save his business ... and his family. Haleem Abdul Mohammed turned to the TV3 series in which Palino rescues restaurant and cafe owners from ruin after his Indian dinery Haleem's was making him broke.

He and wife Ayesha took over the restaurant, in the Auckland suburb of Balmoral, four years ago. With the restaurant losing them up to \$12,000 a month, the couple made the desperate decision to leave their kids Ramsha, Mariya and Abdul Rahman back in India with Ayesha's mother to try to make the business work.

Enter Palino a former New Yorker who has overseen the creation of restaurants, bars and nightclubs who applies his years of industry knowledge and enlists the help of experts from the world of food and design.

He and The Kitchen Job's team's dramatic turnaround of Haleem's decor and menu featured in last Tuesday's episode, and the response was immediate.

"Immediately after the show people were calling from outside Auckland to find out when they could come," Haleem told Sunday News. He was swamped with take-out orders and dozens of diners turned up at the restaurant that night.

The turn-around even blew away Palino.

"The moment the thing aired the phone was ringing off the hook. As a matter of fact people started coming in at 8.30pm. They must have turned the TV off and walked over. That's amazing," the TV host said.

Palino even called in staff from another restaurant to help Haleem cope with the demand. "I didn't expect this was going to be the reaction. (This) was the biggest sale since we've opened," Haleem said.

Haleem hopes the orders will continue rolling in and his finances improve enough to reunite his family. But since the episode was filmed, in May, Ayesha's mum has fallen ill and moved with the three children to Sydney to be with her son. Ayesha, who took care of the restaurant's books as well as being its hostess, joined them in the Australian city two months ago.

"(The) last two months I was terrible. With my wife gone, I couldn't concentrate," he said. But he is confident now The Kitchen Job's kick-start will help him and his family get back on their feet.

The final episode of The Kitchen Job screens on Tuesday, 7.30pm, TV3.

- Sunday News