

More come dine with me..

Millions tuned in to Channel 4 on Sunday night to see an episode of *Come Dine With Me* starring people from the Lancaster and Morecambe district. It was hilarious – but what happened when the cameras stopped rolling? **GREG LAMBERT** finds out

TAKE one bubbly American postmistress who hates English food. Add a straight-talking British vegetarian who is fiercely loyal to her country's cuisine. Sprinkle in a prickly businesswoman with very high standards. And garnish with a wacky club DJ who can't cook to save his life.

It was a recipe for disaster...but also for a slice of TV gold.

Rosie Rawsthorn, Linda Cottam, Anne Thompson and DJ Johnny Pep served up a dish of memorable telly on Sunday night's hit reality TV show *Come Dine With Me*.

Each threw a dinner party at their own house for the others. Then all four were rated on their cooking skills (or lack of them, in Pep's case!) while scathing voiceover man Dave Lamb took the mick.

And at the end, the contestant with the highest score – Carnforth mum-of-two Linda – walked away with £1,000 in cash.

It was a highly entertaining show, which began at the home of Tennessee-born Rosie Rawsthorn, who runs Scale Hall post office in Lancaster.

Rosie, resplendent in a Stars and Stripes-patterned dress, is no fan of English food nor, she claims, our weather or extortionate car parking fees.

This raised the ire of Linda – as did the presence under the dinner table of Rosie's giant pet rabbit Baguley, who weighs a whopping 6kg!

"I couldn't stand that rabbit, I don't like uninvited guests," Linda said afterwards.

Rosie seemed to find her bumper-sized bunny's antics hilarious though.

"He was biting Linda's ankles and he took a bite out of Anne's purse!" she said proudly.

On night two, the show moved on to Linda's house where she was on a mission to prove that British food was best.

"I was flying the flag!" she said.

"If Rosie doesn't like our food then maybe she shouldn't be over here!"

Pep though seemed confused by Linda's vegetarian fayre, asking:

"Butternut squash...is that a drink?"

Then came the undisputed highlight of the show – DJ Pep trying to cook.

The hapless Carleton "shock jock" transformed his Heysham home (which he calls "Knebworth") into a nightclub for the occasion complete with doorman, glitter ball and a stunning female DJ.

Proud of his home town, the DJ gave his guests a stick of Morecambe rock each and got them to wear Eric Morecambe specs while eating.

But once inside the kitchen, the loony music man didn't have a clue.

"The Pepster" had no idea how to make homemade tomato soup, monkfish (which he pronounced "monksfish") or apple dessert Tarte Tatin. But, bless him, he tried – even though he forgot to peel the potatoes before lumping them into the soup pan.

And he used chicken stock in the soup too, even though Linda doesn't eat meat.

Afterwards he said: "I've never met a vegetarian before. I'm a non-cooker. It's all microwave meals in my fridge."

Rosie was not impressed, saying: "The monkfish tasted like an intestine!"

Unsurprisingly, Pep scored the lowest of all four.

The final night saw Anne, who runs her own financial advice business in Warton, try to add a touch of class by asking her guests to dress up for dinner.

But Anne, 33, had already wound up her rivals throughout the show with her ultra-critical manner.

"Anne was



From top, winner Linda, runner-up Rosie, last-placed DJ Pep and Anne, left, third.

Come Dine With Me contestants DJ Pep, Linda Cottam, Anne Thompson and Rosie Rawsthorn.

a bit prickly but that's because she was uptight in front of the cameras," said Linda.

"When the cameras stopped rolling she was lovely."

Anne defended herself, saying: "I wouldn't say I was ultra-critical but I have high standards and if somebody doesn't know how to use a knife and fork I will tell them. It's just my personality. I'm a business person."

Despite all the friction on screen, once the cameras stopped rolling and the prize was won, the food-loving foursome have become best buddies. Well, almost.

Anne is clearly no fan of DJ Pep and his endless stream of bad puns: "Pep is behind his persona the whole time. It's quite grating in the end."

"Linda is lovely but she's a home maker while I'm not. I don't think she's got me. Rosie is so bright and bubbly you can't help but love her."

But Rosie, who finished runner-up, wasn't quite so complimentary of Anne.

"Myself, Linda and Pep talk all the time and I think we all get on really well. Anne? We don't talk at all. I think she was a bit of an outsider by the end."

As for DJ Pep, he says he didn't want the show on Sunday because he wanted to "let the TV critics be the judge".

But on his dining pals, the Frank Spencer of cooking had this to say.

"Rosie is very warm, fun and loving and a very attractive lady – we got on well. Linda was the mother figure. She took me under her wing."

"As for Anne, she seemed very stressed out. Anne said to me: 'I think you're an idiot'. And she's right!"