

Amanda Byram talks to Kerry Harvey about the Travel channel's new reality series based in New Zealand.

# On the rampage

TV presenter Amanda Byram is no slouch when it comes to adventure, but New Zealand gave her the biggest adrenaline rush ever.

"Bungy-jumping 134 metres was something I will never forget because I thought I was going to die," says the former Irish model of just one of her experiences while in New Zealand filming the 10-part reality competition *RV Rampage*.

*RV Rampage* – which will screen in 130 countries around the world – follows five couples on an epic road trip through New Zealand. Along the way they are tested to their limits by extreme sports, mental challenges and living in close proximity while sharing a chemical toilet.

Joining the couples, who hail from Russia, South Africa, Thailand and United Kingdom, are Amanda and co-host Henry Cole (*World's Greatest Motorcycle Rides*).

"I have spent a lot of time in Australia but I'd never been to New Zealand," says Amanda, who is best known for hosting the BBC's *Total Wipeout* and appearing on *I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here*.

"People used to say to me, 'New Zealand is beautiful; it's very much

contestants who, she adds, did not even know where they were heading.

"It was all quite top secret. Their personalities were huge. I don't think we could have cast better."

She describes the show as *The Amazing Race* meets *Big Brother*.

"We have the reality of them in the RVs and then we have them chasing and racing through New Zealand trying to beat each other at all these challenges.

Amanda and Henry travelled in motor-homes just like the contestants but, unlike the competitors, they had one each.

"Initially it was a bit scary for me as I'd never travelled in an RV before but I really enjoyed it. I was lucky because the contestants, unfortunately for them, had one RV for four of them, which was part of the game – to see how much they could hate each other by the end. It was a squeeze."

As with most trips, there were hiccups along the way.

"We lost track of some contestants during a white-water rafting trip. It was getting cold, it was wet and they didn't get back until about midnight. This was one of the rafting

like Ireland' and, as I'm Irish, in the back of my mind was the thought that 'I'll get there some day but if it's quite like Ireland well, done that,'" she says.

It turns out she hadn't "done that" at all.

"Well, it (New Zealand) blew me away. I can't begin to tell you how much it is not like Ireland.

"Ireland is beautiful but New Zealand is breathtaking.

"Each stop we hit had something completely different to offer, and while everybody kept telling me the North Island was beautiful but completely different to the South Island, I didn't think it could possibly get more beautiful.

"Well, lo and behold, we get to the South Island and every corner we turned there's another mountain, another lake, another glacier. It was just unbelievable. I fell in love with it.

"I travel so much for my job and it really stands out as being one of my favourite countries. I haven't stopped talking about it since I got home."

Amanda says that filming *RV Rampage* was a learning curve for everyone involved, not just the

operations where several lives had been lost in the past so we were thinking, 'Are these guys OK?'," she says.

"A lot of the challenges took a lot longer than expected. You've got 10 contestants, cameramen, sound guys.

"If it takes two people two hours to complete a rafting trip, then it's going to take five times as long to get 10 people down."

None of it, however, put a dampener on what was, for her, the trip of a lifetime.

"It's funny. I feel it's my duty to write about how amazing New Zealand is but I don't want to and the only reason I don't want to is I don't want anyone else to know about it. I want it to be my little secret."

Co-host Henry Cole and Amanda Byram

**RV Rampage**  
Travel Channel Thursday