



Stefania le Roux - an Italian in Brittany

Jon Stefania, what made you move to Brittany? How did you end up as an Italian woman in the middle of Brittany?

Stefania First of all it was for work because, um, after my studies in Italy I, I tried to, to move away, see other countries, meet other people and, uh, first of all I end up to work in Switzerland and it was really, really nice because in the same place we can meet people from, from everywhere. It was a touristic place.

Jon Was it a French-speaking part of Switzerland or Italian?

Stefania No, German. German, you know Damatz?

Jon No.

Stefania It's a ski resort. It's the Swiss side of Mont Zermat.

Jon OK.

Stefania And you can find people coming from wherever in the world, come there to, to, to ski and then, you know, after four years you have a little enough of snow, cold..... And so I came, I came to France to work.

Jon Now just talking about your languages then.....

Stefania Yeah

Jon Do you find as a Fre... sorry, as an Italian speaker, do you find French a particularly easy language.

Stefania For me, uuuuh, it's, um, all the Latin languages, like Portuguese, Spanish, French, they are quite easy, because, uh, the structure is basically the same, grammatically also and because everything that in French is an

exception is the same exception in Italian.

Jon OK, but what about things like pronunciation because Italian is much more logical isn't it?

Stefania Yes, Italian is, is, is really easy to pronounce because there's no exception, yeah....

Jon Idiosyncrasies, it's very phonetic.....

Stefania Yeah, each vowel is pronounced seperately by the other one....

Jon Sorry, did you learn French at school?

Stefania Yes.

Jon For how many years?

Stefania Oh, I've learned two years' grammar about three years with a commercial, more commercial French.

Jon OK, and what about English, did you learn that at the same school?

Stefania Yeah, we have done a commercial bookkeeping it w... a mix. For five years we study French and English.

Jon And you enjoyed your languages, did you? You enjoyed your studies?

Stefania Oh yeah.....

Jon Now, so to talk about the actual...., your life in Brittany rather than languages now. What, um, what do you most like about things in Brittany?

Stefania Um, I like..... sunny days sometimes.

Jon 'Cos you're from Naples which is very sunny.

Stefania Yes. That's a little, a little problem, I don't like long winters because they're so humid you know so it's raining...

Jon And they're very grey.... and long .

Stefania Yeah and then you must be.... you must keep busy your children while it's bad weather. But, but it's very nice to live here because it's very green and the people is so nice, they're interest..... they are interested to your life and uh.....

Jon Because there aren't many Italians living here.....

Stefania No there's not a lot of Italian people living here.

Jon Do you know of any who live in the middle of Brittany?

Stefania Ohhh, not a lot. Maybe one, two maybe....

Jon Not many. So, OK, you've mentioned the weather, the sunshine. What about other things like the food? Do you like the food in Brittany?

Stefania Yes, it's not bad.

Jon Compared to Naples, very different.

Stefania It's, it's very different but I..... I personally prefer Italian cooking.

Jon So do I I must admit.

Stefania Because I'm used to, ah...

Jon OK, now a slightly more difficult question, perhaps about identity, how you see yourself. Now, as I say, you're an Italian person. You live in France. Your husband is from South Africa so there's a bit of a melange you know. Did you see yourself as primarily Neopolitan, Italian, European or what?

Stefania I'm first of all Italian because I spend maybe 24 years of my life there since I was born and then I feel most it's European because I find, you know I was a young.... young girl when all Europe comes to be... come..

Jon Comes together

Stefania Yeah, comes together. It was, first of all, just a.... a commercial thing...

Jon Ya, with trading partners.

Stefania Yes and I found that... found that really, really nice to be able to visit all the countries in Europe without any visa, any passport. I first could come here in France and work here without any visa just because I was from Italy. I was European.

Jon What year would that be then? After 2001?

Stefania Yeah, yeah, I came here in 2001 so we already have the Euro coin.

Jon Yeah, I remember I was in Italy when that appeared. I think it was in 2002.

Stefania 2002 yeah but they were speaking about this new coin, this big change.

Jon Stefania, thank you very much for talking to us.

Stefania You're welcome.

