



Marie-Louise -La Chenille Poilue

Elaine To start with, Marie-Louise, could you tell us, basically, what brought you here and how you got started.

Marie-Louise So we came here six years ago, for a better life. We sold our bakery in Ireland and then our little girl was born. We wanted a better way of life, a simpler way of life, and we decided to open up in a little village not far from school. And I don't know really why ... I don't know anything else why we came here.

Elaine What state was the building in when you ...

Marie-Louise It was just a shell.

Elaine It was just like ...

Marie-Louise So it was an old garage before. But there was nothing – there was no electricity, there was no water. There was a bakery for sale beside us but they weren't willing to sell. So we just really liked this village because the people ... we got talking to some of the people and they were really nice. We talked to the mayor, and he was really interested in having people come and set up a business, and he said this place is for sale and the house is for sale, so we decided to go for it.

Elaine Do you ... is the house where you live is it next door?

Marie-Louise Yes, the house next door.

Elaine Ah, right. That's very handy isn't it? So you don't haven't got to sort of travel.

Marie-Louise No. We just roll out of bed and go down.

Elaine Excellent. Can you explain all that you're involved with, because there just seems to be so much going on.

Marie-Louise So it's a pub, and it's a restaurant, and it's a take-away, Fridays, and we have an épicerie, and up until last week we had ... it was a patisserie as well because we were registered, because of my training we were registered as boulangerie, patisserie and a restaurant as well.

Elaine So how do you actually manage to do all these different things, multi-task, basically? Do you get up in the morning and think right, you know, I've got to cook a meal for the restaurant?

Marie-Louise Arnaud looks after the front of house, he's behind the bar most of the time. I'm in the kitchen, and then we close from half ... from 2 o'clock in the afternoon 'til 5. So that allows us to clean up after the food, and to eat, and then we open up again. Arnaud works in the afternoon again. And sometimes we do groups, so like for example Thursday there's people coming in and they're going to be



eating at night-time. We'll be working all day. We do food from 12 and then at night we'll be doing food as well. There's days when it's very busy and there's days when it's a little bit more quiet.

Elaine It's a long day though, isn't it?

Marie-Louise Yeah, it's a long day.

Elaine It's a long day, and you've also dealing with, you know, you've got your daughter to ... to take to school and collect from school and to entertain. Does she help?

Marie-Louise Yes, she does. Doesn't she?

Arnaud Sometimes.

Marie-Louise Sometimes.

Elaine And so the food that you make, Marie-Louise, what ... how would you describe it, is it French, English, or ...

Marie-Louise I think it's really ... it's a bit like simple Irish pub-food, I think. But with a bit of ... sometimes we'll do traditional Breton, like Kegafars (?), for example, so it takes from French, Irish, English, Breton culture, but it's just really simple.

Elaine So, how many people can you cater for in ... your, you know, for an evening meal?

Marie-Louise Twenty. Comfortably twenty.

Elaine So how do you make ... I mean, if you're doing the cooking, who serves at the table?

Marie-Louise Arnaud.

Elaine Arnaud.

Marie-Louise And then he'll also go and serve someone in the épicerie if they're there, and he'll serve other customers that come in for a drink, and ...

Elaine He has different hats to put on.

Marie-Louise Yeah, he's everywhere.

Elaine A little apron? The food, we've established, is probably a fusion. Do you employ anybody to help you?

Marie-Louise No.



Elaine 'Cos I understand that is, is quite an expensive thing, isn't it? So you just have to put your different hats on?

Marie-Louise Yeah. It's a pity that they don't do something about that because there's so many more small businesses would be able to expand and open up but it's actually prohibitive, the cost, the extra costs to employ someone.

Elaine The clientele are ... would you say they are French, English, Irish even?

Marie-Louise No, French. With a few English, and maybe a few tourists now and again, not that there are many tourists around here. But they're mostly French and they're mostly local. But we try to ... well we do do everything home-made, and I'd say we've had a few people who've stopped here to eat because they were working in the village and they've come back, and they've come back with their families, because they did taste the difference of it being home-made.

Elaine Do you propose to expand any further or do you think you've got enough on your plate?

Marie-Louise All the time trying to improve the bar, and the food, and like only recently we just started to do the take-away on Fridays.

Elaine Well thank you very much, Marie-Louise, and we do wish you the very best of luck.