



## *Sur la Route café/bookshop – Johann*

Elaine Well I'm still in this delightful bookshop café and I'm now going to talk to the owner. Would you like to introduce yourself?

Johann Yes sure, my name is Johann. I opened the café six months ago in Huelgoat, café/librarie.

Elaine And what made you decide to combine a café and a bookshop?

Johann Well I had been to a few café/libraries in Brittany and I just love the concept, the atmosphere in those places, and actually my best friend has got a café/librarie in Becherel, which is famous for being the city of books, of cafés/librairies. I went there and I thought Wow this is great because books, and you can also make cakes and I love cooking

Elaine I know that, I have just been testing that gorgeous cooking there

Johann So it was a mix of everything

Elaine So are you originally from Brittany?

Johann I'm from Rennes.

Elaine Ah you're from Rennes, right, OK.

Johann And I've been living in Huelgoat for sixteen years now.

Elaine Sixteen years, right. But I understand also you have spent some time in England.

Johann I did. I worked in London and Plymouth, in the hospitality industry and also I was a French teacher there.

Elaine Right. At a school in Plymouth or...

Johann Yes, Plymouth. Plymouth College.

Elaine Yes, I know.

Johann And I'm loving Huelgoat, it's such a special village with a forest. I love the nature here.

Elaine Well it's full of history isn't it? And this place, did you buy it or are you renting it?

Johann No, I bought it.

Elaine Right.



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Johann So I renovated gites upstairs, so it's also a plus with a café/librairie.

Elaine Was there a lot to do to make it as it is today?

Johann Actually yes because it used to be a Pharmacy which was abandoned for three years and it was like there was a nuclear bomb here! So yes we renovated it.

Elaine Well Johann it's brilliant.

Johann Thank you so much.

Elaine I'm always a big fan of places like these cafés or bookshops that have these sofas too. As you can see I'm spreading out and likely to be still there when you shut up tonight.

Johann Well I just wanted to make a cosy place, to give a cosy place to people, for people to be and hang around.

Elaine To browse the books.

Johann Yes – and you can read if you want to read. You don't have to read. I mean it's – just relax.

Elaine It's my dream, dream job. But also I understand that you do exhibitions.

Johann Yes and that was a plus, a kind of a surprise, because I have lots of people who came to see me, offering me to exhibit their work, and it's been a great experience. I met lots of great people and every month we have a different exhibition. Drawing, we've had sculptures, African sculptures. That was amazing. We also have concerts, harpists, last month and last week we had poetry and music and that was really really good.

Elaine What would you say your clientele are, the people who come here? Are they a mixture of...

Johann Definitely a mixture. I'm lucky. The English have really bought the concept. They were the first in, and now I'm getting the French as well, which I'm happy about. All around Huelgoat, the village is all around Huelgoat. So a nice, good mixture.

Elaine You've got your gites upstairs now.

Johann Yes.

Elaine Any other plans to expand?

Johann I think I've got a lot on my plate.

Elaine Now tell me, who does the cooking? Who makes the cakes?



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Johann Well, it's a passion of mine so I make the cakes. I use organic flour from the windmill in Scignac and I try to use local products or organic products as much as I can. Also vegan milk.

Elaine Well I wish you the very best of luck.

Johann Thank you so much.

Elaine And certainly I shall be back. So best of luck Johann. Good to meet you and I'm sure it will just continue to go from strength to strength.