



Elaine talks to: Claire Field from Shanti House Apparel

Elaine: So Claire, welcome to Spotlight on Brittany's headquarters here in Gouarec and I'm really really I know we're all very interested to hear what exactly is Ayurveda?

Claire: Ayurveda.

Elaine: Ayurveda, see i can't even pronounce it right. And how did you become involved with it?

Claire: Well, to put it very simply Ayurveda is the holistic Indian healthcare treatment. So it's a bit, a lot of people know about Chinese medicine, it's the Indian equivalent if you like of Chinese medicines. So it's treating people holistically with um, it's fully encompassing of yoga, massage and other treatments and also treating the mind, the body and the soul. So in Ayurveda which actually translates as life science or life knowledge, um, they say that if we are um if we are ok in the spirit so mentally then the body will follow. But you can treat the body but if the mind isn't relaxed or you know or feeling at ease then the body will be in tension, So we need to treat the mind, the body and the soul.

Elaine: All 3 together.

Claire: All 3 together.

Elaine: A triangle

Claire: Yes exactly

Elaine: And how do you become involved with that was it before you came here or in England?

Claire: No I was actually I was very interested in alternative medicine. I actually come from a medical family but never wanted to go down the our traditional medical route I've been interested in alternative medicine and I met a lady actually who was one of my husband's clients who imported Ayurveda herbs into France her husband is from Kerala in the south of India and they invited us over to India to study with his family who are a traditional keralan family from the south and so

we of course accepted and we ended up going on a 3000 kilometre motorbike tour of Kerala and tamil madu. We ended up in a wonderful town called ... which is where ramana Maharishi had his ashram and I had my first Ayurveda treatment there which absolutely blew my mind.

Elaine: Fantastic I can imagine

Claire: And I at the beginning was interested in looking at the herbal side of the medicine side of Ayurveda but at that point there I decided that I would really really like to learn how to do Ayurveda treatments myself. I thought I would love to bring this back and share it with the people around me. So on that trip I started to speak to a number of people we stayed in a number of ashrams, my path crossed with a few people who had themselves done some Ayurveda training and one particular person gave me the details of 2 doctors from kerala, but who both were based in the north of India in ... and were based in a very small village called ... just next to Which also happened to be the residence of the Dalai Lama so that's when I said I think actually that's where I would like to go and do my training thank you.

Elaine: Sounds alright doesn't it

Claire: And so we came back that was in 2018 we came back to France and it was actually my husband who said you need to go and book onto that training straight away I can see that you're absolutely dying to do it so you need to go and check out these courses. So I checked out both of the courses and I decided to train with the doctor who had studied Ayurveda in its most traditional form, so that encompasses understanding the mantras and all everything that's involved with Ayurveda. The veydours were written over 6000 years ago so their healthcare system as you can understand is very very old. This particular doctor, doctor siby he had a Pentacarma centre. Pentacarma is where you go for maybe 2 or 3 weeks at a time and completely purge your body of toxins and then you would undergo a series of of treatments. So we had a very small we were 3 students training with doctor siby and so we trained in his pentacarma centre learned how to do all the pentacarma treatments which involved massage the purging of the body a treatment which is called ... which is a very traditional Ayurveda treatment and so I did a I was there for 3 months with doctor siby and then on coming back to England I decided right well I'm gonna

while I've got the ball rolling I'm gonna get my little cabinet set up and get the treatments going. But the other side of that was while I was in I met a wonderful Spanish lady who works with women's cooperatives and sells wonderful products which was another sideline that I spoke to her about when I was out there.

Elaine: You were busy

Claire: Very very busy. I met such wonderful wonderful people there. I was lucky that the Dalai Lama was in residence. I went for 3 of his teachings. Vickars, the guy I was staying with with his family are an old family from ... who had very close relationship with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community there and so yeah I was it was a full encompassing thing, a wonderful wonderful experience but it had to come to an end unfortunately.

Elaine: All good things do come down to earth

Claire: Yes so I came back from India at the end of 2019 and then we had the wonderful confinement so I had just set up my cabinet in Lominaire which is in Lorient and I opened in February and we got closed in March.

Elaine: Typical but you just went calm

Claire: I just went calm. I wasn't worried about it at all and what that actually made people realise is that they really needed to look after their bodies I think it taught us all a lesson of not just looking after ourselves physically but looking after ourselves mentally and because it was very difficult for everybody being suddenly shut in at home and not being able to go out and communicate with people and I think that gave a lot of people the opportunity to go inwards which as in Europe we don't do at all we're all very much out there cerebral you know running here there and everywhere and we don't take that time to go inwards we don't take that time to be with the self which you know with meditation and with yoga but I found that actually although we got closed down from time to time that when I was able to open my massage salon people really really really wanted to come and look after themselves. So in a way covid actually the confinement actually helped me with the treatments. So that was in 2019 and it's been going strong ever since

Elaine: Well I think probably as you say because we had to we were disconnected let's say from the outside world that you had the time to think more about things and to evaluate

Claire: Well people had the time really to think about what was important to them. Is it really important to go out and eat in a bar and restaurant or should we not take the time just to be at peace with ourselves and not need outside influences to be at peace with ourselves and it was the time I think of reflection

Elaine: Yes because there weren't the distractions and the demands

Claire: Absolutely yes of course yeah, I mean you could almost look at it a positive period for some people because they didn't have to go and run around they had the time to be at home and to be with the family which for some people was actually very difficult because we've become disconnected from the people that are around us because we don't have the time to be with them. So I think that period of reflection really helped the alternative healthcare side of things because actually as I say people realise that if you don't have a healthy diet if you don't look after your body and if you don't look after your mind that you are gonna be more prone to succumb to illness. And that has actually continued. I have a friend who is a yoga teacher whose classes have become busier and busier because people have realised that they do need to look after themselves and with Ayurveda it's not one size fits all. Everybody that comes to the door is treated as an individual so you would you can do what you call a billan in French so a consultation to find out what the composition of your body is and then the best treatment that suits your body composition so we talk about doshas. Doshas in Ayurveda are our own personal makeup of our body so it's not one size fits also it wouldn't be you go to the doctor and they give you this pill for that it's like we can take 2 hours to discuss what the actual problem is and then give the treatment

Elaine: That's the thing isn't because sometimes people think there's one for all one treatment for all right if you've got this you take this pill or that dosage or you do this and as you say and as we all need to remind ourselves every individual is completely different

Claire: Everybody's body is different



Elaine: And we all respond differently to infections and whatever the problems others have and so we have to

Claire: So with Ayurveda we have 3 doshas, vatter, peeter and kaffer. So vatter is space and air so people that are vatter, I am just vatter 54% vatter so people that are vatter are people that move a lot speak quickly, normally they're always very slim lots of bones veins very dry you're probably vatter. Very dry body we need lots of oil we need to drink a lot of water because we tend to dehydrate very easily always moving brain always moving far too quickly need to be posed posee need to be relaxed. Then you have pitter which is fire with a small amount of water and people that are pitter very athletic bodies very fiery people pitter is the fire sign. So can get angry quite quickly but also very very organised people, everything is very regulated, they tend to be people that would have skin problems because they keep the fire inside then it kind of explodes if you like out of their skins. They might have problems with eczema, psoriasis, that kind of problem. Then you have kaffer which is water and earth, so these are people that are very solid they tend to be quite well-rounded, very nice teeth and hair, very kind of everything's all very white and very nice big eyes and very but tend to be prone to overweight because of their retention of water and because they're earth and solid. They because they are solid and don't tend to express very well they tend to hold onto their emotions, keep all that inside, so they tend to have more kind of like emotional problems and also tendency to overweight. So you would treat all these people with very very different treatments and they will in turn have very very different physical problems. So that's kind of a very brief synopsis of how we treat the individual

Elaine: Right, so how many you've got your medical cabinet you say set up near Lorient, how many people do you see perhaps on a regular, do you see them on a regular basis or is it a one-off?

Claire: It tends to be, so I work in 2 different places. I actually work at a centre, I say centre, the Chateau d'Olonay which is in Pleurdut which is a private chateau where people come and do either 4 days or a week's cure if you like. I also have my place in Lominaire and in Lominaire, the reason I opened up in Lominaire was basically by chance I met up with an old friend of mine who happened to have a space that was just the right size for me. But also I think people in Central Brittany would realise especially if you are into alternative

therapies, you need footfall, you need people around and Central Brittany we're all very sparsely populated, So that's why I decided on Lominaire, near to a big town, but in a small village. All my clients come by word of mouth, I don't really, I've got my website but I don't really need to do any publicity. so the clients tend to be regulars, There's a lot of people that come and really enjoy the treatments, so then they will buy a bon cadeau for a friend and it's a good present. A gift token, gift voucher, yeah, and I would say the majority of my clients are probably women from 30 through to their 70s. They quite often send along their husbands ... drag him in, who then go on and then they absolutely adore it. So um that's I would say that's the majority of my clientele in Lominaire are women who have realised that they really need to start looking after themselves. Quite a lot of women that are going through the menopause who just need to offload emotionally

Elaine: Learn to accept what is happening and run with it rather than fight it

Claire: Absolutely, run it rather than fight with it. So then also I have or I will be shortly opening a small, I live in Mellionec, so in Mellionec I will be setting up a treatments there I'm not quite there yet, I've just moved house , so I'm trying to spread myself out a little bit, and I like that, I like being in different places

Elaine: Are your clients do they are they English, French?

Claire: In Lominaire it's all French, all French clients. Pretty much 99% of my clients are French. I have a few, a couple of English clients but 99% are French.

Elaine: I think there is an attitude here isn't I know like mixing chemical medication with bio you know bio medicine

Claire: I think it could also be

Elaine: Herbal, herbal remedy, herbal remedies as well, the 2 together rather than poles apart.

Claire: Yes, absolutely, yeah. Um I mean it's mainly I think over in Lominaire there's a larger French population as well there's not so many British people out on that coastal area, they're more in Central Brittany, I would say. So that's probably



why I've got more of a French clientele otherwise I don't know, I don't really advertise very much so

Elaine: Well we'll take your contact details anyway , but I know as you say as with many things it's word of mouth, isn't it because its a recommendation direct , rather than you throwing yourself out and it might not work.

Claire: No that's it and I think it's just it kind of is a bit like a snowball once somebody's come and had a treatment and they really enjoy it they speak to somebody else and then pass it on, yeah

Elaine: Well thank you very much Claire, I'm absolutely fascinated , I'm absolutely totally green with envy that you were so near to the Dalai Lama

Claire: Yes, I mean that was just the cerise sur le gateau.

Elaine: Yes, absolutely, because he did come here in 2008 to the Buddhist centre in Pleuray and arrived apparently by helicopter.

Claire: Yes apparently so. I think he arrives everywhere by helicopter

Elaine: And I because I've been to the Buddhist centre a couple of occasions because again amazing atmosphere , although it's a newish building in its way its got that

Claire: It's the calm. There are certain place that have a calm and in India as you might have found in Tibet although there's a craziness of life going on there is also a calm and there's a the Indian philosophy they just give no matter how little they have they just want to give.

Elaine: Well you always find that, those with the least to give give more ,

Claire: Yes absolutely and Ive kind of Ive brought that philosophy back with me and it just to if you are a generous person and you open up that generosity you will always receive generosity back. You might find there's a couple of people that might take advantage but generally if you're generous to people they will be generous back.



Elaine: So thank you very much Claire. I shall be in touch.