

Elaine interviews: Larry Lellouche, from snack-bar ValFresco in Caurel

Elaine So er Larry, thank you very much for taking time out to talk to me this afternoon. First of all, if we if we can start with perhaps a little bit of background information, because I believe you're not actually from Brittany.

Larry No, I'm from France. I'm Parisian.

Elaine You're wife? Um Rosanna?

Larry Oh, and Rosanna, she's Brazilian. Er, we have two child, one child, she's 23 years old now. She's student in er in Italy. And my second child, six years old. He lives with us. Of course, so he's great

Elaine Just down the road. And so er well, I believe also that you have, er er your mother was Polish.

Larry Yes

Elaine And your father was,

Larry Ah, my father is French, and I have er my mother Catholic, my father Jewish. So I have er Russian Jewish part, and Algerian Jewish also part French part. And er so lot of mixed,

Elaine Well, very worldly.

Larry Yes,

Elaine Very worldly. So when and why did you come to Caurel and take over ValFresco's? All of ValFresco's.

Larry Oh is big story. But first was er Covid. Er I was in Paris. It's difficult to on my job, um to find a a nice job. Everything was complicated in Paris, you know, big city, the life very hard. And er my my sister say, Larry, come to my new home. So she provide, she buy home on this time. So I go to to meet her. And I was er in love of this place of er Caurel, the lake and everything.

Elaine She lives here does she?

Larry She lives in er near Saint Nicolas du Pélem

Elaine Oh

Larry In Saint Nicolas du Pélem, she deciding to change her life. So after that, I I I I come to for one week's holidays to meet her, and I say, "Wow, some beautiful place like that I I never see". And then I looking for some place maybe er I can er provide because um I'm, you know, I'm waiter usually. So I have progress, like a waiter and er still director of restauration. Then I have second job also. I'm a concierge in a luxury hotel.

Elaine In Paris.

Larry In Paris, yes. So that and that I was born born in, I was born in in Paris. So I make er like er, big er, big breathe. And I say, "Okay, I need to do something, something here. I need to prove my job somewhere else. And I find ValFresco's"

Elaine Fantastic, because I know, well I remember it when it first opened, when it started, first opened, and um so then it closed for a while. Obviously, I think there was, there was illness and and then, of course, with Covid. So it was great when I heard that it had been taken over and opened up again. So you've obviously had previous hospitality and er catering experience.

Larry Yes, on er I work usually, you know the Lido de Paris? I was a waiter. I was a young waiter. Er I worked also in Tunbridge Wells in England

Elaine OK

Larry In 2001 in the Hotel Du Vin

Elaine Right

Larry And Bistro. And then, after one year's experience, they proposed me to do opening in Brighton. I say, "No, I want to be a actor". So back to France, and I make er some er few, one year, two years school theatre, but I'm back to like, like a waiter er in Lido. And after, I worked on many plays. After I have, um I have works, and they propose. The waitering was too much for me on this time, and when I was 23 years old, they proposed me er like er bellboy, bellboy in Hotel Rafael in Paris, five stars

Elaine Very smart. Yes. With a uniform and

Larry Absolutment. I was bellboy, park er, and then I worked during the night, and I meet er the most important people in the world, and I I learning er like er concierge. So slowly I progressed like a concierge on this job, and er I was in Australia, I opened French pancake business. I back. My experience is too long to explain.

Elaine Okay, well, no, you obviously have been around. Let's say.

Larry Yes

Elaine You've been around. When you came here, what was your initial plan and and has it changed? Because I do see, I remember then there was sort of various activities going on, you know, afternoon tea and Sunday roast and quiz night.

Larry Um. My first activity is the room. The room, we have five rooms.

Elaine Chambres d'hôtes



Larry Chambres d'hôtes. Er. My wife, she provides very well. Er, she was er she was gouvement in big palace in Paris, La Réserve. My wife, you know, she's Brazilian. I meet her in Brazil, and she learned this job. And er when I come the first things was only for the restaurant, but after I say no for Rosanna, I will need to find something with rooms and with er restauration. The rooms so Valfrescos was, the activity of rooms was er fame, not famous, but was

Elaine Was well known.

Larry Yes. The restauration is, was completely

Elaine Non existent I think.

Larry Not existent. Very private, very private for no much people. And so my first idea is to do something for make a life of this place. But two years ago, with lot of the wars, with er everything, much more expensive, the Covid.

Elaine Yes.

Larry Everything have changed. The people, I I make a sport on the TV. The people watch sport on on the house. They don't go out now,

Elaine Well, that was with with Covid, people became very used to not going out didn't they

Larry Absolument, absolument.

Elaine And it became less of a a routine thing to do.

Larry Absolument.

Elaine And it's been a little difficult, I know, for many businesses, to attract

Larry Exactly

Elaine People out.



Larry And, you know, you told me, we learn every time. When I come here, I think I will open and I'm I'm professional. Everybody. "Oh, he's from Paris." No, it's not like that. The the true things, the true things, I I need to be very small and just looking how the people want or how the people mind. So I have changed maybe five times my idea, but it's no problem, because it's all my my way. But so now I have changed my idea. Now I have concentrated to make er burger. Flammekueche. Only one thing I don't have changed. Practically, not everything, but practically is local or home made. It's my er is what I want. Is er okay. I can buy everything surgelé. Everything can er be cheaper to do like that, but no, I prefer to buy more expensive the meat, but it's local. I prefer to ask the Boulanger the bakery to make my bread. Of course, it's more expensive because is er not bigger, it's local.

Elaine But then. They appreciate you then, making business with them. I think they if you're getting your bread locally, rather than on on a large scale.

Larry Er, of course er they they appreciate but if the local appreciate that for the moment, I'm not sure, but er I I need, I need a time. I need a time.

Elaine Little by little, it's little baby steps.

Larry Yes, exactly, step by steps

Elaine Step by step.

Larry Yes.

Elaine And I do notice, as I'm sitting here, you've got a dart board, and I'm sure that attracts people who, particularly the English people like their darts.

Larry Yes, exactly.

Elaine And er. So it's little things, I think, like that, and it's, I can see there is a very good ambiance here, very good.



Larry It is. I I remember er my first years I come here. So one and half years ago, last summer, I asked all the artisans

Elaine Artisans

Larry Artisans local

Elaine Right

Larry Last years, every week they make me every Friday night, a market on my garden. So they come. Er, so I I've tried to to move something from the local, but it's difficult. It's like that,

Elaine Well, I can very certain that, once we get the word out Larry that it will then, this is the thing is, people are used to going to a certain place.

Larry Yes

Elaine And we have to now make them try somewhere else.

Larry Exactly.

Elaine Um and something being that's been offered that is slightly different. So you've got your Chambres d'hôtes up and running you okay, you're doing your snacks, your flammekueche and the um burgers and things. Have you any other plans?

Larry If I have any other plans? Auf, I have 1000 plans. But er the reality it's er it's a time, it's a time and possibility and money of course. The first plan I I try to improve my my building, because energy is much more expensive. So the plan ecological, I would like to put more. I would like to make more special night, like er a disco night or er karaoke night, or or last week was a rock group, two two people, um artists, make a big, big night. My plan, really, my plan is the people need to know this place.

Elaine Right.

Larry Is that the first place the communication is that difficult. The communication because er first the people know to know where I am and who I am, that the most important. After the plan I have 1000 plans, really, I am multi

Elaine Multitasking.

Larry Yeah, polyvalent

Elaine Polyvalent.

Larry I can make, I would like to make big um on my garden, Marriage and everything. But for makers that, I need to have a new kitchen. But I have that good quickly on my head.

Elaine No No I'm sure, as I said, we will put the word out there.

Larry Exactly.

Elaine And verbally as well, because I heard about you from from Zoom over the road,

Larry Yes. Oh OK.

Elaine Um, so then you get, as we say in English again, we spread by word of mouth.

Larry Exactly. Yeah. Okay.

Elaine Well, I wish you and Rosanna and all the very best of luck.

Larry Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Elaine And I will certainly be back now. I know you're open because there were times when I would pass and it never seemed to be open here.



Larry Yeah, but no, no, it it's open, and I want the people look, look you and know, know, we make you some radio together. No, no,

Elaine Exactly.

Larry I don't know if everybody understand me, but anyway

Elaine I'm sure. Well, thank you very much indeed. Thank you.