

Michelle interviews: John and Lisa from Le Black Dog pub, Saint Aignan

Michelle: I am joined this morning by Lisa and John at Le Black Dog in Saint Aignan. Good morning to you both, and welcome to Spotlight on Brittany.

John and Lisa: Good morning.

Michelle: To start then, why did you choose to move to Brittany?

John: Well, um I guess it all started back in the late 90s.

Lisa: Yes.

John: When we had, at the time, just two children, and we were looking to buy a holiday home here in the region, and frankly, the holiday home just got bigger. Um, we decided it was probably the right move at the time to leave the UK and set up shop here. And then we had the joyous delivery of a third child, and he was actually just two weeks old when we signed our for our first house in er near Guéméné-sur-Scorff back in 2002 and then we moved over here fully in 2004 after we'd renovated our houses and stuff, and er our journey began.

Michelle: Okay, and why did you decide to open the Black Dog then?

Lisa: Well, we started, we we both met when we were in catering in the UK, um and we did other things after that. Obviously, children take you away from your work a little bit. And we'd had another business here first of all. Always wanted to go back into the catering. A property came up in Cléguérec, so we bought that, renovated that. Great little business. Kind of outgrew it. And then we found this property. We knew the owner, and um it just meant that we could do more, because at Le Café Crème Cléguérec, we could only do the food and we had a limited space. Here, we've now got bedrooms, er the huge car park, we're in a more tourist area. So as much as Cléguérec was great and dynamic, um it's actually quite nice to be back in the calm of the countryside again.

Michelle: Okay, of course. So how long ago did you start offering bedrooms?

John: Um. Well, we opened, we bought the bar itself in quite a state back in 2021.

Lisa: 21 in COVID

John: Right in COVID, which was fun, trying to negotiate with a mask on. Um if we can remember those days. Um we opened in 22 um and we bought just one or two bedrooms on to start with, and then the other bedrooms we opened er last year. So we've got five bedrooms in total to rent, to let out, and er we've got two doubles, two twins and a single. And so far, touch wood. It seems to go quite well for us. As Lisa: said, we're in a very tourist area during the summer months. We get an awful lot of cyclists coming along the Nantes à Brest Canal and looking at the amazing attractions we've got in the area, with the lake and Bon Repos and Salles des Forges and all the other amazing places around the area. And to be frank, you know the the selection of people that we get it's not just English, it's not just French, it's Dutch, Italians, Germans, Americans. It it's so international. It's er, it's really reassuring, actually, that the the Black Dog sort of profile has reached out to those people and enabled them to come and enjoy what we all like, of the area that we, that we now live in, really, I think,

Lisa: Yeah, and we, I mean, we've also had businessmen. We have a regular Portuguese businessman um that er buys and sells tyres. And he comes three to four times a week. And er he loves it, doesn't he? Just. He joins in speaking English as well. So, no, it gives it a real international feel in the pub.

Michelle: And this summer, I guess, will be more of an international feel because of the pull of the Tour de France.

Lisa: Exactly. Yeah

John: Yeah, we're all all excited about that

Lisa: Yeah

John: Coming back again. It's um, this will be probably our fourth or fifth tour that we've we've seen over the years, and Mur seems to now be a a real

Lisa: Hot spot

John: Hot spot for the tour organisers to come. Um. The atmosphere is just off the scale. And if people haven't been to the Tour de France and cycling is not your thing, then all I can say is get out from in front of the TV and and try and come to



Mur on that er I think it's a Thursday this year um when they finish on the on the hill and the atmosphere, there'll be over 100 plus 1000 people here. It is incredible.

Lisa: It's brilliant. And the caravan before hand as well.

John: Yeah, with all the

Lisa: Throw stuff out.

John: Freebies stuff out. The atmosphere is astonishing. You won't believe you'll have been there five hours or more waiting for 20 seconds of action, because that's, frankly what happens. But it's just the whole atmosphere. It's just an amazing day out for all the family, young, old. It's a brilliant day out. Um and we will hopefully be full. Um

Lisa: Some rooms are booked already

John: Our bedrooms will be full. We already got reservations from last year for the tour. It's that much of a pull to peoples.

Michelle: What events do you run at Le Black Dog?

Lisa: We recently started, well, we've done one quiz, and it was great fun, really, really good. We have about 15 questions on half a dozen categories. Everything through to music of all um eras. Geography and Breton culture as well, which was quite an interesting one, and also you learned something. So that was great fun. And there are prizes. And we also um sometimes have karaoke. And in the summer, we had a DJ er out in the terrace, which really sort of kind of felt like an Ibiza vibe, um but we had to cancel a couple of times because the weather. So it's very much weather dependent whether we have music outside or not.

Michelle: Okay. And finally, then how can people book either a dinner or a room or both?

John: Um quite easy, really. I mean, you can either um give us a ring when we're open and check on all the networks, Facebook and all the other social media networks, um Instagram and so on, Google Maps is a major pull these days for people, but primarily, I guess, people, the easiest way is to just simply visit our website, the um leblackdog.com, because there you can book a table, you can

book a room, you can actually even book a takeaway meal if that's what you look like. But all the information is there in two languages. Um French is the default, but obviously there's an option for people to visit the English site, which is a direct translation. It's not just a brief version, it's actually everything translated into English. Um and any problems, again, just give us a ring. We're always available on WhatsApp or by the phone number um or by email, so either way, please pursue us, and we'll try and help you and um give you a nice, pleasurable stay when you visit us, either in the bedrooms or in the restaurant.

Lisa: Also, just to add in there, we do do larger parties as well. If people have birthdays or any special events events, we can um actually hold those for people as well. Um but we do prefer to speak to people before.

John: Absolutely

Michelle: Great. That sounds great. Okay, well, thank you very much for your time, guys.

John: Thanks for thanks for being and thanks for having us.