



Michèle (centre) offers personalised tours

A local's view

Michèle Clark Nickler explains why she fell in love with the beaches and villages of Finistère where she runs guided holiday tours

What were you doing before you moved to France and what prompted you to make the move?

I was a consultant at Ernst & Young in Gaborone in Botswana. Every year while I watched the Tour de France on the television I promised myself that one day I would be there. Popping over to France from Botswana was not as simple as popping down the road. However, during my second Tour de France, sitting in a small village waiting for the riders to cycle though, it became obvious that I had found my new life. *Voilà!* I arrived in France in 2005.

What attracted you to France, and Finistère in particular?

France itself was the attraction. The French, romance, markets, *boulangeries* and wine - everything to make a very happy girl! Then, quite unexpectedly, a French chevalier in shining armour arrived. In 2010 we married in a beautiful romantic medieval village. Needing a home, we spent three years travelling to various regions before deciding to settle in Douarnenez, Finistère, in September 2013. I fell in love with the quaint French town and its centre.

Did you find it easy to find a suitable property?

Before house-hunting we made a list of essential needs, wants, nice-to-haves. We were organised, determined and enthusiastic. After visiting available homes it became evident that our list was just not going to be fulfilled. We decided to throw away our list and got ready for total home renovation. The outcome is that we have an incredible home that far surpasses our expectations in a place we love.

Tell me about Enjoy France Tours - how easy has it been to get established?

Very soon after moving to France I realised my ambition was to be a private tour guide/operator. I was privileged to have received the highest level of training during my working life, mostly from a world-renowned tour company during the Tour de France. It became obvious that I could share 'my France' with others. Hence, Enjoy France Tours was established. So, I am the main guide, interpreter and organiser, and on certain occasions the driver too.

What do you most enjoy about living in Finistère?

Honestly, I cannot say one thing pleases me more than another. The Breton people and culture, the pure wild coast, stunning summers and stormy winters. There are so many things to see and do such as boat trips, hiking, outdoor activities. The French way of life - simple but totally essential things such as the *boulangeries*, markets, food and French bars - for *un café* of course! It is truly fantastic here.



Michèle loves Brittany's coastline

Where is your favourite local market?

I should say our local market in Tréboul, but I find the market in St-Renan (12km from Brest) pleases me, especially during winter. From quail eggs to freshly fished seafood, freshly baked breads to home-made cheeses, cosy coffee shops - it's an experience!


Can you recommend a good restaurant?

Difficult question; it's impossible to recommend just one! Here are a few of my favourites (not in order):

- **Le Bord'Eau** (Port Rosmeur, Douarnenez) is a stunning Michelin restaurant which offers excellent food, great service and fantastic sea views. It's a well-kept local secret and I've spent several cosy evenings there.
- **L'Insolite** (town centre, Douarnenez) is an amazing Michelin restaurant with two renowned chefs. I love their *menu du marché*, sometimes treating myself to their *menu saveurs*.
- **Restaurante La Régate** (Hôtel des Sables Blancs, Tréboul, Douarnenez) - the house speciality is an incredible fresh *plateau de fruits de mer*. It's not possible to get fresher or better. Recommended also by *Le Routard* and *Petit Futé*.

And I've not even started to talk about *crêpe bretonne* and our *Kouign-amann!*

Is there any aspect of living in Finistère or running the business that surprised you?

I'm utterly amazed that I am so welcomingly accepted and am always treated with sincere kindness. I never dreamt that yoga on our local beach would bring such a sense of pleasure and fulfilment - happy exercise with noisy seagulls keeping us company. 

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