



Why (did I stay in) Reunion?

Part II

In a previous podcast I **answered** the question that so many people ask us **native English speakers**: 'Why did you come to Reunion?' For this week's episode I'm going to answer a question which for me is much more important: 'Why did you stay?'

Answering this is quite emotional, for I **realize** that, after sixteen years on the island, the reasons for staying have **shaped** my entire life. I would say there are two groups, the first being a list of quite specific points in no particular order:

The food, the beaches, **snorkelling** at Boucan, the **outdoor** lifestyle, the impossible blue of a cloudless Reunionese sky and the fact one can spend ten months of the year wearing just a pair of shorts. Not at work, of course. What else? The amazing people who have become my friends and the **hardworking** colleagues and clients with whom I've had the pleasure to work, and the warm and open population.

The second group of reasons is more general – here's my top three in **ascending** order:

Number 3) People born in Reunion grow up with this **stunning** surrounding scenery, but I often feel it's important to point out just how phenomenal, **outstanding** and singular the geographical relief of the island really is. Looking out across Mafate from Le Maito, the volcano from Oratoire St Therese or Cilaos from Le Piton des Neiges are privileged moments which make me feel **at one** with nature and truly alive. These are feelings that I have rarely had in England or Mainland France.

Number 2) Much like the **landscape**, some fail to realize just how unique it is that a place in the world exists where people of all races and religions live together, not only **peacefully** but also with mutual respect. This makes Reunion a fantastic place for children to **grow up**, and the fact that my children, two little 'Portoises', have had this opportunity will help to make them tolerant and accepting **human beings**.

And number 1) I guess that big cities where I have lived such as London, Paris and Valparaiso (in Chile) seem so **impressive** and **awesome** at first, but this doesn't mean that choosing to live in Reunion is an easy alternative. As they say, size is not important – big cities soon lose their attraction and the **awe** turns to **boredom**. People have asked me if I feel claustrophobic on a small island. In reply, I ask 'how far away is your horizon? Can you see past the next building?' I've been either **hiking** or mountain-running at least once a month for all these years, and there are still loads of **footpaths** left for me to discover...

Which I guess brings me to my conclusion: Living on Reunion is a constant adventure, and isn't that exactly what we all **wish** from life?





Vocabulary

to answer - répondre
native English speakers - Anglophones
to realize - se rendre compte
to shape - façonner
snorkelling - palmes-masque-tuba

outdoor - extérieur
hardworking - bosseur
ascending - croissant
stunning - époustouflant
outstanding - remarquable

at one - en symbiose
landscape - paysage
peacefully - paisiblement
to grow up - grandir
human beings - êtres humains

impressive - impressionnant
awesome - formidable
awe - admiration
boredom - ennui
hiking - randonner

footpaths - sentiers
to wish - souhaiter