

Band Cochons



I must admit, Reunion Island is a lot **cleaner** today than when I first arrived in 2000. I remember walking through the streets of Saint-Denis, when sometimes the **pavements** were covered with **dustbin bags** and **scuttling cockroaches**. I remember the **litter** along the Barachois. I even remember taking a wrong turn in Mafate and coming across the **refuse tip** in La Nouvelle...

Today it is different. I think people are more **aware** of the importance of keeping the island **tidy**, and the local councils are doing their best to keep the place clean. But not everyone is helping. How many smokers still **stub** their cigarettes **out** in the sand? How many people throw chocolate **wrappers** on the ground? How many people decide just to leave their old **washing-machines** by the side of the road?

I had a bizarre experience not so long ago in the town centre of Saint-Paul. I was sitting in a **traffic jam**, and the road was blocked. Looking at the car in front of me, I watched as the woman inside **threw** an **empty** plastic Coca-Cola bottle out of the window into the street.

I opened my door, picked up the bottle, walked to the woman and said (ever so politely!):

*'Excuse me, you seem to have **dropped** something. Here you are.'*

Her response was rather curious. *'It's not mine',* she said.

'Ok', I replied, *'just for your information, my car is right behind you and I saw you do it.'*

'I don't care,' she said. *'It's not mine.'*

I **kept my cool** and said *'I've got an idea - either you can **look after** it until you find a **bin**, or if you want, I can do that myself. What do you think?'*

'I don't care,' she repeated. *'Do what you want.'* I kept the bottle.

Now this could be an extreme case, but her use of the words *'I don't care'* or rather in French *'je m'en fous'* is **pretty** unfortunate, and it will be difficult to keep the island clean with this kind of mentality. But there is hope! Have you heard of *Band Cochon*? It's a website which charts **rubbish**, litter or **fly-tipping** around the place, helping to promote a cleaner Reunion Island. If you see rubbish somewhere you can upload your photo to the website.

Another idea would be simply to ask the radio presenters on RFO, Festival and Freedom to simply finish each programme with the words: *'Thanks for listening, good bye, and keep your island tidy.'*

But not in English of course...



Vocabulary

cleaner - plus propre
pavement - trottoir
dustbin bags - sacs poubelles
scuttling - courir vite
cockroach - cafard

litter - déchets
refuse tip - décharge
aware - conscient
tidy - propre, range
to stub out - écraser (cigarette)

wrapper - emballage
washing-machine - machine à laver
traffic jam - embouteillage
to throw - jeter
empty - vide

to drop - faire tomber
to keep your cool - garder son calme
to look after - s'occuper de
bin - poubelle
pretty - assez

rubbish - ordures
fly-tipping - dépôt sauvage

