

Michelle interviews: Sabine Anderson | Sound therapist

Michelle: I'm joined today by Sabine Anderson, who runs a gîte complex in Saint Nicolas du Pélem. Welcome to Spotlight on Brittany, Sabine.

Sabine: Thank you, Michelle, for having me.

Michelle: You're welcome. So you're originally from Dunkirk. I know. So how did you end up in the US, which is where you went?

Sabine: Yes, well, it's a very long story here. Um, I've always wanted to move to an Anglophone country. So what I did, though, is in back in 1991 I had the opportunity to apply for a teaching assistant job, and my counsellor told me, you know, you shouldn't apply for London, because everybody wants to go to London, so I decided to apply for Scotland.

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: To improve my English. And I ended up in Bothwell, Motherwell or near Glasgow, and spent a year there, and then moved down to London. The path to the US is I applied for, actually played the lottery, the green card lottery, and I got selected.

Michelle: Was that as a French citizen, or because you were in the UK?

Sabine: As a French citizen.

Michelle: Okay.

Sabine: So as a citizen, they have a certain quotas that they give out the green cards for the lottery process. And I was at the time that year, there were only giving 500 green cards to French citizens, and I was one of the lucky ones. So we started the process. And then in 2000 I did move to San Francisco, California, United States.

Michelle: Okay. And then you met your husband when you were in San Francisco.

Sabine: Yes.

Michelle: Because your husband is actually American, isn't he?

Sabine: That is correct.

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: Yes.

Michelle: So how long did you spend there?

Sabine: About 25 years.

Michelle: Oh, just 25.

Sabine: Just 25 yes. Um overall, I spending most of my adult life in Anglophone country.

Michelle: Yeah, of course.

Sabine: Spent a lot of time in London after Scotland and er and I'm here in Brittany.

Michelle: What did you do in the States before you came here?

Sabine: Well, I have different type of jobs um. I worked for, I manage a veterinary clinic

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: For a few years, and then I got really involved with um nonprofit organisation, especially targeted for HIV and AIDS, around prevention and treatment. I also worked for er um the WHO on their guidelines back in 2013 on treatment and prevention for HIV and AIDS. So that was really kind of where I found my peace, like, really, when I just felt I was already helping people.

Michelle: Yeah, of course.

Sabine: And very important, I think even nowadays, um yep. And then, basically, we moved to Brittany a couple of years ago so.

Michelle: After you had your son, of course.

Sabine: Yes, indeed, we had the son back in the US, and we moved here when he was just 10.

Michelle: When he was 10. OK. And how did you find the transition back to here from the US?

Sabine: Um, it's a little challenging. Ah French bureaucracy at his best, as everybody knows, um I think it's a very slow reintegration process. But I think moving

from a very urban area to a rural area here, I think it's, it's beneficial for everybody's health.

Michelle: Sure.

Sabine: Um, we were, we were really busy. We had really busy lives, and we always wanted to run gîtes, and we thought we're not going to wait till we're retired. We're just going to move the date forward a little bit. And we found a place that we liked, and Brittany is just so lovely, and this area is so welcoming that there's no regrets. We're just really happy to be here.

Michelle: So now you run your own gîte complex in Saint Nicolas du Pélem.

Sabine: Yes.

Michelle: Do you have um very defined seasons, or is it all year round?

Sabine: We actually open all year round.

Michelle: Okay.

Sabine: So we have three gîtes, um one that sleeps 10 people, one that sleeps five and one that sleeps two.

Michelle: Okay.

Sabine: We own about one hectare of land. So it's very peaceful, very green.

Michelle: Yes.

Sabine: We also have a swimming pool.

Michelle: Fabulous.

Sabine: Which people love when we have the wonderful warm weather. And you know, we do welcome people year round. Our peak season is really, I would say, from end of April to the beginning of September.

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: We have a lot of people coming just to hang out with friends or with family, and then we do typically have people coming over Christmas because they want to get families together.

Michelle: Sure, and what sort of nationalities do you tend to find you're attracting? Is there any specific ones? Or

Sabine: We do have Americans that came, mainly because of friends of friends that come and stay with us and happen to be in Europe. We have a lot of British people that come from, usually north of England, that come, and I think they think that Brittany is the south. So far, they haven't been too disappointed with the weather. Um we have a lot of French people over the long weekends. So

Michelle: Sure.

Sabine: April, May, June, tends to be French families or groups of friends that come and

Michelle: Because of the French public holidays.

Sabine: Exactly.

Michelle: Sure.

Sabine: So there's really long weekend. We had people from Germany. We had people from Belgium. We also we had a family from Spain, from the south of Spain, that came all the way to to stay with us last year.

Michelle: Yes.

Sabine: So we do have different nationalities that we come across.

Michelle: Excellent. And now I know that you've started diversifying yourself as well, and you started doing sound baths.

Sabine: Yes.

Michelle: That's correct, isn't it? Sound bath.

Sabine: Yes.

Michelle: Um, so can you tell us a little bit about what that is?

Sabine: Sure, absolutely. I ought to mention that when I was in US, I was really interested in helping others and around well being. So I did take a training in massage therapist,

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: So I'm certified as a massage therapist. And then a friend of mine took me to this sound bath in the middle of like a flower field, really early in the morning, and I came out of it so relaxed and it was so enjoyable that I was like, I need to do this. I need to learn about it. So I decided to be on that journey. So um a sound bath is really - lots of people know about the Tibetan bowls that you play, that people would play, what I play is actually crystal bowls. So it's like they're made of crystals, and they have different tones. They have different sounds depending on what crystals they're made of, and this will bring you, like a lot of health benefits. For example, lots of people never find the time to, like, sit down, relax, meditate, and it's really enveloping yourself with beautiful sounds that takes you on this journey for yourself.

Michelle: Is it like meditation?

Sabine: It's a bit like meditation. I think we do start with a few minutes of meditation, but it's really for you to absorb the sound of the bowls. So the crystal bowls, it's not something new. You know, when you look at Hildegard, for example, she believed you know, back to the mediaeval time, she believed that plants can heal, but also music and sound can heal. And so this is not something new. I think it's something that has been quite forgotten, and then that is coming back slowly in everybody's life. But Michelle, you've experienced one of the sound bath with me.

Michelle: I did. I had one, and it was it was amazing. I felt like no time had passed at all, and it had been 45 minutes.

Sabrina: Right.

Michelle: So, yeah, that was incredible. It was that was really, really lovely. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I'd be recommending it, for sure.

Sabine: Thank you.

Michelle: So is this something that you'll be, you think, combining, say, like a retreat. So with the gîte complex as well that you'll be offering sort of weekends where you do the sound bath at the gîtes?

Sabine: Yeah. I mean, we can, most different options we can have. If there's somebody who's interested, you know, they can have a private sound bath, like you and I did.

Michelle: Okay

Sabine: So I could come to their place to do it, or they can come to you, to me. Or we can also arrange for like, a group session, like, if there is an association that wants to do it and can host it, we can also do that. The plan is indeed to be able to offer that in addition to people staying in their gîte if they wanted to experience that, and further down the line, to have you know wellness retreats, where we'll be able to incorporate that and be in nature, have a sound bath, go on hikes. Visit. The possibilities are endless and so we are in the stages of setting all this up.

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: With our wonderful French bureaucracy that everybody knows about. Um. So, yeah, I mean, I think you know in a few weeks, I think everything will be ready to go.

Michelle: Okay, and where do people go to find out more? Do you have Facebook or?

Sabine: So for the gîte, we have a website, which is Kermarch, K, E, R, M, A, R, C, H.com, where you can actually book online. The sound healing aspect is not fully set up yet.

Michelle: OK.

Sabine: Because it's very new, but on the website, there's an email address, and there is a phone number, where people can reach us at.

Michelle: Brilliant. So if people want more information, they can - about the sound baths - and they can still come to you through your website for the gîte.

Sabine: Absolutely.

Michelle: To get information. Okay, that's perfect.

Sabine: Absolutely.

Michelle: Okay. So, Melissa, thank you very much for all that's really interesting, and I look forward to seeing you at the Wuthering Heights day on the 20th of July.

Sabine: Oh, we're so looking forward to it. The whole family is coming. So.

Michelle: It's great fun.

Sabine: Yes.

Michelle: It was great fun last year. I'm really looking forward to it this year.

Sabine: And even if you're not a dancer, you should totally come.

Michelle: Just have a red dress.

Sabine: Have a red dress. Everybody has moves, so.

Michelle: No it'll be great fun. I look forward to seeing you then.

Sabine: Thank you Michelle.

Michelle: Thanks so much. Sabine.

Sabine: Bye.