



This is France — Expatriate Success Stories

In several previous issues, we have devoted a lot of space to the personal stories and interviews of expatriates who explain in depth the many difficulties they faced in adapting to life in France. In this issue, we have chosen to give the floor to those who have really managed to integrate into a new culture and society. Their experiences illustrate that it was, of course, not without pitfalls, obstacles, and various problems, but still, they

made it! Therefore, they are the perfect demonstration that yes, one can totally adapt to a foreign country, given a little effort, especially in learning the language and understanding the culture.

We have asked each of the interviewees to, first, introduce themselves and their environment in a few words, second, to reply to five questions (see box). Please find their replies on the following pages.

Ces expatriés qui ont réussi leur intégration : témoignages

Dans plusieurs numéros, nous avons consacré une large place à des témoignages et interviews d'expatriés qui ont décrit longuement les difficultés qu'ils ont eues pour s'intégrer en France. Dans celui-ci, nous avons choisi de faire parler ceux qui ont parfaitement réussi leur intégration dans une nouvelle culture et société. Leur expérience démontre que celle-ci n'a pas été, certes, sans écueils, obstacles et divers problèmes, mais ils y sont arrivés ! Ils

sont donc la parfaite démonstration que oui, on peut s'adapter totalement à un pays étranger, pourvu que l'on fasse un peu d'effort, surtout pour apprendre la langue et comprendre la culture.

Nous avons demandé à chacun de se présenter, de décrire le milieu dans lequel ils vivent, en quelques mots, et de répondre à cinq questions (voir encadré). Leurs réponses figurent dans les pages qui suivent.

Our questionnaire

- 1) Why do you like living in France so much?
- 2) At what point did you realize that you truly felt at home living in France?
- 3) What are the things you were not prepared for when you moved to France?
- 4) What adjustments/changes did you have to make in your life in order to successfully integrate?
- 5) What crucial advice you would give to those contemplating settling in France?

Fiona Hopkinson

We have lived permanently in France since 2004. When we arrived our children were aged 8, 10 and 12. We had lived in the South of England, near Newbury, for 13 years, but we found the pressure of just living there really detrimental to family life. My husband is an airline pilot and was based at Heathrow. In 2003 he had the opportunity to work part-time and so we decided to make a permanent move to France. For years we had a holiday home in Burgundy, but we knew that

we couldn't live there permanently because it was too quiet outside of the holiday season.

We decided to indulge our passion for skiing and whilst Chris continued to fly part-time I would run a catered ski



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