

Ah Paris

WEA PEOPLE BRIAN HORAN

by Tony Elshof

Brian started relief teaching across the Illawarra, and made the most of his teaching breaks by travelling. At the end of a 7 month backpacking trip across 5 continents, he was sitting on a plane and the thought came to him, "I wish I knew what I know now when I first started travelling!" These thoughts, combined with his passion for people and teaching, led him to approach WEA in 1989 with the idea of running courses on travel, culture, and language.

Brian's very first course was called, 'Hints to Budget Travel' and he had 30 people in his class. Students ranged from mums and dads who wanted to plan their own travel instead of doing an organised tour, to young people about to start off on their first overseas adventure.

"One of the things I was trying to get people to think about was adding in some independent travel. If a couple were planning an organised tour with a travel company through mainland Europe, I would suggest adding in something like a self-drive trip around Ireland. Many people have a dream of independent travel, but are unsure about how to do it...my courses are about practically preparing people to travel independently."

Brian believes that Aussie travellers can have a negative opinion of the French people and their culture. "What I learned from my cross-cultural visits is that the French place a lot of significance on their language and what it represents. If you attempt to acknowledge them in their language, they will warm to you, but if you waltz into a café and say, "Do you speak English?" they might take it as an insult.

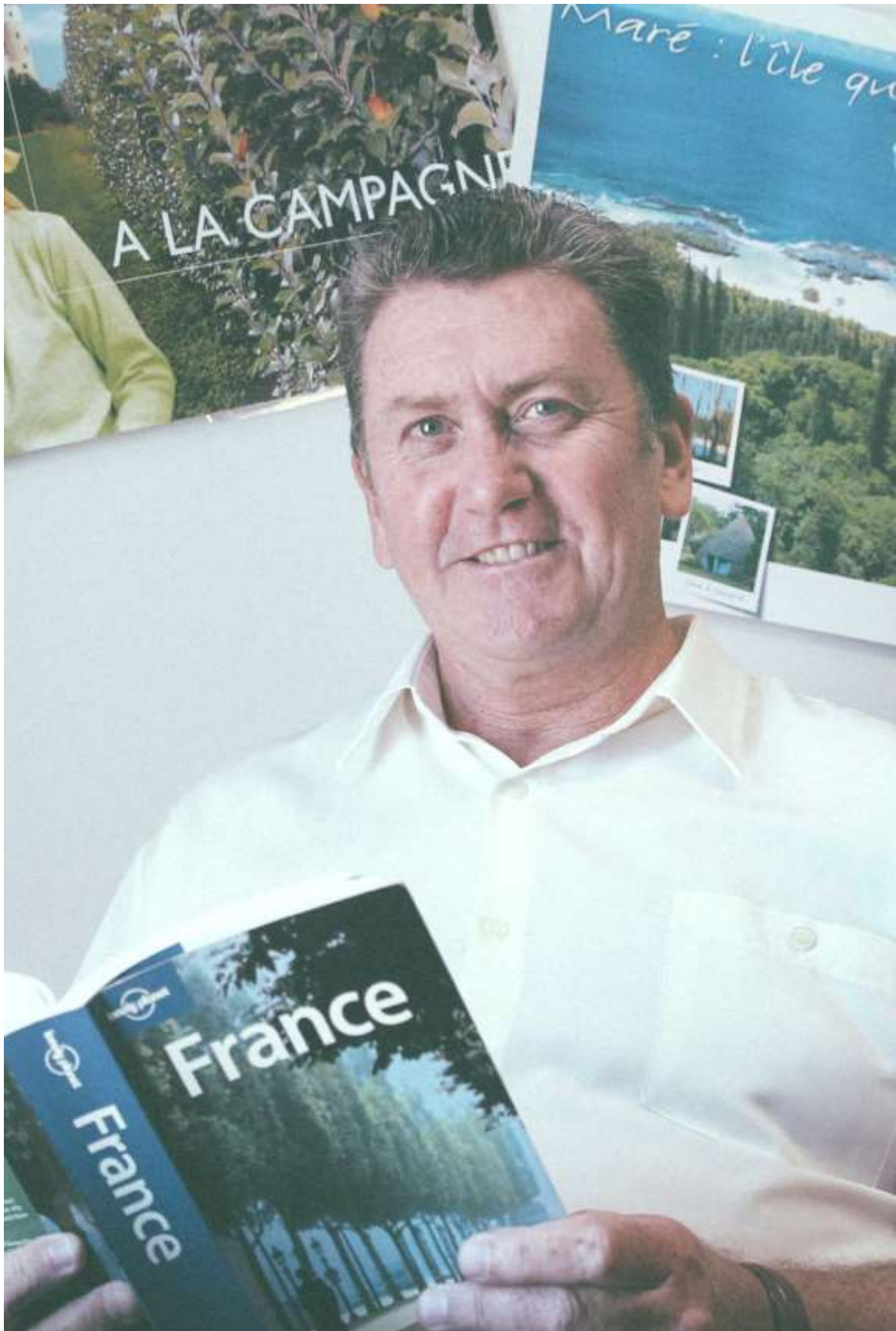
Many French people are also uncomfortable with speaking English, so they will try to avoid it unless they see you attempt their language first. Another way to gain respect is to find the store owner, and acknowledge him or her in French, and then you will get far better service!"

"I had two young female travellers do one of my courses, and they later told me how astonished more experienced, older travellers were at their confidence about backpacking, especially when they learned that the girls had never travelled before!"

After 25 years teaching at WEA, and many more years travelling, Brian still has the passion to pass on his experience and knowledge to those who are about to set off on an overseas adventure. Brian teaches a number of courses and he told me that after his 8 week French Travel Leisure and Culture course, committed students will be able to have a ten minute conversation in French!

“Many people have a dream of independent travel, but are unsure about how to do it...my courses are about practically preparing people to travel independently.”

If you would love to book into one of Brian’s courses - call WEA today.



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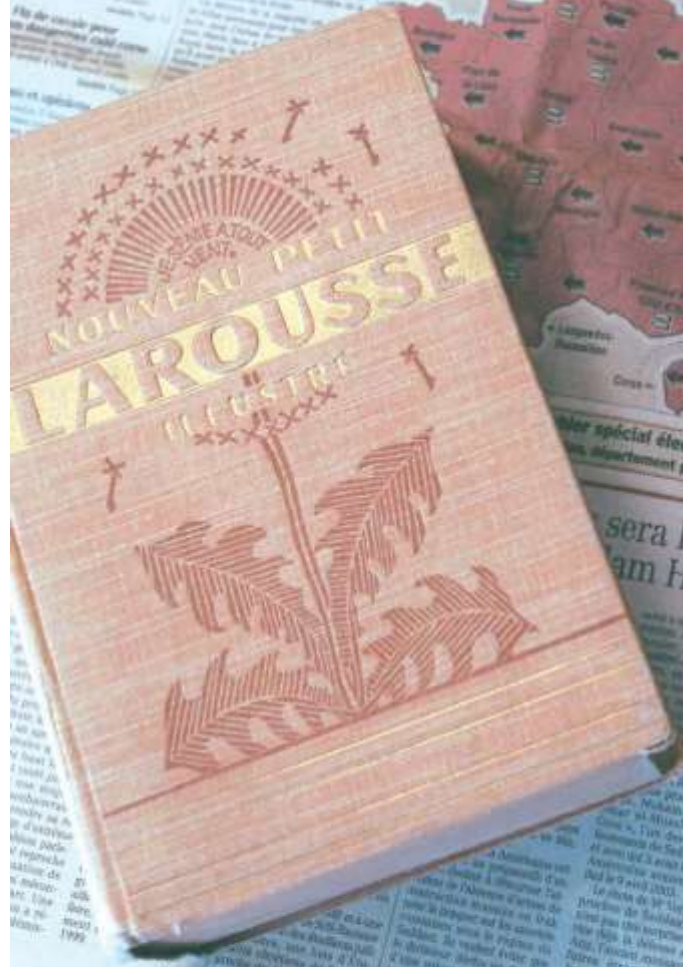
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