



CARIBOU AZORES

Testimonial Martin: The lasting lift of the ‘Azores High’

After 55 years of a happy marriage, I had to say a final goodbye to my beloved wife. Children, grandchildren, and the many dear friends – none of it could stop from feeling as if the ground had been pulled out from under my feet.

When I received a striking photo card along with a warm, empathetic message, inviting me to a week for bereaved on the Azores, I set it aside. ‘Interesting,’ I thought, ‘but too soon for me.’ A few weeks later, the card resurfaced, and I visited the promising website caribou-azores.ch. ‘Actually... this might be something for me,’ I thought this time. My two children’s response was immediate and unanimous: “Dad, you absolutely HAVE to do this. We’d be so proud of you – and we’re sure Mom would have wanted it too.”

I met Regula for a coffee in Zurich – and right away, I felt: ‘This is a good match. The chemistry is right.’

Even though I hadn’t been on a plane for 27 years, I decided to take the plunge. At Ponta Delgada airport, I met the other participants for the first time – and just a day later, we had already become a remarkably well-functioning small community. Each of us came with a willingness to open up, to share, to listen, and to take in as much as possible from the experiences and perspectives of others – drawing meaningful insights for our own path ahead.

The structured rhythm of our days began with a kind of ‘amuse-bouche’ – morning meditation beside the bubbling fountain in the cloister of the Convento. Though long since transformed into a guesthouse, this historic building still held its impressive – almost mystical – character. A rich breakfast (with the juiciest, most flavorful Azorean pineapple) was our daily ‘starter.’ The actual ‘main course’ consisted of the morning Impulse session. In the atmospheric and evocative hall, Urban offered a thoughtful introduction that opened into a round of lively exchange.

The ‘dessert’ came in several courses: each afternoon featured a different excursion on this fascinating volcanic island, followed by an always superb, high-quality dinner. We were lucky to benefit from the ‘insider tips’ shared by Regula and Urban – two siblings who complement each other perfectly. Of course, these outings sparked spontaneous conversations about our shared theme of the week. There were emotional moments, yes – but even more often, we found ourselves laugh wholeheartedly, letting go of our grief – at least for a short time. A themed ‘bedtime story’ with a nightcap marked the end of each eventful and always insightful day.

Did this week meet my expectations? No – not at all. That would be a complete understatement. In truth, my expectations were exceeded many times over, in every possible way. Perhaps the fact that the two siblings were also mourning – having recently buried their younger brother – contributed to the fact that we all immediately felt like a close-knit community.

The passion that this ‘dream team’ puts into their Caribou Azores project was palpable throughout. A thousand thanks for what you two, Regula (the organisational talent) and Urban (the multitalent), offered us during this truly extraordinary week; even the weather played along!

I am convinced we each carried a part of that ‘Azores High’ back home with us, along with the comforting certainty that we will stay in touch well into the future.

Martin Steinacher, Illnau

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