

What do foreign residents think of Vitoria and Vitorianos?

ECP coach Rob Hextall, resident in Vitoria-Gasteiz for nearly 25 years, was recently invited by the magazine **Dato Económico** to participate in a debate about foreign residents' views of the city and its people

Before you read the article find this vocabulary in the text:

to pick (someone's) brains: to ask another person for their expertise

wariness: suspicion, caution

a nightmare: a horrible or disconcerting experience

to laugh (something) off: to treat accusations, problems or insults as a joke

a nightclub: a discotheque that is open until the early morning

to settle down: to feel comfortable in a new position/lifestyle/job/home

otherwise: 'apart from that', 'in other respects'

Recently, I received an invitation from the monthly magazine Dato Económico to join four other foreigners who are resident in Vitoria to express our opinions about the city and its inhabitants.

We were invited to have lunch at the Parador hotel in Argómaniz and, once we had finished our desserts and had ordered coffee, Iñigo Ramón Fernández, the editor, began to **pick our brains**.

These were my colleagues for the afternoon:

Pascal Dione (Senegal - artist and restaurant owner), Yueh Yun Lu Tsai (China - Chinese language teacher), Jhon Freddy Hernández Rios (Columbia - Cooperation and Development manager), Katja Jokisch (Germany - German language teacher).

Why did you choose to live in Gasteiz?

Lu: I lived in Bilbao with my family but when I got married we came to Vitoria to try our luck and we set up a restaurant. I liked the city so I decided to stay.

Pascal: I was living in Italy when my girlfriend came here to study on the Erasmus scheme. I came to visit her, loved the place, got a job and we decided to stay.

Rob: I was only going to stay a year or two, but I felt so at home after years of living and working abroad that I just **settled down** and never wanted to leave.

What do you like about Vitoria and Vitorianos?

John Freddy: Colombian cities are loud and chaotic whereas in Vitoria you can live in a much more relaxed and organised manner. Local people soon get over their initial **wariness** towards you and accept you as just another new Vitoriano.

P: Vitorianos are genuine in their curiosity, it's not just for show. With regards to the city, I'm from Dakar where the traffic is a **nightmare**. As I hate cars and don't have a driving license, the small city of Vitoria is a paradise for me!

Have you suffered prejudice because of where you are from originally?

JF: Once, when someone in the Old Part realised I was Colombian, I was asked if I had any cocaine. I **laughed it off**. Other parts of Spain are much worse.

P: Some people won't let me into bars and **nightclubs** simply because I'm black. Hopefully, in a couple of generations this won't happen. People who travel around the world don't behave like that.

Katja: I've been called a Nazi a few times, and people criticise my accent.

What would you change about Vitoria-Gasteiz? Why?

K: The centre needs to regain the life it's lost. I miss the vitality it used to have.

R: I'd teach bars and restaurants to treat their customers better. Being nice to your clients doesn't cost anything, but not asking them if they would like a drink as they look at the menu is not only rude but is also a lost business opportunity.

L: I wouldn't change anything. It's a lovely place to live and I actually quite like the weather. I'd only ask for people to be a little more polite and to be more respectful.

Would you ever leave Vitoria? Why/Why not?

P: I'd go anywhere in the world for a worthwhile artistic project. **Otherwise**, I see no reason why I would go anywhere else.

L: I have a large family here and in Bilbao. I don't have anything in China and if I left here, I would lose the retirement pension I have worked so hard for.

Adapted from the original Spanish by ECP coach Rob Hextall

Flesch Reading Ease: 73 = Fairly easy to read (See explanation on page 2)



Dato Económico is a monthly magazine about business, politics and culture in Vitoria-Gasteiz

To read the original article in September's Dato Económico, look for a copy in your local bar or at work!

Let's chat about that!

Look at the questions that Dato Económico asked the foreign residents.

Imagine that Dato Económico is asking you the same questions.

What would your answers be? Write your answers in an email and send them to your ECP coach. Don't forget to give reasons for your answers!

Social Events In English

Real-Life English in Vitoria-Gasteiz



iLook, iThink, iSpeak

Real Language to Express Yourself Better



The last Friday of every* month from October to June, come to ECP to watch a film in English (with English subtitles) and talk about it afterwards.

October 26th - November 30th -
January 25th - February 22nd - March 29th - May 31st - June 28th

WhatsApp John for more details on: 657 73 13 54

Time: 19:30 to 21:30

Place: ECP Hub (C/San Ignacio de Loyola 15)

Price: Free!

Friends welcome

**Please note: there will be no Cinema Nights in December or April.*

The first* Saturday of every month from October to June, come to Panadería Bertiz, C/Francia for a coffee and a chat in English.

October 6th - November 10th - December 1st
January 12th - February 2nd - March 2nd -
April 6th - May 4th - June 1st

WhatsApp Alison for more details on: 608 42 64 92

Time: 11:00 to 12:30

Place: Panadería Bertiz, C/Francia

Price: Just bring enough for a cup of coffee!

Friends welcome

**Please note: Coffee Saturdays will take place on the second Saturday in November and January.*

Great ways to express your opinion:

I reckon (that) there's too much traffic in the town centre. People shouldn't use their cars so much.

It goes without saying that everyone prefers to travel by car but why can't we walk or use our bikes more?

I suppose (that) I could walk more, but only if it isn't raining!

I'd like to point out that I've been using my bicycle to get to work for the last three years.

To be honest (with you), I thought that cycling would be more difficult, but in fact it's easy and I feel fitter too.

As far as I'm concerned, the best way to get around town is by bike. Walking is a good option too if it's a short distance.

If you ask me, I'd make everyone use a bike for at least one week a year. That would help them change their opinions.

I feel that the local authorities could do more to encourage people to use public transport.



Flesch Reading Ease Formula

This formula is used to assess the difficulty of reading a text written in English.

- 90-100: Very Easy
- 80-89: Easy
- 70-79: Fairly Easy
- 60-69: Standard
- 50-59: Fairly Difficult
- 30-49: Difficult
- 0-29: Very Confusing