

Switzerland is more than cheese, chocolate and clocks

By VINCE EGAN
Travel Columnist
Thomson News Service

You know, of course, how most of us carry on when outsiders describe Canada as the land of mountains, moose and Mounties.

Well, the Swiss are similarly miffed when the rest of the world dismisses Switzerland as a country of cheese, chocolate and cuckoo clocks.

The towering and eternally snow-capped Alps are equally prominent in the world's mental image of this landlocked republic - so much so that the attractions of its eminently livable cities tend to be forgotten.

For one of Europe's smallest countries - about 16,000 square miles, 6.5-million inhabitants - it's surprising that Switzerland's cities are so diverse. That diversity stems from the tangled historic relationships between Switzerland and the larger countries that surround it - but it is maintained today by the linguistic and cultural mix.

About 65 per cent of the Swiss have German as their mother tongue; for another 18 per cent, it's French, and for 10 per cent, it's Italian. (Those are "official" languages. Romansch is a "national" language, confined to a relatively small group in the rural canton of Grisons.)

The German, French and Italian linguistic groups impart their own colorful characteristics to their particular regions, but always with a unique Swiss overlay.

Here, then, is a look at a leading city in each of the three official-language areas. Each city makes the most of its setting on an attractive lake fed by Alpine rivers:

GERMAN LUCERNE

Lucerne is the most scenic and historic city of German-speaking Switzerland - or, perhaps, of the country as a whole. It has grown and prospered along the shores of the Reuss river and Lake Lucerne, and almost in the shadow of the 2,500-metre Mount Pilatus.

Its most famous landmarks are

two covered wooden footbridges spanning the river in the heart of the city - the Kapellbrücke (with its eight-sided stone watertower in the middle), built in 1333, and the Sprauerbrücke, dating from 1408. Both are handsomely decorated with centuries-old overhead paintings.

Many visitors to Lucerne happily put in a full day at the lakefront Swiss Transport Museum, a fascinating and all-embracing collection of airplanes (together with Swissair crew uniforms over the decades), locomotives, cable cars, motorcycles and so on.

But many more come to Lucerne (where tourism is almost the sole industry) to steep themselves in the Teutonic charm of its Old Town, where the richly painted townhouses of ancient German aristocrats and merchants still stand after all the centuries.

Swiss hotels are noted for their elegance, none more so than the celebrated Palace, which, for 83 years, has gazed serenely out across the lake toward snow-peaked Mount Pilatus.

FRENCH GENEVA

Geneva, the foremost city of French-speaking Switzerland, is just inside the Swiss-French border, where the great Rhone river flows into Lake Lemman.

Not enough has been said or written about the beauty of Geneva's many green and leafy parks and its inviting lakeside promenades. Rather, the rest of the world seems to think of Geneva only in terms of its historic role as the city of the Protestant Reformation preached by Jean Calvin; as the site of countless multinational public agencies from the League of Nations on through its offshoots and successors; and as a birthplace of the humanitarian movement that produced "the Geneva Convention" to ensure the civilized treatment of prisoners of war.

Naturally, as a destination frequented by diplomats, convention delegates and tax-exempt functionaries with generous expense

accounts, Geneva has an array of deluxe and first-class hotels that is probably unmatched by any other city of its size - 165,000 people. These facilities tend to be built in the grand manner of the Belle Epoque, and to take advantage of the view over sparkling Lake Lemman - as does the dignified Hotel d'Angleterre on both counts.

RED CROSS

For a visitor staying in any such top-flight hotel, it may be unsettling to tour the stark new International Museum of the Red Cross, on a suburban thoroughfare facing the Geneva headquarters of the United Nations.

The Red Cross Museum, open since last November, graphically depicts the human tragedy of war, with special emphasis on the suffering of the wounded and prisoners of war. (Henry Dunant, a Geneva-based author and humanitarian, was - the leading spirit in the founding of the Red Cross movement 125 years ago.)

Also of interest to museum-goers is the elegant Watch and Clock Museum, which this summer is holding a special exhibition of rare and expensive products of Patek Philippe, one of whose watches was recently auctioned off at a record price of \$3.4 million (Canadian equivalent).

The next best thing to a visit to Geneva's Watch Museum is to stroll the fashionable shopping streets of any major Swiss city, window-shopping at the countless displays of beautiful - and pricey - products of Switzerland's famous watch-craftsmen.

ITALIAN LUGANO

Lugano, on the international (Swiss and Italian) lake of the same name, is the primary city of the Italian-speaking Swiss canton of Ticino. Its sub-tropical setting, against a northern background of an Alpine range, makes Lugano a painter's delight.

The border between the two countries runs in an eccentric and apparently senseless fashion throughout Ticino, but there's

Lifestyles

nothing haphazard about the impeccable public gardens that line much of Lugano's lengthy lakefront.

But it takes more than landscapes and a pleasant year-round climate to attract the tourist trade these days. Lugano, like Geneva, has more than its share of grand hotels, including the famous five-star, century-old Splendide Royal. Its Old Town is a colorful maze of crowded walkways with interesting shops. And it offers an almost endless program of high-calibre music festivals, from classic to jazz.

But at the top of Lugano's list of man-made attractions stands the noted Villa Favorita, a museum reputed to hold the world's second-greatest collection of 14th- to 19th-century paintings (surpassed only by the collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, it is said).

GOLD AND SILVER

Currently on display until July 16 is a special exhibition of centuries-old gold and silver jewelry and ar-

tifacts from the private collection of the Villa Favorita's owner, jet-setter Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza.

The museum, in the suburb of Castagnola, is best reached by one of the frequent shuttle ferries that crisscross Lake Lugano. A distinct contrast is in store for visitors who take the ferry to the opposite shore, a few minutes away, to see the Swiss Customs Museum.

Entire villages in Ticino once depended for their livelihood upon the Swiss-Italian smuggling trade, and this absorbing museum shows how Swiss Customs agents dealt with the illicit trade - or sometimes lost their lives in the attempt.

Lugano and its neighboring Italian-speaking cities, such as Locarno and Ascona, have within the past decade become much more accessible to visitors to mountain-ringed Switzerland, with the completion of the St. Gotthard Pass road tunnel and the inauguration of a feeder airline, Crossair, partly owned by Swissair and operating Saab-built Cityliners.

How to help those orphaned animals

With spring fast approaching, veterinarians can count on receiving a number of phone calls about orphaned baby birds and rabbits and squirrels. In our concern for the welfare of these little ones we frequently "rescue" them, bring them home and in so doing, almost guarantee that they will die; baby birds and animals have very demanding requirements which can only really be met by their parents.

If such a tiny creature appears to have been abandoned, it should if possible be put back in its nest with the minimum of handling. Next best is to DO NOTHING, just observe it from a distance for at least 3-4 hours; almost always the

parents are watching from nearby. Everything possible should be done to make the area safe; a cat or dog threatening to harm the little creature can be removed from the scene and kept away.

If the baby turns out to be truly abandoned, the kindest approach is to take it to your local veterinarian. In many cases they will look after it at no charge but this should only be done as a last resort.

Injured wild birds can be taken to the Wild Bird Clinic at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph. The phone number is 519-823-8840.

Ashgrove WI discusses Alzheimer's

By DORIS McNABB

Ashgrove W.I.

For their Family and Consumer Affairs meeting the Ashgrove Women's Institute met at the home of Muriel McClure on May 16 with 19 members and nine visitors attending. President Pat Stark chaired the meeting.

In reply to the roll call, "What I can do to keep mentally alert" members suggested using their heads instead of a calculator, exercising, reading and looking after their physical health.

The motto: "Keep your face towards the sunshine and the shadows will fall behind," was given by Betty Brownridge. She read excerpts from Greg Clark's book, *Bar'l of Apples*, in which he told how he made a lifetime friend and even met Franklin Roosevelt because he always looked ahead of himself and not behind.

Isobel Carney introduced the guest speaker, Kathlene Crittenden, who spoke on Alzheimer's Disease. Kathlene is a nurse at Credit Valley Hospital and a member of the Board of the Alzheimer's Society for Halton and Wentworth.

She said very few families are not affected by the disease as 10 per cent of people over 65 will develop it. We must be optimistic and remember the other 90 per cent will escape it.

Support groups have been set up and there are groups in Milton, Acton and Oakville. They help the family and support the care-giver who is looking after the spouse or relative with the disease.

A video narrated by Dr. Donald McLachlen followed the life of a

patient and his family as they learned to accept and cope with the disease.

Two letters in reply to our request for a sign to identify the Ashgrove rural cluster were read by Doreen Wickson. She noted that the location of Ashgrove can be seen on the 1988 Ontario-Canadian Official Road Map.

Those members who took the landscaping course will be creating a new flower bed at Hillcrest Church. Mary Jane Wingfield outlined the plans for the first work meeting on May 18.

The correspondence, read by assistant secretary, Ismay Bird included a letter from Beth Burnett announcing a day of leadership

development to be held on June 10 at Belwood United Church and the spring newsletter from "Share" outlining their programs.

Members were reminded that Wednesday, May 31 is Participation Day and each one should do 15 minutes of exercise and call in their activity to the Halton Hills rec department.

Mary Jane Wingfield reported that the POWER garage sale had been most successful and that they would still welcome new members.

The meeting closed with a social hour and lunch served by Ethel Wilson and Doris McNabb.

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KATHY HAJAS
Diet Center Counselor

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