

# Mailbag

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### Swiss Review 4/05

I write to express how impressed I am by the cover of the August issue, which I received today. Switzerland is in desperate need of a multicultural awakening, and your cover provides a positive image and model in this respect. I lived and grew up in Canada, and though that country does not have the same ingrained historical traditions as Switzerland – thus making it somewhat easier for it to adapt to immigration and change – it nevertheless had to generate a multicultural identity for itself, often through explicit campaigns aimed at achieving that goal. Switzerland needs to do the same thing, ditching its negative, ostracizing policies (3 generations and no citizenship) for more progressive and sustainable ones. An image such as that of the young soldier on your cover provides a new model for Swiss people of all races, showing that the traditional is compatible with the undeniable present.

I also would like to express my appreciation for the book review of Thomas Maissen's "Verweigerter Erinnerung". Again, on the theme of Switzerland's need to recognise itself as it truly is, this book – and any publicity for it – will help us to confront an unpleasant historical truth, a process which I believe has not been undertaken sufficiently to date.

I look forward to the next issue of Swiss Review.

MATHIAS LOERTSCHER,  
LONDON, UK

### Good typography

Congratulations on your new layout. We (a group of Swiss sharing a house in Berlin) were

pleasantly surprised with the new look. Normally the Swiss Review is immediately consigned to the paper recycling heap. This time I took it with me and read it in the subway on my way to work. I am most impressed by the good typography and the appealing imagery.

I'm already looking forward to the next issue.

MARTIN SCHMID, DESIGNER,  
BERLIN, GERMANY

### Applause for the new Review

I congratulate you on the quality of the new Review and in particular the August issue (No. 4): the content and layout are a total success. I used to leaf quickly through the magazine (out of a sense of duty), but I thoroughly enjoyed reading the last issue.

All the articles – army, around the world on foot, Hayek etc. – provided stimulating and interesting reading. Bravo!

LOUIS-DAVID MITTERRAND,  
FRANCE

### The new look

When a woman gets a new outfit, I'm the first to compliment her. When a well-loved magazine does the same, I feel entitled to criticise. Since 1960, when I was privileged to work in Zurich as a typesetter for a number of years, I have regarded Swiss typography as a shining example. Like the Roethlis' expression in the "Contents" section, my first reaction to the new magazine was puzzlement. Everything I object to actually appears on the editorial page:

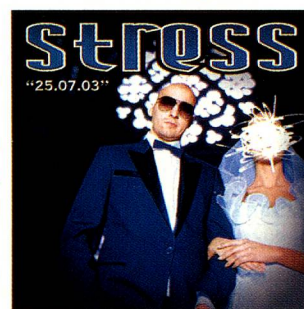
1. Here we find six different fonts.
2. The Antiqua used for the editorial is too slight in the serifs and the last line of paragraphs. I find it difficult to read the text – despite the new spectacles I've had since last week.
3. All the lines are somewhat too "bold".
4. I would only use the upper and lower line in the page header (no frame). Then there would be no need to position the page number on the lower edge of the fill-in. The page number

### Funky western Swiss music scene

The vitality of the Swiss music scene is reflected in the quality of our country's musical output. This article turns the spotlight on three western Swiss groups: The Rambling Wheels (rock), Stress (hip hop) and Akamassa (reggae).

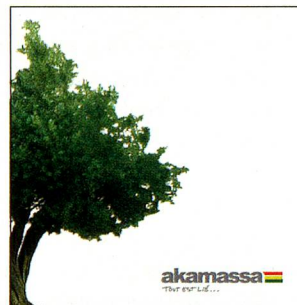
**Just like the Rolling Stones.** A sense of irony, outstanding panache, and outfits reminiscent of the sixties: The Rambling Wheels mix the aggressiveness of the Rolling Stones with the lyrical songwriting of the Beatles. Hot off the press, their first album "The Rambling Wheels" offers a selection of exciting melodies that appeal to today's rebellious young generation and the '68 generation alike. Formed in 2003, the Rambling Wheels (like other currently popular groups such as Sweden's "The Hives" or New York's "Strokes") specialise in timeless songs. The band members call themselves Fuzzy O'Bron, Rafenbaker, Mr. Jonfox and Papayoo Kustolovic. Not a trace of melancholy: just good old rock'n'roll to lift the spirits.

**Biting satire from Stress.** The rapper Stress was the first French-speaking Swiss to make it to No. 3 on the Swiss hit parade, successfully combining different musical genres and creating a hip hop that transcends the conventional sound system (a DJ without instrumentalists) by joining forces with an inspirational band. The calm demeanour of this young Lausanne rapper contrasts with the biting satire and acerbic pen of his alter ego Billy Bear, the hero of his first album, who occasionally reveals his cheeky, ingenious personality. After completing his studies at the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne and working for one year as a junior manager, Andres Andrekson decided to devote his life to music. With his multifaceted album "25.07.03", Stress created a masterpiece that successfully mixes hip hop, rock and folk. He is even more famous in German-speaking Switzerland than in his own French-speaking part. Stress doesn't hesitate to sing with Bernese or Zurich rappers in order to publicly criticise a certain right-wing political party, in the process turning his poetic spirit, inspired by everyday life, to political ends.



### Positive vibes from Akamassa.

With their "roots-rock-reggae" mix, the nine members of Akamassa have carved themselves a remarkable reputation in western Switzerland over the past four years and even gained recognition in the music scene beyond our borders. Their first album, "Akamassa" (2003), featuring songs



like "On est des millions" and "Sequoia Tree" (a homage to Bob Marley), was a big hit with music fans and proved especially popular with live audiences fascinated by the charisma and candidness of singer Greg, alias Junior Tshaka. The second album, "Tout est lié..." (due to come out towards the end of 2005) features some high-calibre guests (a French musician and a Jamaican). Passages like "Le battement des ailes d'un papillon africain peut déclencher un ouragan sur sol américain" ("A butterfly fluttering its wings in Africa can trigger a hurricane in America") or "Yvan", a song about an old farmer losing his land, will touch listeners' hearts and radiate an energy that instils a zest for life. Positive vibes.

BY ALAIN WEY



should also be in larger type – exactly the height between the two lines. This would also solve the problem on pages 14 and 16: the logos would then be free-standing and not “hemmed in”. And finally: 5. There’s something I’m dying to find out. I eagerly await the next issue to see how Mr Herzog is going to solve the problem on the front page. September, October, November and December have more letters. Will the flag fly off to the right?

Perhaps it will stick to the smiling soldier’s beret and he’ll take it with him when he does his service.

WOLFGANG SCHALLER,  
BAD SODEN, GERMANY

#### **Editorial content of Swiss Review**

As the recipient of the Swiss Review for many years, I am delighted to confirm that the substance and quality of the “Editorial” sections have remarkably improved since Heinz Eckert took over this task.

It is also gratifying to notice that the editorial content is now free of unwarranted radicalism and misguided feminist ideology.

WERNER R. STUTZ,  
NEW YORK, USA

#### **“New look for the Swiss Review”**

I can only congratulate you on the Swiss Review, which have enjoyed reading on a regular basis for many years! It’s a pity, though, that – apart from the rather refreshing front page – the layout and graphics have not produced any real improvement. For instance, you have used far too many different fonts which, when combined, give the publication a “busy” and, in my opinion, unaesthetic look. I find the font used in the titles particularly old-fashioned and inappropriate, as it contributes little to producing a crisp page of text. Text can be emphasised sufficiently using “upper case”, “lower case” or “bold” without

having to change fonts, thus producing a calm, modern-looking typeface that avoids the appearance of a “club circular”.

DR GABY NICKEL,  
HANNOVER, GERMANY

#### **New Design**

It was a great pleasure to receive and read the latest issue of the Swiss Review (August 05).

The new look, branding and layout is very innovative, modern and “edgy”, and the stories show diversity beyond what’s already known.

It is a very important step in representing “all things and people Swiss” in such a fashion, because it’s inspiring and it makes me proud to be part of it. It gives me, as a Swiss abroad, the tool to plug Switzerland as a place of ideas and great spirit.

My thanks to the designer Franz Herzog, I appreciate the belief in great new design.

EVA SCHICKER, NEW YORK, USA

#### **Warmest praises**

Sincere thanks for the new Swiss Review. I must commend you on the August issue, because for the first time I read it through instead of giving it a quick glance before throwing it in the bin. I have the impression that the reporting style has changed. The reports are without exception highly interesting and appeal very much to me (perhaps I should mention that I am 25 years old). Moreover, rather than writing about a remote home country (or indeed a home country) with which the reader has little in common, most of the articles inspire an interest in one’s country. I also find the new layout very attractive.

Many thanks for your efforts: I look forward to other Reviews, which I will certainly read.

CHRISTIAN FEIERABEND,  
TROSSINGEN, GERMANY

#### **Excellent language**

My son and I read the Swiss Review with great interest. The language your magazine

uses is excellent. I also read Focus and Spiegel, and am always amazed at the poor expressions – to put it mildly – that these two German magazines use.

MARGRIT ROFE-GRIEDER,  
MICHIGAN, USA

#### **Congratulations on the new design!**

Since last year I have been living in Thailand, near Chiang Rai, and regularly receive the Swiss Review!

I find it a great magazine: very colourful, diverse and informative, with lots of interesting articles. Now that I am a Swiss Abroad, I find it an excellent source of information! In addition to the Swiss Review I also receive the Schweizer Illustrierte, so I’m kept fully up to date...

JÜRGE E. BRÜGGER,  
CHIANG RAI, THAILAND

#### **Swiss Review 3/05, Editorial**

I want to comment on the very good editorial of your editor, Heinz Eckert. It is indeed urgent that as many voices as possible point out the deep malaise of Switzerland, which is not unlike that of France and Germany.

It seems that the politicians of those three countries believe that the redistribution of income and wealth is so popular that it cannot be taken out of the electoral tool box. After 40 years of such transfers into public services, such as education, health and other welfare benefits, the number of people employed in providing those services added to the civil servants at multiple levels of responsibility, Confederation, cantons, communes, all providing different set of regulations and joined by an increasing legion of young retirees, is now getting larger than the number of people employed in trade and industry.

I will add a personal note. I found that, should I retire in the canton where I was born, investing my savings in Confed-

eration bonds, a reasonable procedure to avoid the anxiety of the stock market, my taxes would far exceed my income! Is there something wrong in the land of William Tell?

FRANCOIS GRANDCHAMP

#### **Swiss Review 3/05, Editorial**

As a Swiss living abroad I always read your magazine with great interest. The many interesting and informative articles keep me up to date with events back in Switzerland. The editorial in your last issue (No. 3, July 2005) was entitled “On course for the poorhouse”, and the “Focus” section also addressed this topic. There is no doubt that all the world’s countries are subject to the same economic and political forces nowadays. But I believe that highlighting economic growth in this way and with such headlines, is more appropriate to the tabloid press. Best wishes.

SARA GUTH,  
BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

#### **“Switzerland needs swissinfo” Swiss Review 3/05**

There’s no denying the fact that we need “swissinfo”, the only direct and up-to-date link with our country. We also regularly receive “Die Schweiz und die Welt”, “Indo-Swiss Business Newsmagazine” and the “Swiss Review”.

Applause for Renzo Respini – your arguments are spot-on! We hope that SRG takes note of them, otherwise we will be left only with the Eurostar radio and TV channels (via Asiasat-2 satellite) with their European perspective but without the inclusion of Switzerland.

We have been living in South India for ten years and are sorry to see that media contacts with our country are slowly but surely disappearing: a dramatic state of affairs for Switzerland’s image abroad.

MARION UND ANDRÉ COURTIME,  
AUROVILLE, INDIA