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TOURIST NEWS

A GUIDE TO VILLA HOLIDAYS

Who has not been annoyed when, after searching through countless small ads in countless newspapers, one still does not have enough information? It cannot be denied: for the ever-increasing number of people who want privacy, independence and a pleasant apartment for their holiday, there is a definite gap in holiday planning.

This has now been bridged by Swiss Chalets-Inter Home who have the greatest number of holiday apartments to offer, with their new international Guide to Villa Holidays. This, the first of its kind, was published recently and contains thousands of properties, all described in detail, in the whole alpine region. And Summer 1977 edition, which will appear on 30th November 1976, will contain 10,500 apartments in 14 countries.

In the interest of the tourist a lot of attention has been paid to detail. For if one cannot inspect a holiday apartment beforehand, one should at least be able to read as much as possible about it. One can ascertain, for example, if there is an indoor swimming pool in the neighbourhood, or how far it is to the mountain railway or ski lift, or if there is a heated garage or a dishwasher, or whether pets are allowed. In short, everything one needs to know before finally deciding on an apartment.

The fact that the publisher is also the landlord is only an advantage. First of all one can make a direct reservation by phone with Swiss Chalets-Inter Home. Secondly, the publication is free of charge. And thirdly, one is not dealing with a more or less anonymous author, but with a concern which has made a careful and thorough selection, and which has straightforward, fair booking conditions.

After hundreds of hotel-, camping- and restaurant-guides, the time is ripe for a Guide to Villa Holidays. It can be obtained free of charge from Swiss Chalets-Inter Home (10 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1AE, telephone: 01-948 4112).

SWISS HOTELS SHOW ASTONISHING RESISTANCE

BERNE. An increasing number of Swiss hotels are facing serious difficulties because of soaring costs and falling

receipts, the Swiss Hotel Association has warned in its annual report.

The SHA says last year's relatively minor drop in overnight bookings in Switzerland should not hide the fact that the industry is confronted with a worsening economic situation.

The report adds: "While the majority of Swiss hotels have shown remarkable discipline in keeping their own prices stable since 1974, the hotels themselves have been faced with rising taxes and salaries, and food and energy costs.

"In addition, the trend has been for most guests to spend much less in hotels on drinks and certain supplementary services."

Overnight bookings at Swiss hotels last year fell 3.3 per cent (or just over one million nights) compared with a five per cent drop the previous year.

But contrary to the trend in 1974, the fall in overnight bookings by Swiss themselves (down 4.5 per cent) was greater than the drop in bookings by foreign visitors (down 2.5 per cent).

The SHA listed the main reasons for last year's fall in bookings as:

- * The increasingly high value of the Swiss franc, making Switzerland too expensive for foreign tourists;
- * The falling value of other currencies, making holidays abroad cheaper for the Swiss; and
- * The economic situation in major "tourist exporting" countries such as the United States, Britain, West Germany and France.

"But", the report concluded, "the Swiss hotel industry showed astonishing resistance in surviving 1975 better than other sectors of the economy."

PATHS TO LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IN CANTON FRIBOURG

The commune of Ueberstorf, which lies in the Sense region in the extreme north-east of Canton Fribourg (accessible by postcoach from Flamatt) introduces itself to walking enthusiasts in its newly published brochure on "local knowledge" footpaths. Featuring seven different walks lasting from one to four hours, the publication describes the sights to be seen en route, such as churches, chapels, castles, half-timbered farmhouses, mills, sawmills, the Lourdes Grotto, inns and also the variety of trees to be found in the area. The brochure costs Sw.Fr. 3.00, and is obtainable from: Gemeindeschreiberei, CH-3182 Ueberstorf.

PARIS - BERNE SERVICE

A daily air service between Paris and the Swiss capital, Berne, has been introduced by French carrier Air Alsace.

The flights operate Monday to Friday, with 29-seater Nord 262 aircraft leaving Paris Le Bourget at 12.30 local time and departing Berne for the return flight at 13.30 local time. Flying time is one hour 35 minutes.

The service was launched by an inaugural Paris-Berne flight carrying Air Alsace president Mr. Guy Dopff, who

told more than a hundred Swiss travel agents and tourist officials at a Berne Airport reception: "We are proud to be the only airline linking the Swiss and French capitals.

"We may be a small company but we operate to the same high standards as the major airlines."

Mr. Dopff said it was possible that Air Alsace would add a second daily Paris-Berne flight later.

The last company to operate Berne-Paris flights was Swiss carrier Balair, which withdrew from the route in 1970.

"PASTORAL SWITZERLAND" - A NEW SNT0 FILM

Themes from Beethoven's 6th Symphony - the "Pastoral" - provide the musical accompaniment to the gripping aerial shots of the varied Swiss landscape between the Jura Mountains and Canton Ticino in the Swiss National Tourist Office's latest film.

Audiences may not appreciate just what feats of daring were needed to fly a helicopter over the storm-lashed peak of the Matterhorn and - for the first time - through the narrow confines of the Aare Gorge. The film, awarded the rating "Highly Commended" by the Film Assessment Board at Wiesbaden in the Federal Republic of Germany, was made by Condor-Film AG of Zürich.

It was directed by Nicolas Gessner, whose successful career in films, the theatre and television has made him internationally known. The 15 minute colour film, which has no commentary, will be shown in the cinemas before the main feature and at the same time it will be screened in over 25 countries through SNT0 agencies and sub-agencies. In Switzerland, 16 mm copies of the film will also be obtainable from October on free loan from the Schweizer Schul- und Volksskino in Berne (Tel: 031/23 08 32).

SAVOGNIN IMPROVES ITS PANORAMIC FOOTPATH

The resort of Savognin, in Canton Graubünden, has made improvements to its panoramic footpath from Somtgant (top station of chairlift, 6,929 ft.) to Radons (cable car top station, 6,200 ft.). Crossing more than 30 little bridges, this footpath offers an easy two-hour walk amid alpine scenery. The Nandro-Bergbahnen AG Savognin issues special round-trip tickets for the chairlift trip from Savognin up to Somtgant and the trip back down to Savognin by cable car from Radons, including a snack at the restaurant in Radons. Savognin is also staging "Alp safaris" every Wednesday/Thursday until October to the Alp d'Err.

ROUND THE DENTS-DU-MIDI

The new footpath round the Dents-du-Midi, not far from the town of Champéry, opens up a wonderful tour, by means of a safe track, around the mighty massif with its towering rocks, waterfalls, idyllic little mountain lakes, meadows

and woods. Absolutely essential for tackling this 25-mile route are robust boots and appropriate clothing, and a rucksack with food and drink. The walk takes some 20 hours and can be completed in three days without undue difficulty. Starting from Champéry, the route goes over the Col de Susanfe (8,200 ft.) to Mex, the "Les Jours" cabin and the Signal de Soi, back to Champéry, with overnight accommodation in mountain inns and hostels. Experienced mountaineers can combine the walking tour with climbing the Haute Cime, the highest peak of the Dents-du-Midi (10,685 ft.).

BALLOONING MUSEUM AT LAUTERBRUNNEN

A section devoted to the sport of alpine free ballooning has been opened in the Valley Museum at Lauterbrunnen in the Bernese Oberland. The museum has been housed in the old schoolhouse there for several years and a classroom on the second floor has been given over to aeronautical items. Photographs and documents are supplemented by a slide show with sound commentary describing the development of the sport of free ballooning in the alps, with special emphasis on ascents in the Schilthorn area since 1910. Opening times are: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 2.30 to 5.30 p.m. and Sundays from 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 to 5.30 p.m.

A QUICK TRIP TO THE TICINO

"Lugano from 95 francs" continues to be the big hit which the Ente Ticinese per il Turismo (Ticino Tourist Office) is offering its holiday visitors in conjunction with a travel agency. The weekend arrangement (Friday to Monday) operates until 22nd October and the midweek arrangement (Monday to Friday) is available until 25th October. The all-inclusive price covers accommodation on a twin-bed room basis, with breakfast, an excursion to Monte Generoso, and second-class rail ticket from the following Swiss Federal Railways stations: Aarau, Basel, Baden, Berne, Brugg, Chur, Lucerne, Lausanne, Martigny, Neuchâtel, Solothurn, St. Gallen, Schaffhausen, Thun, Winterthur and Zürich. Reservations can be made at any Hotelplan branch office.

AUTUMN IN THE JURA

October still offers many and varied opportunities of discovering the Jura region. With the "Reka-Wanderpass" for two, four or seven days, families can set off on their own, but armed with plenty of suggestions for walking tours. The prices cover overnight stays with breakfast in hotels or inns and free use of all public transport facilities in the region.

A pass for two days (one overnight stay) costs Sw.Fr. 40, for four days (three overnight stays) Sw.Fr. 95 and for seven days (six overnight stays) Sw.Fr. 170. There is a 50 per cent reduction for children aged from six to twelve. On Saturdays and Sundays the Jura Railways give out a daily pass for Sw.Fr. 9. Meanwhile, trips in gypsy caravans through the Jura are continuing to increase in popularity.

One route leads through the Ajoie district and another covers the Franches-Montagnes region. Eight days (seven nights) hire of horse and caravan, accommodation in country inns, breakfast, care of horse and insurance cost Sw.Fr. 690 each for the first and second persons and Sw.Fr. 190 each for the third and fourth persons. Two-, three- or four-day arrangements cost from Sw.Fr. 235.

BLONAY-CHAMBY DEPOT MUSEUM OPENED

In countless hours of voluntary work, friends of the Blonay-Chamby Tourist Railway have set up a Depot Museum. The locomotives and carriages, restored with great care and affection, will attract railway enthusiasts and those who look back with nostalgia to the "golden age".

DEER-MATING TIME IN THE SWISS NATIONAL PARK

During deer-mating time in October the Zuoz Tourist Office offers all-inclusive arrangements from Sw.Fr. 204 (double room with bath and breakfast) to Sw.Fr. 300 (full board). The "non-hunting course" includes game-watching and night walks and a huntsmen's evening with game speciality dishes. A weekend during the deer-mating period (2nd/3rd, 9th/10th and 16th/17th October) costs about Sw.Fr. 100 including sightseeing and fine food.

GINDELWALD HAS ITS ICE GROTTO AGAIN

Thanks to the forward movement of the Grindelwald Glacier in recent years, it has again been possible — with a great deal of hard work — to make an ice grotto. This means that visitors can go more than 30 yards inside the glacier. The entrance is at the glacier tongue and is accessible at all times up to late autumn. From the Restaurant Wetterhorn, for example, it takes just 15 minutes to reach the blue grotto.

"SILVER THISTLE" TRIPS

This autumn the Rhaetian Railways are again featuring their "Silver Thistle" special offer. The three-day tickets are valid on the entire Rhaetian Railways network every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until 25th November. In addition, half-fare tickets are available on all postcoach services and the Disentis/Mustér — Andermatt — Göschenen connecting stretch of the Furka-Oberalp Railway.

Furthermore, the Graubünden mountain railways are issuing reduced-fare tickets for connections. The three-day tickets cost Sw.Fr. 32, second class and Sw.Fr. 48, first class, with half-price fares for youngsters up to 16.

LOCARNO — CHESTNUT FESTIVAL

The traditional Locarno Chestnut Festival was held this year on Sunday, 10th October. Along Locarno's lake promenade, over 1,000 kilos of chestnuts were distributed to visitors, who were also offered samples of local wine. Folklore performances enhanced this friendly occasion.

NEW HOLIDAY CENTRE IN THE UPPER VALAIS

At Fieschertal, near Fiesch in the Rhône valley, a new holiday complex will be opened in February 1977. Being just over one mile off the main road, it is well situated as a holiday and excursion centre for winter and summer. The sleeping quarters consist of nine bedrooms with accommodation for 79 persons. Prices, depending on the size of the group, range from Sw.Fr. 6.60 to Sw.Fr. 10 per person per day.



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MECHANICAL MUSIC IN LICHTENSTEIG

The long-forgotten age of historic musical apparatus from 1780 to 1928 lives again in the little medieval town of Lichtensteig (Canton St. Gallen). To go there is to take a trip back to the world of barrel organs, musical waltz-playing clocks, orchestrions, hurdy-gurdies and perforated plates producing bird songs.

The instruments and apparatus are on view in "Fredy's Mechanical Music Salon" in the Restaurant Hoffnung and three guided visits are arranged daily, at 10.30 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Attached to the exhibition are a barrel organ hire service and a workshop for the repair of all automatic musical instruments.

BERNE'S WINE FAIR

Berne's annual Wine Fair will be held at the Kursaal from 26th October to 5th November, when more than 350 wines will be on display from France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. This year's guest of honour is the Swiss wine-producing canton of Valais. Wines may be sampled and ordered, and there will be a wine-tasting competition. An additional attraction will be a "grotto" where visitors may wine and dine.

AIGLE - NEW WINE MUSEUM

The castle of Aigle, situated amid vineyards on the outskirts of Aigle, has been turned into a viticulture museum and contains the most important collection on the subject of wine. Seven rooms in the castle have so far been converted, in which implements such as hoes, bill-hooks and vine shears as well as back-baskets, pitchers, bottles, glasses, wine labels, etc. are on show. An outstanding item is a Lurcat tapestry illustrating the theme of wine. In the cellars are circular casts and a huge 17th century wine press. The collection will eventually occupy 22 rooms. The museum is open from May to October from 10.00 to 17.00 on Saturdays and Sundays.

DAY TICKETS ON LAKE LUCERNE

Until 31st October 1976, the Lake Lucerne Navigation Company (SGV) is issuing attractive Day Tickets for unlimited travel in first or second class for Sw.Fr. 15. The company's fleet consists of 16 comfortable boats, each with a capacity of up to 1,200 passengers, including five old-time paddle-steamers.

SEA WATER IN THE TICINO

It is now possible to swim in sea water in the new indoor pool of the

Hotel Villa Margherita (60 beds) at Bosco Luganese near Lugano.

The sea water used is heated to 27°C, and the swimming pool area is fully air-conditioned. The hotel also features a sauna, solarium, underwater massage, fitness corner, and a "Vita parcours". Opening periods: April-October.

GENEVA - INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF INVENTIONS

From 26th November to 5th December, 1976, the 5th International Exhibition of Inventions and New Techniques will be held at the Palais des Expositions in Geneva. Several hundred inventors have already notified their intention to participate.

The entries received by the organising committee include products not previously seen and technical novelties of exceptional interest.

The Geneva exhibition, which is under the patronage of the Swiss Federal Government and the Canton and City of Geneva, is attracting a growing number of official bodies, independent research workers, research undertakings and laboratories, which are anxious to draw attention to their inventions.

GENEVA - INTERNATIONAL BOAT AND OPEN-AIR SHOW

From 4th to 14th February, 1977, the 3rd International Boat and Open-Air Show will be held at the Palais des Expositions in Geneva. The following two sections are featured:

Boating:

Motor boats and yachts, sailing boats, rowing and inflatable boats, marine engines, equipment and fittings, trailers and boat carriers, associations and specialised literature, schools for sailing, navigation and diving.

Open-air:

Sports gear, camping, caravanning, swimming pools, aeronautical sports.

MONTREUX - IMPORTANT EVENTS IN 1977

Montreux will again organise in 1977 a number of international events.

14th-16th April

International Choirs Competition

At the Congress Centre of Montreux, an impressive number of international choirs will compete for the first honours.

8th-14th May

The Golden Rose of Montreux

Contest of international television productions in the entertainment field. Several awards are given of which the Golden Rose of Montreux, as well as the Silver and Bronze Rose, are best known the world over. The success of this

contest is proven by the increasing international participation.

3rd-10th June

International Television Symposium and Technical Exhibition

This very important event takes place every two years and unites specialists in the field of telecommunication from all over the world. The exhibition presents latest products and technical achievements.

1st-24th July

International Montreux Jazz Festival

World renowned artists and musical groups assemble in the new modern Casino of Montreux to play for the pleasure of numerous fans and lovers of Jazz, Pop and Country music.

September

International Festival of Classical Music

The 31st Festival under the direction of René Klopfenstein will again bring to Montreux famous orchestras, conductors and soloists. Concerts will be given in various Concert Halls of the region, and several in the famous Castle of Chillon.

PUBLICATION "FREE IN SWITZERLAND"

What can Switzerland, as a holiday land, offer its visitors free of charge? A great deal, as the Swiss National Tourist Office found out when they compiled a booklet called "Free in Switzerland". Things that can be enjoyed free include escorted walks, visits to industrial plants and local places of interest, garden chess, sports programmes, museum visits, local folklore evenings, film shows, lake night festivals and regattas. "Free in Switzerland" can be obtained from the Swiss National Tourist Office. And it's free, of course.

WINTER IN LUGANO

All categories of hotels in Lugano are offering weekly packages between 23rd October, 1976 and 26th March, 1977.

Prices start from Sw.Fr. 210 for seven nights full board, including a Welcome Drink, admission to night clubs and indoor swimming pool and a local transport season ticket for seven days' free travel on lake boats, certain funiculars and bus services, as well as the railway line from Lugano to Ponte Tresa.

A leaflet is available from the Swiss National Tourist Office.

BASLE - NEW DATE FOR INTERNATIONAL ART FAIR

The next International Art Fair ART 8'77 will be held in the Rotunda Building of the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle from 16th to 21st June, 1977 (one



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week earlier than originally planned), in order to prevent a clash with the 6th "Documenta" in Kassel (West Germany). The opportunity to take part consecutively in two major European art events next summer is particularly likely to interest visitors from overseas.

BRIG — NEW HOTEL

The "Schloss-Hotel garni" at Brig (Valais) has recently been opened. It is a modern, first-class hotel, situated in a quiet area near the park of the Stockalper Palace. All rooms have private bath, WC, telephone, radio and balcony. A car park and lock-up garages are available.

FLY—RAIL SWITZERLAND

"Fly—Rail Switzerland", the new concept of a transportation package introduced in this country last April, has proved extremely successful with both British holiday-makers and business visitors. Swissair have just published their new combined brochure "Fly—Air Switzerland" and "Fly—Drive Switzerland", valid for the winter period 1st November, 1976 to 31st March, 1977.

The "Fly—Rail Switzerland" holidays, for two or more people, include economy-class air travel by any direct scheduled flight of Swissair, British Airways or Dan-Air, plus a Swiss Holiday Card valid eight days, 15 days or one month. The Swiss Holiday Card entitles the holder to unlimited travel in Switzerland by rail, boat and alpine postal coach.

In addition, reductions of 25-50 per cent are offered on many funiculars and mountain railways. The Fly—Rail cost is from £85.20 per person, for return air travel London to Basle or Geneva, including a second-class eight-day Holiday Card. Flights to Zürich and Berne and from Manchester to Switzerland, with first or second-class Holiday Cards valid eight days, 15 days or one month, are also available at additional cost.

Bookings for "Fly—Rail Switzerland" can be made with travel agents, airline offices and the Swiss National Tourist Office.

SWISS HOTEL RESERVATIONS THROUGH SWISSAIR

Instant bookings in about 120 hotels in Switzerland are now available to air passengers through Swissair's new hotel reservation system "HORIS". It is an extension of the airline's passenger reservations system, linking a computer at their Zürich head office with some 50 reservation offices in Switzerland and abroad. The data of all HORIS member hotels are stored in the computer and can be instantly displayed on the visual display units in Swissair reservations offices.

The information includes the hotel's address, telephone and telex numbers, category, rates, credit card acceptance, connections to airport, special facilities such as TV, radio, air-conditioning, parking, swimming pool, restaurant etc. Individual hotels hold a number of double and single rooms, and room reservations can therefore be con-

firmed immediately. Of the participating hotels about 60 per cent are located in Basle, Berne, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne and Zürich, with the remainder distributed throughout Switzerland.

"FLOWERS OF EUROPE" — AN EXHIBITION OF COLOUR PRINTS

Desmond and Marjorie Parish specialise in the photography of wild flowers in their natural habitat. They are ardent conservationists who have used photography as a means of "collecting" specimens throughout many countries of Europe, and particularly in Switzerland's alpine areas. A delightful exhibition of colour prints taken by this husband-and-wife team is to be shown at the following centres, organised by the Midlands Museums and Art Gallery Service, Birmingham:

December, 1976 — Malvern Library, Malvern (Worcs.)

February, 1977 — Worcester City Museum, (Worcester)

The colour photographs on show, which were all made from 35 mm "Kodachrome" transparencies, are the result of many years' exploration from sea level to 11,500 feet and of considerable botanical research. The photographs were taken working from dawn to dusk in all weather conditions. During unfavourable weather, electric flash was used for close-up records.

LAUTERBRUNNEN — BALLOONING MUSEUM

In the Valley Museum located in

the old schoolhouse at Lauterbrunnen (Bernese Oberland), a section devoted to alpine free ballooning has recently been opened.

Photographs and documents are supplemented by a slide-show with sound commentary describing the development of the sport of free ballooning in the Alps, with special emphasis on ascents in the Schilthorn area since 1910.

Opening hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays 14.30-17.30; Sundays 10.30-12.30 and 14.30-17.30.

BASLE — WORLD EXHIBITION FOR SKI, SNOW AND WINTER SPORTS

The 2nd World Exhibition for Ski, Snow and Winter Sports — "SNOW '76" — will be held in the halls of the Swiss Industries Fair at Basle from 23rd October to 11th November, 1976. The competent international bodies of the winter sports sector will again be holding their congresses in Basle during this exhibition. The exhibition will comprise the following special sections:

Winter tourism and transportation, winter sports equipment and clothing, popular sport and competition sport, safety and rescue services, urbanisation and alpine environment.

SWITZERLAND FOR WINTER SPORTS

A special number of "Switzerland News", out in October, will be devoted to winter sports in Switzerland. The issue will include details of events, information on inclusive holidays, and new developments in Swiss ski resorts.

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