

Zürich's Bahnhofstrasse

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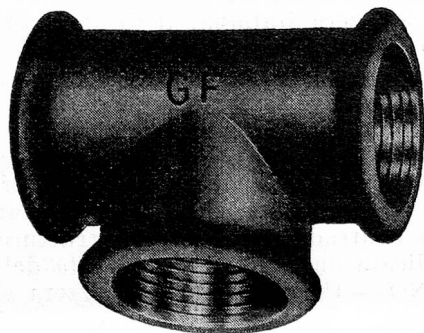
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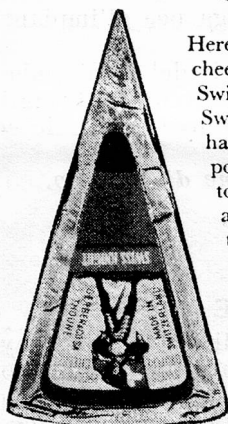
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ZURICH'S BAHNHOFSTRASSE

By SUZANNE FELCHLIN

Zürchers say, and most visitors agree, that the Bahnhofstrasse is the most elegant commercial street in Europe, if not in the world. Even the Champs Elysées has its ups and downs in quality. Even Bond Street lacks versatility. Even Madison Avenue has more grey flannel than brocade. The Bahnhofstrasse challenges all comers, regardless of length, width or latitude.

Beginning with the Bürkliplatz on the lake, where swans in the water vie with flowers in the lawns, moving up to the city market, past Alfa Romeo, the London Shop and the Swiss Handicraft store the street flows into the Paradeplatz. This triangle of traffic is flanked with riches and goodies on every side. Sprüngli's, the teashop, massive banks, jewellers, porcelain and silver, oriental carpets, watches and furs, silk and styles at Grieders, and right in the middle, a kiosk laden with newspapers published the world over and the kind of chocolate bars made only in Switzerland. The street leads on to one temptation after another.

More jewellers, leathers for purses and luggage, a shop for milady's gloves, another for her hose. Two sports shops with marvellous cut woollies for winter and nothing-at-alls for summer. Skis and skates, snorkels and sailboats. A wonderland food store, across the way a chocolatier. Pralinés and pearls. A cinema and a camera shop. A store full of departments and Mr. Pestalozzi's park full of children. A fine book publisher in a tall ancient house and a travel agency in a taller modern one. Peruvian tobacco? Chinese tea? American blue-jeans? The perfumes of Araby? All on the Bahnhofstrasse.

And at the end, behind the neat policeman in his white gauntlets and the spilling fountain, is der Bahnhof. La Gare. The Station. The Depot. Looking a bit like Queen Victoria in stone, not very handsome but ever so assuring. The punctual trains slipping cleanly in and out will take you anywhere in Europe . . . but chances are you won't go. Rather have an excellent lunch at the station restaurant and then walk down the other side of the Bahnhofstrasse.

From lake to locomotives it is only a 15 minutes walk — with blinders. But the most hurried businessman, the most flurried tourist, the oldest and most bored citizen of Zurich can't help, can't resist, can't avoid lingering and looking in the show windows. The brilliance of these displays is due to more than enterprising merchants and imaginative decorators. The Association of the Zurich Bahnhofstrasse is largely responsible for the integrated visual appeal of the whole area. The association was founded in 1955 by individual firms on the Bahnhofstrasse for the precise purpose of maintaining the street's reputation and being responsible for enhancing it if possible. Hermann Sprüngli was the first president, and Franz Türlér took over his chair upon Mr. Sprüngli's death.

Membership fees are small, but enthusiasm and private initiative are enormous in the association. One of the main projects has been in co-ordinating the displays and advertising themes. Once it was Flower Week, wherein 20,000 Swiss tulips blossomed out the length of the street. Another time the windows were all keyed to French gastronomy. The Berlin Week made us acquainted with this isolated capital. Various

airlines once combined with various fashion houses in advertising elegant travel clothing and comfortable travel. The association has even been successful, and gratifyingly so, in persuading the banks to replace their grilled windows with attractive and informative show cases.

Along with its commercial cares, the association has civil interests. They are active in the city planning of new one-way streets, erection of new street lighting, staggering noon-times to fit in with heavy traffic, etc. They are of course greatly interested in the proposed rebuilding of the Bahnhof itself.

Customers, window-shoppers, tourists and citizens alike who enjoy and take pride in the Bahnhofstrasse may well echo the congratulation of the newspaper "Die Zürcher Woche." "Although the Association of the Zurich Bahnhofstrasse is primarily interested in increasing the buying desire of the public, we are still very pleased with it when this occurs in such a charming and pleasant manner."

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SOCIAL MEETING

(open to all Members of the Swiss Colony)

Tuesday, February 16th, 1960, at 7.45 p.m.

at the

Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, N.W.3.

Monsieur W. ROCH, of the Swiss Embassy, has kindly consented to give us a causerie (in French) with coloured slides, on "JAPAN". Discussion to follow.

BUFFET SERVICE with coffee or tea, 3/6d. inclusive, from 6.30 p.m. onwards.

Will Members and Friends intending to be present please inform the Warden of Swiss Hostel not later than Tuesday, February 16th, between 11 a.m. and noon.

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