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Swissness

A huge thank you for the Swiss Review; our only source of "swissness". My father emigrated to South Africa in the 1960s. Because he was Swiss, I too was eligible for a Swiss passport, which I have cherished ever since my father came home with the large, bright-red passport bearing the white cross. After completing my national service in South Africa in 1990, I was fortunate enough to be able to visit Switzerland, a beautiful country that has remained etched in my memory like a fairytale. Today I have a 13-year-old son whom I tell the few things I know about the land of his grandfather. I hope that my financial means will enable me to send him to Switzerland one day so that he can appreciate what all Swiss men and women already know: it is a wonderful country. Until that day, I eagerly await every new issue of the Swiss Review, thanks to which I can keep in touch with lovely Switzerland. After all, reading the Swiss Review is the only way that many of the Swiss abroad can maintain their "swissness".

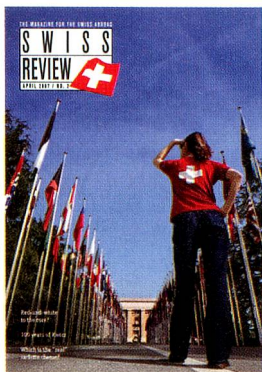
JURGEN VOGT, SOUTH AFRICA

(BY E-MAIL)

Swiss railways

Because my wife is originally from Switzerland and she still has three sisters and other family members there, I am an avid reader of the Swiss Review.

In your April issue I saw three graphics on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Switzerland and what it meant to people. Over the years, I have spent nine extended holidays in your country, and I believe that your railway system is your greatest asset. It is the gateway to Europe. When I ask Australians



who have visited Switzerland for their opinion, they all praise the Swiss railways, their staff, the friendly service and good advice. I have already written to the head of the SBB twice to praise every aspect of the Swiss rail-

ways, and have received books and a special train tie from him in return. I already look forward to my tenth visit to Switzerland.

GEOFFREY MEDCALF, TUNCURRY, AUSTRALIA

Switzerland's armed citizens

I am concerned about the fact that the Security Commission wants to stop soldiers storing ammunition for their assault rifle at home. If this recommendation were implemented, it would disarm the entire Swiss militia in one fell swoop. It would also suggest that the Swiss government no longer trusts its citizens to carry weapons. The right to bear arms is the symbol of a free society. By contrast, any society that restricts or denies this right is a slave society in the mould of the former Soviet Union and Nazi Germany under Hitler. I hope that the government has the good sense to reject the Commission's advice or at least put the matter to a referendum.

ERWIN ALBER, BANGKOK

(BY E-MAIL)

Thank you

Many thanks for the Swiss Review, which manages in just a few pages to keep us informed about the major social developments in our beloved homeland. I always read it with great interest and wish the entire Swiss Review team all the best for the future.

ELISABETH DONNET-DESCARTES, FRANCE (BY E-MAIL)

Swiss delicacies

Where can you get the best polenta, the tenderest sauren mocken and real capuns? And who produces the fruitiest Merlot? There are countless restaurant guides, but none offer as many recipes and information on all aspects of eating and drinking in Switzerland than the two-volume "Urchuchi" by Martin Weiss, published by Rotpunktverlag. One volume is dedicated to the Ticino and Misox regions and presents 45 restaurants and 30 grotti, plus 200 shopping tips and 120 recipes to try out yourself. The other volume of Urchuchi covers 70 restaurants in German-speaking Switzerland and the Grisons region and offers 300 shopping tips and 150 recipes to choose from.

Urchuchi is also a voyage of discovery through Switzerland's culinary heritage. In compiling his guide, Martin Weiss not only spoke to the country's top gourmets. He also went in search of an "authentic feel". The result is two beautiful and accessible volumes, with a third on the culinary delights of western Switzerland due to appear next year, rounding off a veritable treasure trove for everyone who loves genuine local Swiss cuisine.

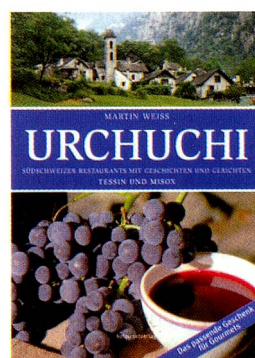
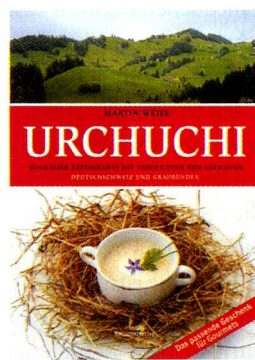
There are portraits of master chefs like mushroom specialist Thuri Maag and farmhouse cooks like 80-year-old Lorenza Caminada from Vrin, the last person alive who knows how to make amplus, a Grisons dumpling. You'll find everything from Glarus "net" roast to ziger bananas, Zug röteli to freshwater crabs and delicious chügeli pâté, and any other traditional Swiss recipe you could possibly think of – not to mention interesting articles and extensive information about the various products.

Even those well-acquainted with Ticino are bound to find tasty inside information on hitherto unfamiliar delights in the volume covering the cuisine of Ticino and Misox. For instance zincarlin, a peppered fresh milk cheese; cicitt, an apparently exquisite goat sausage that can only be found in the Maggia valley; and polenta

made from red cornmeal, which the Ticinese have starting growing again. No fewer than 120 recipes have been gathered from Ticino's cucina povera, capturing a chapter of the region's cultural history that can easily be tested at home, including mousse made from goat cream cheese, chestnut gnocchi, coniglio al forno, busecca and Ticinese bread cake. While some of the recipes are from ancient farming families and passed down from one generation to the next, others have been developed recently or revived by top Ticinese chefs.

Urchuchi is both appetising and packed with wonderful photographs, fascinating articles and interesting information. Now we can't wait for the third volume dedicated to the cuisine of western Switzerland.

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Urchuchi is published in German by Rotpunktverlag, Postfach, CH-8026 Zurich. Price: CHF 59. www.rotpunktverlag.ch, www.urchuchi.ch.