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Little gems

A special place to stay in Berne

A new bed and breakfast opened in Berne at the beginning of April. The small guest house is situated very close to the world-famous "Zentrum Paul Klee" and is therefore called "Bed & Breakfast Im Klee". The property built in the 1940s, which has a large garden and swimming pool, has been stylishly furnished with great attention to detail. The five rooms – all of which are located on the

south-facing side of the building with fantastic views of the Alps – cost between 75 and 130 Swiss francs per night (single and double rooms, discounts apply for longer stays). Two rooms have running water, while showers and bathrooms are located on the landings. Parking spaces are available in front of the building, and public transport and the well-known "Schöngrün" restaurant are nearby.

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Im Klee, Bed & Breakfast, Melchenbühlweg 8, 3013 Berne +41 31 931 35 35
www.imklee.ch, schlafen@imklee.ch



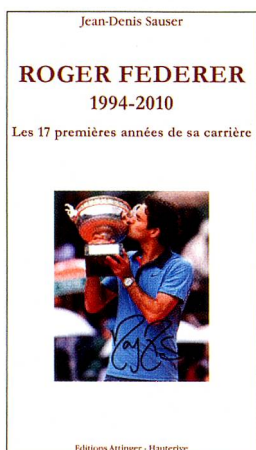
Roger Federer – 1994 to 2010

Neuchâtel-born Jean-Denis Sauser is a fan who has written a book about his idol. The research work he has done on Roger Federer is monumental. While the biography is rather concise, the information provided on matches, records and opponents is encyclopaedic. The book even contains some revealing anecdotes about the champion's ambitions when he was still a teenager. When asked at the age of 15 what his goals in tennis were, he replied: "To become world number 1." The author manages to incorpo-

rate everything – a detailed list of honours including a set-by-set breakdown, characteristics of his game, train-

ers, unforgettable matches, defeats as number 1, quotations from opponents and tennis greats, his life off-court and almost a hundred pages on all of Federer's matches. Some of the proceeds from the book will go to the Roger Federer Foundation, which works to help disadvantaged children in South Africa. This book provides a highly enjoyable insight into the career of the greatest player of all time.

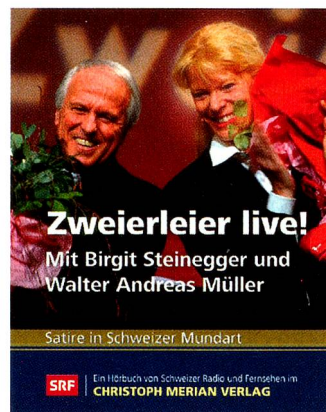
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"Roger Federer 1994-2010 – Les 17 premières années de sa carrière", Jean-Denis Sauser,

Wonderful sketches

They are in a class of their own. Few Swiss performers have mastered the art of parody and satire as well as Birgit Steinegger and Walter Andreas Müller. Their "Zweierleier" programme could be heard on Swiss radio every Saturday afternoon for 28 years. Absolutely nobody was spared. Steinegger and Müller parodied politicians, business leaders, sportspeople and even the Pope.



Their show was dropped at the end of last year as a cost-cutting measure. A selection of their sketches is now available on CD. This includes a eulogy for banking confidentiality, which had "been sick for some time", for example, along with a parody of Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey and the Axis of Evil, as well as a conversation between Signora Schruppattelli, a cleaner at the Federal Palace, and Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler on the wine glut in Valais. These humorous, probing recordings can still be enjoyed years after their production.

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Zweierleier live! Birgit Steinegger und Walter Andreas Müller; Christoph Merian Verlag, Basel; audio book 80 mins; price around CHF 20; www.merianverlag.ch

Bulletins

Promoting Italian

The status enjoyed by Italian in Swiss schools is too low. This is the conclusion reached by the Swiss Commission for the Federal School-Leaving Certificate (SMK). A survey in the cantons revealed that on average only 13 % of school pupils at Swiss grammar schools choose Italian as a basic, main or optional subject. The cantons of Geneva and Grisons came out on top with an average of 30 %. A working group is now to propose measures to promote the appeal of Italian.

Right to vote for Swiss abroad

The Great Council of Basel-Stadt is supporting the right of the Swiss abroad to vote at Council of States elections. It has submitted a motion setting out this demand to the Executive Council after approving it by a large majority. The Executive had previously opposed the right to vote for the Swiss abroad.

Criminal investigation against former Federal Councillor Blocher

Zurich's public prosecutor's office has opened a criminal investigation against former Federal Councillor and Minister of Justice Christoph Blocher on account of his role in the affair concerning Philipp Hildebrand, the former President of the National Bank. The public prosecutor's office is investigating whether Blocher committed a criminal offence in passing on confidential bank data. A house search was carried out at Blocher's villa in Herrliberg on 20 March. At the time of going to press, the committee concerned had not yet decided

whether Christoph Blocher's parliamentary immunity would be lifted. This would be necessary for any criminal prosecution.

Mani Matter now in Schwyz

The exhibition on the Bernese singer-songwriter, "Mani Matter (1936–1972)", at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich in 2011 was a huge success. Consequently, the exhibition has now gone on display again, this time at the Forum of Swiss History in Schwyz.

It will run from 31 March to 16 September 2012.

Fewer employees, higher salaries

35,618 people were employed by the federal administration at the end of 2011. This is 162 fewer than at the end of 2010. They are divided among 32,179 full-time positions. Salaries have increased – the average gross annual salary stood at 117,755 Swiss francs last year, 2,163 francs or 1.9 % more than in the previous year. This is indicated by the federal government report on personnel management for 2011. The federal administration still employs fewer women than the Swiss average. The Federal Council has set corresponding objectives. It expects the proportion of women to reach 29 to 34 % in the middle salary bands and 16 to 20 % in the higher bands. 5 % of federal government employees are trainees.

Almost a million per day

The SBB transported 977,000 rail customers a day last year. This represents an increase of 26,000 people compared with the previous year. Passengers travelled a total of over 17.5 billion kilometres.

Quotations

"When consumed by anger, people usually act stupidly rather than cleverly."

Jeremias Gotthelf, pastor and novelist

"Constantly reacting too late is a genetic disorder within Swiss politics."

Dick Marty, former FDP member of the Council of States and Council of Europe

"You need to hit the ground running and then accelerate."

Federal Councillor Alain Berset

"Where freedom reigns, even labour is repose."

Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), Swiss doctor and botanist

"People usually only learn during wars and personal crises – and rarely of their own free will."

David Bosshart, futurologist and head of the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute

"Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former."

Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

"Are Swiss banks now supposed to collect taxes for other states?"

Oswald Grübel, former CEO of Credit Suisse and UBS

"We are living in a dangerous age. Man has controlled nature before learning to control himself."

Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard

"I felt dreadful when the BDP was formed."

Hans Grunder, outgoing President of the Conservative Democratic Party (BDP)



Daniela W. and David O. returned to Switzerland on 15 March after being held hostage for nine months in Pakistan. Speculation has since been rife regarding the circumstances of their escape, which is how the couple describe it. Experts on the situation in Pakistan say that an escape would have been almost impossible and that it is extremely likely that Switzerland and Pakistan made concessions to the Taliban. This may have involved the payment of a ransom or the release of prisoners. The incident has triggered a debate in Switzerland about how much a state should do for its citizens abroad who negligently place themselves in danger. Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter said that it was imperative that we "reflect on individual responsibility for personal safety and the limitations of state intervention", though he, of course, condemned "the kidnapping industry".