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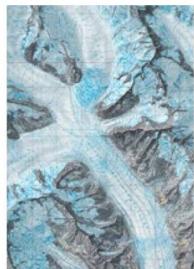
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Swiss cartography – In the land of razor-sharp contours



Wonderful to read, learnt a lot! I have just one thing to add. Marc Lettau wrote the following about an imaginary sun casting its shadow from a north-westerly direction: "The advantage of the misplaced sun is that it allows the cartographical reality to be presented extremely vividly and therefore realistically." I think that's simply because we've got used to it. To me, it makes more sense that the first creators of these artworks placed the imaginary sun in the top left, where their table lamp was, in order to get an idea of the relief. It's quite possible that most of them were right-handed. The aerial and satellite pictures that we are accustomed to today tend to have the shadow coming from the sun in the east because the pictures are often taken in the morning. That's why we sometimes see the relief the wrong way round, with the mountains as holes and the rivers flowing up on a ridge.

HANS HURNI, SWITZERLAND

The little cartographic jokes hidden in the rocks and lakes are just wonderful! Who says the Swiss don't have a sense of humour? And such cartographic jokes transcend national boundaries. The UK's Ordnance Survey has a few as well.

ROBERT CAMPBELL, ENGLAND

Excellent! I'm reminded of just how good our maps are whenever I look for their equivalents abroad...

FRÉDÉRIC VOGT, CHILE

An icon of Swiss wine – The wine-grower Marie Thérèse Chappaz



Well done and thank you! Fully is a legendary fruit-growing paradise for people living in the three valleys where I spent my childhood. I fondly remember the days when donkeys reigned supreme and the splendid great Troillet chalet in La Neuvez, now gone up in smoke, back in the 60s. What Val Ferret has lost in authenticity, it has gained in regrettable developments! My next glass of Petite Arvine will be drunk to the health of the Troillet family.

CHARLES ROCHAT, SWITZERLAND

Editorial – Accounts on the same terms

Why do Swiss banks always justify their high account fees by pointing to the huge cost of collaborating with other countries? I know people from England and Germany who live here in Spain and have accounts in their home countries – without such horrendous fees! If you're living on a basic Swiss state pension and have to pay out 300 francs of it per year to have an account in Switzerland, that's outrageous.

RENATO BESOMI, SPAIN

The behaviour of our banks hits many Swiss Abroad hard. Reasons such as security or risk almost label ordinary people like us criminals, while the bigwigs in the upper echelons of the banks remain unpunished for the adventures they have with their customers' money. An account costs me 360 francs a year, compared with interest of less than 100 francs a year. Is that justifiable? Can our MPs really do nothing about these financial institutions, whose reputations have been so severely tarnished?

PIERRE STACHER, AUSTRALIA

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