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# REGIONAL EDITION

## UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

### EDITORIAL

This is the last issue of the Swiss Review until October. As the editorial deadline is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup>, it is not possible to publish here the results of the elections to CSA.

■ *These will be announced online during the FOSSUK'S AGM on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June. Please check FOSSUK's social media for all information. The positive aspect which I would like to draw your attention to is that this year we have been able to vote online. This is an opportunity that for now is granted only to the Swiss community in the UK.*

■ With sadness but immense gratitude we say farewell to our Ambassador Alexandre Fasel, who will be back in Geneva after four years spent here. His service has been decisive during the Brexit process as well as the coronavirus pandemic.

■ *The SR would like to thank Ambassador Fasel on behalf of the whole community to which he has been so passionately committed. On these pages, you can read his interview and farewell message. Thank you!*



GIOIA PALMIERI,  
«UK & IRELAND PAGES»

### 4 YEARS IN THE UK: THE BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS, THE PANDEMIC, THE BIKING AND FORMULA ONE'S CHALLENGES



*Swiss Review: Ambassador Fasel, these four years have been signed by an intense period of changes and fundamental challenges for the UK. How was your own experience?*

**Mr Alexandre Fasel:** In my role as Ambassador, there have been two major elements, which were

constant in my work: the first was Brexit and the implementation of the strategy of the Federal Council 'Mind the Gap'. So, Brexit and its aftermath have been definitely the guiding theme of my stay. The second central feature was the COVID-19 pandemic which has been a new experience, for everyone. The main point for me was: how much the pandemic would affect my work and my projects? After ensuring everyone was safe and after implementing all the necessary measures, it was crucial to understanding the impact brought by the virus and what lessons could be learned. It is now clear that, if we consider the actual hardcore diplomatic work such as negotiations or consultations with the authorities, it did not suffer because everything was moved online. We were in a phase of the 'Mind the Gap' strategy where the direction to take was clear. This part of the diplomatic life can be done online, but the life of an Embassy finds its expression in events, in representation, in engaging with people face-to-face. This part of the work just vanished and could not be completely moved online.

*SR: How the relationship between the UK and Switzerland has changed during these four years you served as Ambassador?*

**AF:** With Brexit, the UK has suddenly become a 'third country' in Europe so that Switzerland and the UK shared the same characteristic: to be economically and financially important countries outside of the EU. Our relationships were already excellent before Brexit, but from the moment the UK left the EU, our British counterparts took a more active interest in Switzerland: they wanted to hear from us, to know better how

life outside of the EU is and how a third country can defend its interests. These questions, together with the implementation of the 'Mind the Gap' strategy, led to a remarkable intensification of the bilateral relationship between the UK and Switzerland, taking the form of the 'Mind the Gap' strategy as well.



*SR: Would you like to mention any particular achievement that you feel to be proud of, please?*

**AF:** Pride is always a dangerous concept. In a certain way, it is difficult to achieve diplomacy alone. Through effective teamwork, I would say that the objective concerning the 'Mind the Gap' strategy has been fulfilled in a very satisfactory manner. Another element that I would like to highlight is a project which we called 'Precision Engineering': it was aimed at bringing together and promoting closer cooperation between high tech industries in Switzerland and the UK. We used Formula One as the vector to bring those two high tech industries together. Actually, Formula One represents two factors: the sports competition and the world's foremost technology accelerator. Technological progress is faster in Formula One than in aerospace or in defence.

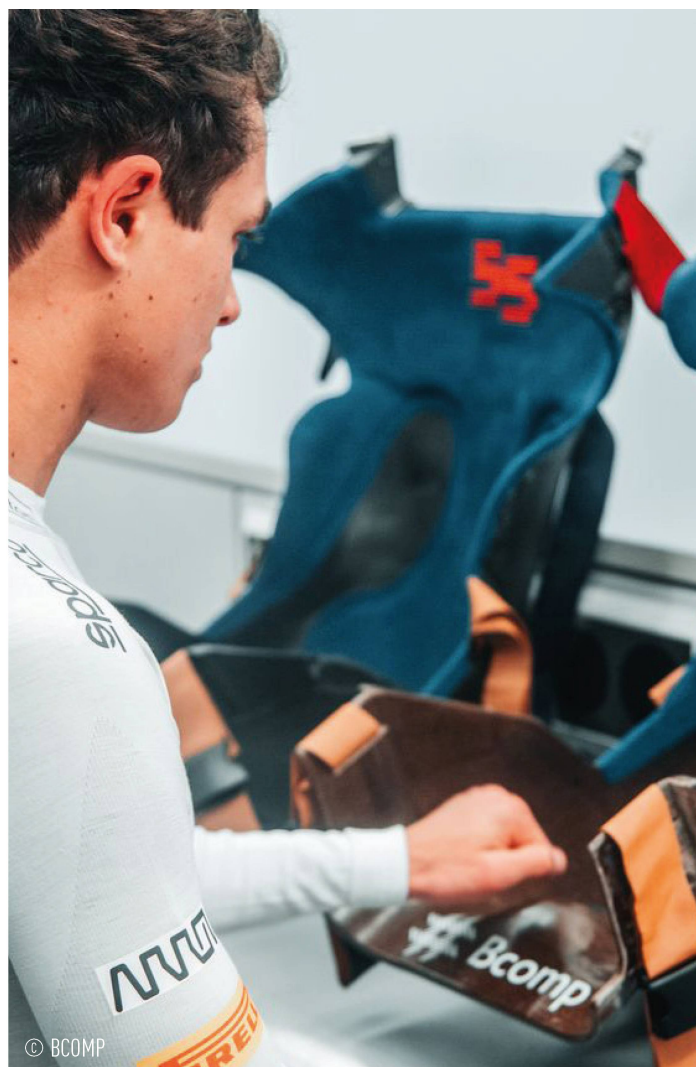


*SR: This is new to me. Could you please explain this better?*

**AF:** Formula One is a very competitive sport and there are considerable financial means involved. Every weekend or every second weekend, there is a race. It is high tech at the very sharp end of things. And the technology keeps evolving for competitive reasons. The other aspect is that seven of the ten Formula One teams are based in the Midlands of England that is the centre of the world for Formula One: it is called the 'Motorsport Valley'. We also have a Formula One team in Switzerland which races as Alfa Romeo. The idea was to bring together those two entrepreneurial industries. If those two worlds could meet and sell services and products to one another – but also to team up and use technology to penetrate commercially other markets, like automotive, aerospace, marine, and other sectors – then this would be in the mutual interest of both countries. The British side – which is undisputedly number one in that domain of technology acceleration through motorsports – has found an interest in buying technology from the Swiss. It has been a very positive experience. That's quite an achievement. We were able to sell the services and products into the heartland of Formula One and paved the way for sharing high tech services from both countries: the vector of Formula One has led to a whole array of new opportunities.

*SR: Can you mention please just another example, a concrete example of how it has worked?*

**AF:** For example, one of the technologies that are evolving through Formula One concerns materials, which have to be extremely lightweight and yet extremely strong. The Formula One materials industry has perfected the carbon fibre technology which is now being very widely used. But unfortunately, it requires a lot of carbon to be consumed and, consequently, this material entails a significant CO<sub>2</sub> footprint. In Switzerland, there is a company called Bcomp – a spin-off of the École Polytechnique of Lausanne – which uses flax fibres to reinforce the materials. The McLaren Formula One team is now partnering with Bcomp to pioneer sustainable light weighting in the sport, but the BComp technology can also be used in automotive, motorsport, skis, bikes, tennis rackets, everything can be made with natural fibres: it is sustainable and green. We helped to bring this technology to Britain where they are trying to adopt it due to the pressure we all have to bring society towards zero CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.



*SR: And well, just a very simple question to know what drives you to get so involved with the Swiss community despite so many other commitments?*

**AF:** It was a great joy, a very fulfilling and gratifying experience to engage with the local community here. Engaging with the Swiss community is part and parcel of the Swiss diplomat's role, which is to implement the foreign policy of the Federal Council. It is all about safeguarding and promoting the interests of our country, which ultimately are the interests of the Swiss citizens at home and abroad. What we actually do for the Swiss nationals can take the form of concrete negotiations like the one around the Citizens' Rights Agreements (the settled status), but it can also take the form of regular participation in the social life of the community.

*SR: Could you tell us a moment that has been meaningful for you during these four years?*

**AF:** I really dread those questions because the life of a diplomat is very rich in human experience and I really feel hard-pressed to make choices. One unique experience I had with my wife Nicole has to do with the pandemic. During the first lockdown, we took up cycling. Every evening, after the job, we would take our bikes and go outside for an hour or two (at the weekends even a bit longer). Finding yourself alone in what shortly before was a buzzing metropolis has been a surreal experience. There was nobody there, this brought us venturing out of the centre of London, from west to east, north and south. We visited most of the 32 boroughs of the capital. So I think I am the first Swiss ambassador who has cycled so many miles and so widely across London.





# AGM 2021

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June PM  
Virtual/London tbc

## FOSSUK: AGM 2021

The Federation of Swiss Societies UK (FOSSUK) Annual General Meeting (AGM) and CSA UK Delegates Ratification taking place on Saturday afternoon 2pm on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Due to uncertainty around Covid, the event is provisionally online. Register to attend by the 17<sup>th</sup> of June via the FOSSUK website (relevant documents are available to download too).

### HIGHLIGHT:

Announcement of the new 2021–2025 UK Delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA)

### Special guests:

Mr Laurent Perriard; Deputy General Consular Affairs (FDFA)

Mr Remo Gysin; President, Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

[www.swiss-societies.co.uk/AGM](http://www.swiss-societies.co.uk/AGM)

## CSA ELECTION UPDATE: BIG INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL SWISS COMMUNITY FOR THE FIRST E-VOTING

For the first time ever worldwide, the Swiss community in the UK had the opportunity to vote online for the candidates standing for the Council of Swiss Abroad (CSA). This is also the second election open to all citizens registered with the Swiss Embassy. This year, thanks to a team effort involving volunteers, the Federation of Swiss Society's (FOSSUK) committee members and the Swiss Embassy London – the Swiss in the UK voters have had very different elections.

‘We see a much bigger involvement by the online Swiss community’ explained Camilla Ghislanzoni, the UK's elections country representative. ‘The UK is one of the very few countries that has opened this process to the public: it's no longer exclusively open to formal Swiss clubs as in the past – now members of the public can apply to stand as a candidate and every eligible Swiss living in the UK can also vote’.

The increased use of Social media in the past 4 years, but especially during the pandemic lockdowns, has really contributed much to the awareness of the Elections leading to higher participation. ‘The UK is the first country to offer eVoting’. We were able to do this thanks to the knowledge of Ané-Mari Peter from on-IDLE Ltd and her team of technical experts. Previously many people did not have access to a printer and found postal voting cumbersome (unless they received the Swiss Review in paper format), whereas now this is no longer an obstacle. Of

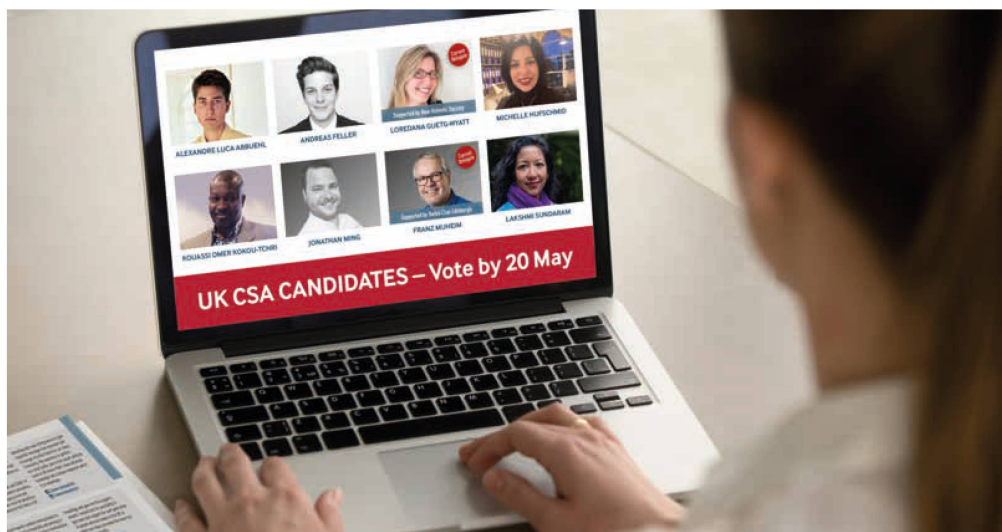
course, a postal vote is still an option and has been used by a handful this year, however the uptake of eVoting and simplified data processing for the Embassy and Elections team has been remarkable.

During this election, the candidates' campaign has been particularly rich in information shared. ‘FOSSUK has used its website to provide full biographies, social media links and video presentations from each, with the videos also shared on social media increasing engagement with voters’. Every candidate has then been able to use their own various ways to campaign: some created a website, they campaigned on social media, some joined online meetings and events. FOSSUK held an online webinar and the Swiss in the UK Facebook group invited candidates to a coffee morning

zoom further raising awareness and giving the community a real opportunity to get to know the candidates on a personal level.

‘We should not forget that the Embassy is instrumental in the whole process: staff check that the candidates and the voters meet the eligibility criteria (citizenship, 18 or older, registered at the Embassy in London and to the voting register). This ensures the validity of the elections process and subsequent results’. In keeping with the spirit of eVoting, the Embassy promoted the Elections on their official social media channels and the official email newsletter. We are very grateful for the Embassy's support and the staff involved. They have been amazing (and patient) throughout the new process.

[www.swiss-societies.co.uk/elections](http://www.swiss-societies.co.uk/elections)





## AMBASSADOR'S FAREWELL MESSAGE: "IT HAS BEEN A REAL PRIVILEGE TO MEET SO MANY OF YOU"

Dear compatriots

After four eventful years, I left London at the end of May to take up my new role as Switzerland's Special Representative for Science Diplomacy, based in Geneva.

During my time in London, I was closely involved in the bilateral negotiations between Switzerland and the UK and the Swiss government's 'Mind the Gap' strategy, to ensure a smooth transition of relations both during and after Brexit. I was also delighted to oversee several Swiss Ambassador's Award concerts, which enabled us to showcase a range of incredibly talented classical musicians across the UK. Last year saw entries for the award extended to British or British-trained musicians for the first time, in the spirit of highlighting the close ties between the UK and Switzerland and helping to foster intercultural exchange.

It has been a real privilege for my wife Nicole and I to meet so many of you during our time here and see for ourselves the tremendous work you do in so many ways to nurture ties of culture, commerce and friendship between the UK and Switzerland. My successor as Ambassador, Mr Markus Leitner, is lucky to be arriving here later in the summer to find such an established and resourceful network of Swiss citizens.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to represent Switzerland in the United Kingdom, and to be able to travel around the country and meet many of you personally at events and gatherings. I will certainly never forget the four enjoyable years I have spent here as Ambassador and I will take many happy memories away with me.

With my very best wishes for the future,

*Alexandre Fasel*

*Ambassador of Switzerland to the United Kingdom, 2017–2021*



Mr Fasel has been appointed in 2017.

### HEALTH INSURANCE: TRAVELLING IN CH AND EU

For information regarding the application for the UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) and UK European Health Insurance Card (new UK EHIC) please check the 'Brexit FAQ' page on the Embassy website and the Embassy's newsletter

## TIME IS RUNNING OUT! APPLY TO THE EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME BY THE 30 JUNE DEADLINE.

Have all your Swiss family members, friends and colleagues in the UK already applied to the EU Settlement Scheme? Please check!

There are now only weeks to go for Swiss citizens in the UK to apply for settled or pre-settled status under the UK government's EU Settlement Scheme, with the **30 June deadline** fast approaching.

Swiss citizens who wish to continue living in the UK **must apply before this deadline**. This includes those with a British spouse and those who already have a 'document certifying permanent residence'. Those who have 'Indefinite Leave to Enter or Remain (ILR)' are also strongly encouraged to apply. However, those

who also hold British citizenship do not need to apply and are ineligible to do so.

If you have not yet registered and now feel ready to do so, you can **start your application right away** via one of the methods mentioned on the dedicated UK government website: [www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families](http://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families)

Smart phone users with an iPhone 7 and above or an Android 6.0 and above can apply using the government's ID Document Check app ([www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-eu-exit-id-document-check-app](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-eu-exit-id-document-check-app)). If you apply in this way it removes the need to send your passport away for verification and means you can **complete your application in around half an hour**.

If you have already registered then no further action is required on your part.

If there is anything about the Settlement Scheme that you are uncertain about, our **Brexit FAQ page** ([www.eda.admin.ch/london/brexit](http://www.eda.admin.ch/london/brexit)) contains lots of information and can answer many of the common queries that you may have.

Please don't let the **30 June deadline** pass you by without applying. **Don't be late, remember the date and don't delay, apply today!**





## A NEW SWISS BAKERY: THE MISSION TO BRING A REAL TASTE OF SWITZERLAND TO LONDON AND THE REST OF THE UK

We are Andre and Tanja from Swiss Bread! Andre is from Zurich and Tanja from Bern and we both studied at Belvoirpark Hotel-fachschule Zürich to become Hoteliers and Restaurateurs, fuelled by a passion for good and memorable food. We spent our early career working in amazing hotels and restaurants in various parts of the world.



Andre trained as a chef at the Relais & Châteaux Hotel Spluegenschloss in Zurich, had work experience at the 5 star Browns Hotel in London before heading up Food and Beverage at a 5 star resort in Thailand. Tanja worked in various Relais & châteaux hotels across Switzerland. In 2008, we had a crazy and ambitious dream – introducing Swiss quality breads to restaurants and hotels in London. This was not an easy task, contacting hotels and restaurants and setting up meetings was close to impossible and competition fierce but we persevered for many months as we knew we had very special products and that you can't find better quality than our Swiss breads! We had numerous setbacks but with determination and patience, the quality of the products did the talking and convinced some of the most discerning places to order from us. Chef Anton Mosimann was one of the 1st chef to believe in us and our products and we became the bread supplier for their private club and events in 2009. We have met some very interesting

people along the way. One of our highlights was being inside Buckingham Palace for a meeting with the head chef! Places such as the Savoy or the Ivy Group still order from Swiss Bread to this date and the feedback received (and still do) from chefs and customers alike was what continued to motivate us when times were really tough. Doing business in the UK with no previous knowledge of the country or the market was a giant learning curve, but with Swiss Quality and Swiss customer service, we continued to build trust across the hospitality industry. All our breads are made with 100% Swiss flours and ingredients. Swiss quality and passion is behind everything we do.

We always wanted to open a bakery making our breads and bakes available directly to the public and bring a real taste of Switzerland to the UK. In late 2019, we took the plunge and decided to open a shop in Richmond, West London. Little did we know that Covid-19 was looming and we opened our shop on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, the 1st day of the UK lockdown. It was tough but also a blessing as supplying hotels and restaurants went to an abrupt stop. We had amazing feedback from day 1, cus-

tomers absolutely loved the breads, pastries and cakes, queuing around the block for a taste of Switzerland. It's so incredibly exciting when we introduce our customers to Bûrli or Zopf or Raclette and see them coming back every week for more or when kids (and adults!) look at our cuckoo clock and ask what this is. Recently, we have introduced our Swiss Deli Food Shop importing loads of Swiss staples to the UK every week such as Rivella, Zweifel Paprika chips, Biberli, bratwursts and a lot more – we stock now about 50 Swiss favourites and we constantly add to our assortment. Those are available at the bakery and for delivery all across the UK by shopping online through our website [www.swiss-bread.com](http://www.swiss-bread.com). Our mission to bring a real taste of Switzerland to London and the rest of the UK continues!

ANDRE AND TANJA

## IRL: APPEAL FOR SWISS PEOPLE TO JOIN THE CLUB

The Swiss Club Ireland has been active in the territory for many years. It organises various initiatives and meetings aimed at Swiss citizens residing in the Republic of Ireland. We invite all interested parties to reach

us and get in touch with us. As soon as the anti-covid rules allow it, we will organise meetings open to all.

For information, please contact:  
[swissclubireland@hotmail.com](mailto:swissclubireland@hotmail.com)

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## LONDON 3-8 AUGUST: MAURICE KASPAR'S WATERCOLOURS SHOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UK

Due to COVID-19 the exhibition of watercolour paintings by the late Swiss architect and artist, Maurice André KASPAR, that was first promoted to be held at the Royal Watercolour Society's Bankside Gallery in London 26–31 January this year had to be postponed, and will now take place in the same location 3–8 August.

Its organiser, Swiss born René Dee (and the grandson of Maurice) has made significant progress in creating awareness of it, both here and in Switzerland, including continued support from the New Helvetic Society. It will be the first time that Maurice Kaspar's beautiful and historically important wa-

tercolours will be shown in the UK. René has gained important support from the President of the Royal Watercolour Society who has kindly agreed to be present at the opening. The Town of Carouge (where Maurice lived) and where he was commissioned to paint 33 definitive paintings of the town that are permanently lodged in its Museum has already promoted it, and will send several of its representatives to also attend. The pre-Exhibition Catalogue can be viewed at [www.papermine.com/booklet/31702502](http://www.papermine.com/booklet/31702502) and selected prints of the paintings will be available and on sale at the exhibition itself.



Exhibition at  
the Royal  
Watercolour  
Society's  
Bankside  
Gallery.



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## WINNERS

The winners of the quiz  
'Uncle Ruedi's Alphorn' children  
book are:

- 1) Keana Piper-Gidman from Broadstairs, Kent
- 2) Hodel's family children from Liverpool
- 3) Tommaso Starnini from Bristol

Congratulation! The Swiss Review  
offers them a book's free copy to enjoy  
with the family.



## UTL: COOKING MASTERCLASS

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, we took part to a great cooking masterclass via zoom with the acclaimed ticinese chef Kira Ghidoni!

Under her expert guidance we prepared a delicious ticinese recipe of 'Capretto al forno' with roast potato, lamb's lettuce salad and strawberry with sabayon for dessert.

It has been wonderful to cook together with Kira, and get to learn how she turned her passion for cooking into her profession. Her kindness, the fondness for simple, genuine ingredients, the inspiration she got from her Granddad in Ticino and the encounters she made during her travelling are some of the unique ingredients that make her cooking a very special experience!

EMILIE MARTIGNONI  
UTL PRESIDENT

Swiss chef  
Kira Ghidoni.

## A CHEF'S LIFE: FROM SWITZERLAND TO AUSTRALIA TO TASTE THE WORLD

I was born and bred in Switzerland (in Ticino, the Italian part) and I began cooking when I was 4–5 years old.

I went to high school but after 6 months I realised that it wasn't for me and one day I woke up thinking 'what if I become a Chef'? Within 5 years I finished two apprenticeship one as a Chef and another as a Pastry Chef. After working for 2 years in the French part of Switzerland I decided to leave my country to improve my skills and I've got a call from London.

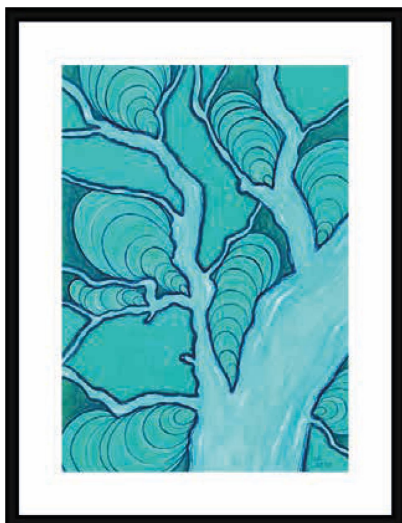
It was hard at first, not knowing a word of English, but the passion for my job took over my fears. I had a blast and worked as a Pastry Chef in some of the top restaurants in London; Mosimann's, Murano by Angela Hartnett and Fera at Claridge's only to name a

few. After 5 years I've decided to move to Australia, the country I've dreamt of for so many years. Here too I found a job as executive Pastry Chef at Vue de Monde and worked there for 1 year. I moved to New Zealand in 2017 and decided to take care of the dessert menu of The Grove but I wanted to go back into the kitchen to learn more.

So I did and within 8 months I was promoted Head Chef. I met my partner Fabien and after running the restaurant together for over a year we decided it was time to come back to Europe. Fabien followed me back to my roots, my home, Ticino. Here I am now, we're looking at places to open our own restaurant and can't wait to get started.



## NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY: THE CLUB'S AGM CELEBRATES THE CONTRIBUTION OF SWISS WOMEN ABROAD



On March 16<sup>th</sup> the New Helvetic Society kicked off its events with the virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) during which we welcomed Erna Kaufmann as Council Member.

Erna is from Lucerne and has been living in London since 2014 (after a first time here in 2006). Welcome Erna.

At the same time we said goodbye to Marine Paquet who returned to live in Switzerland and is now able to spend more time closer to her family. We would like to take this occasion to thank Marine for all her help. You will be missed.

After the formal AGM part the Ambassador Monsieur Fasel gave us a few words of welcome and an update on Brexit. We then moved to the

second part of the event which was to Celebrate the contribution of Swiss women in Switzerland and abroad with Swiss artists Fiona Bunn, Regi Claire and Vreni Renggli. With this occasion, the New Helvetic Society presented Monsieur Fasel with a painting by Vreni, to thank him for his invaluable contribution these last years: the painting that you can see here has the title 'Plane Tree, St. James park, London' from the series: In-between

To close the evening we were very pleased to be able to have an interview with Mrs Simona Regazzoni-Kwenda, Consul and Head of Regional Consul Centre in London.



## HELVETIC KITCHEN: CROSTATA DI FRUTTA



If you'd like to try it for yourself, recipes for this and other Swiss specialties can be found at [www.helvetickitchen.com](http://www.helvetickitchen.com)

Crostata is a tart, at times sweet or savoury, enjoyed throughout Italy and also Ticino. There are countless versions—jam fillings with lattice tops, ricotta and lemon, or even filled with Nutella. I've made mine with fresh fruit and a fancy braided border, but to save time you can always skip this and just flip up the sides to hold in the fruit.

## RECIPE

200 g flour, 50 g sugar, 1 tsp salt, 80 g butter, 2 tbsp cold water, 3 tbsp apricot jam  
500 g apricots, 200 g blueberries (or other soft fruits: raspberries, peaches, blackberries, plums etc.)

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt.

Add the cold butter in pieces and rub into the flour mixture with your fingers until you have small flakes.

Make a well in the middle of the flour and add the water. Mix this gently until a dough forms. Press the dough into a disc, wrap, and let cool in the fridge for about an hour. Preheat oven to 180 C / 350 F / gas mark 4.

Roll out the dough into a round and place it on a parchment lined baking sheet. Spread with jam, top with fruit, and then flip up the sides to contain the inevitable runaway juices.

Bake in the bottom part of the oven for about 30 minutes, or until the jam bubbles up and the crust is lightly browned on top and on the bottom.

## SAVE THE GLACIERS: PRINTS PAYING TRIBUTE TO SWITZERLAND'S MOST BEAUTIFUL AND ENDANGERED MOUNTAINS

Growing up in Switzerland, Sandra Liscio had access to some of the most breathtaking mountains in the world. This is where her passion for the alps was born.

As Swiss designer she felt the need to do something about the scary effects that global warming is causing to the glaciers and everything that is connected with it.

For this reason she decided to she laughed and proposed 'Save the Glaciers'. It is a limited edition collection of Giclée prints paying tribute to Switzerland's beautiful and endangered Glaciers.

She donates 20% of proceeds towards Swiss Association for Climate Protection which launched the Glacier Initiative. Their goal is to eliminate emissions by 2050, to anchor the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement in the Swiss Constitution and to promote climate protection in Switzerland.

'These mountains with their majestic gla-



ciers are part of our life but the melting of our glaciers is a wake-up call for us all! Together we must stop global warming, to prevent our living conditions from irreversible deterioration.

This is a personal project that I really feel attached to. I'd love to find a way to spread the word in the creative community' she told the Swiss Review.

## IMPRESSUM

HOW TO CONTACT THE EDITOR: Reports of Swiss society activities, news, coming events, correspondence, articles and advertising for the 'Switzerland in the UK & Ireland' section of the Swiss Review, should go to the editor:

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## Next Issues

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