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any object being disposed of must first be offered to another museum. But Simon believes that public museums are not the only place to keep artefacts. "We apply a broad interpretation of the guidelines," she says. "However, we give priority to professional applications from other museums," she quickly adds.

Jacqueline Maurer has no issue with the project either: "The museum staff have only disposed of items that are already covered in the collection. In addition, the project helps to keep the museum in people's minds." This approach seems to be working. The public nature of the process has also helped to elicit new information, resulting in the museum changing its mind and keeping certain artefacts after all.

Carmen Simon: "The people of the Emmental Valley should have a say in what happens to their cultural heritage." Photo: Eva Hirschi

Simon: "We have enough specialist expertise to know what specific items were for, but we don't always know whom the things belonged to." Take the work garment that was returned to the collection. "We thought it was just a tatty coat, but we have now discovered that it belonged to a radio mechanic whom everyone knew in the village." The committee decided to keep the garment.

Duty of care

The bequeathing phase finally took place this summer. This involved working out what exactly will happen to each and every object. Not through an auction or an online shopping platform (no money changed hands), but via a thorough application process. Museums, organisations and individuals – including those outside the Emmental region or even abroad – can apply to obtain a specific item. There are no conditions attached to future use, regardless of the intended purpose – upcycling, art, interior decoration, or whatever. Next come the decisions on who gets what: the committee meets again in mid-August, taking account of the online public votes in each case.

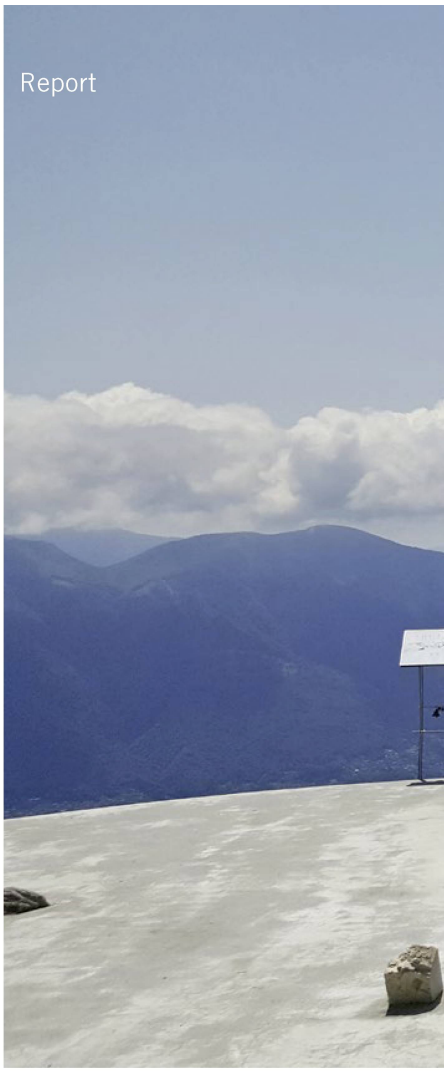
The entire process is time-consuming, taking about a half a year in total. But Simon thinks this is justified: "After all, these objects have been entrusted to us. As museum curator, I have a duty of care." Initial scepticism among the public seems to have evaporated, while interest across the wider museum community has also grown. They are even getting inquiries from abroad from people who want to know how the project works.

Carmen Simon is delighted. This is already the second round of deaccessioning – the museum conducted its first round last year, albeit for only about a hundred items. Another round is planned for 2024. According to a Chüechlihus survey of those who voted online, many in the local population now feel a greater attachment to the museum. "Bringing the museum to our community is exactly what we want to do," says Simon. "What matters is that we establish a connection. It is not about objects, but people."

Langnau native Jacqueline Maurer agrees: "I had forgotten that this region has so many intriguing things to offer. We should be proud to live here." Because the aim of the project is not simply to free up space – but win hearts and minds.

For more photos of deaccessioned artefacts in Langnau, visit: revue.link/langnau.

Report



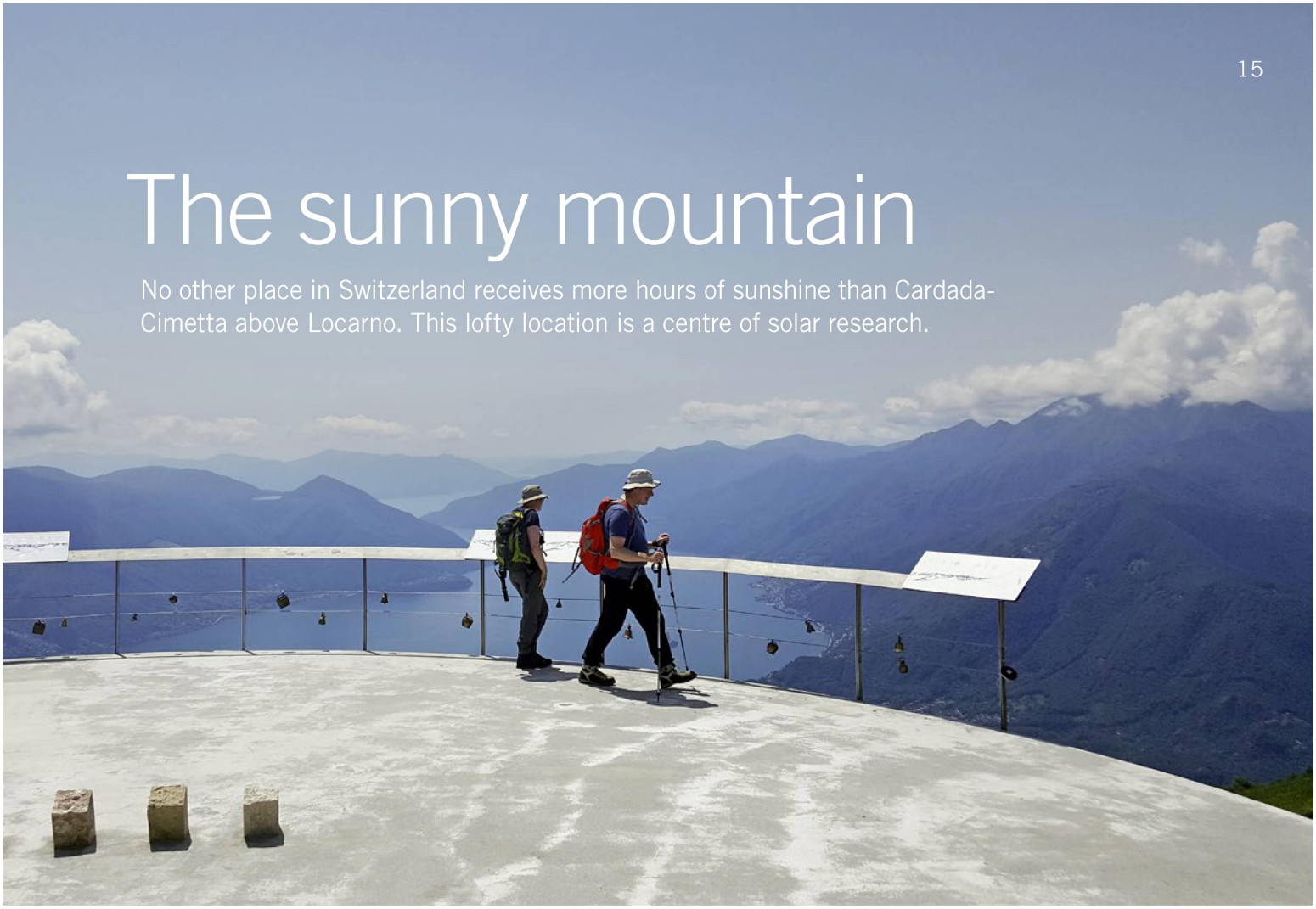
GERHARD LOB

Ticino is known as one of the sunniest spots in Switzerland. The sun does indeed shine very often in the country's most southerly canton. Ticino often vies with Valais for the title of Switzerland's sunniest canton. Sometimes the former comes out on top, sometimes the latter. But Ticino is the sunniest on average, according to MeteoSwiss meteorological records from 1990 to 2020. Ticino boasts five of the ten sunniest places in Switzerland. Cardada-Cimetta, the mountain overlooking Locarno, is in first place, with an average of 2,256 hours of sunshine each year. The Valais capital of Sion comes second, with 2,192 hours.

It is, therefore, no coincidence that Cardada-Cimetta is a popular destination for both locals and tourists. The 1,670-metre summit, Cimetta, is easy to reach. You first take a cable car from Orselina (395 metres) to Car-

The sunny mountain

No other place in Switzerland receives more hours of sunshine than Cardada-Cimetta above Locarno. This lofty location is a centre of solar research.



Cardada-Cimetta, the mountain overlooking Locarno, receives an average of 2,256 hours of sunshine each year. It was formed as a result of a collision between the European and African continental plates. Photo: Gerhard Lob

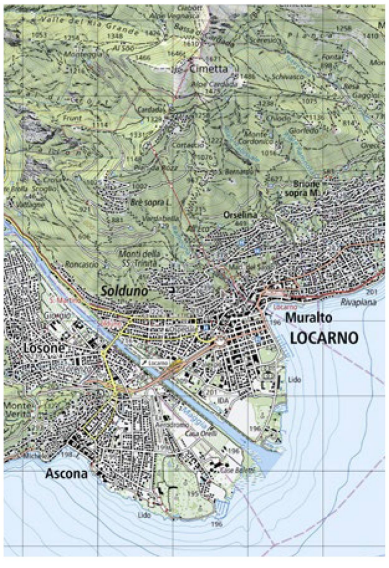
dada (1,340 metres) – a mountain settlement with its own little church and two restaurants, a place where many Locarno locals own a second home. Star architect Mario Botta modernised the Orselina-Cardada line in 2000, redesigning the top and bottom stations. The cable cars have had automatic doors since then. Up in Cardada, the air is fresh. When you alight there in summer, it is a blessed relief from the hot, humid conditions in Locarno. You then cover the 300-metre difference in altitude between Cardada and Cimetta in a sideways chair lift dating back to the 1950s. It is the last lift of its kind in Switzerland. The panorama is breathtaking.

From the mountaintop station, it's just a few more metres' walk up the hill to the Cimetta viewing platform. From there, you can enjoy an incredible panoramic view encompassing Switzerland's lowest point down below, Lake Maggiore, and its highest point, the Dufourspitze, in the Valais Alps further away. A geological fault called the Periadriatic Seam runs right under this point from east to west. To oversimplify (or exaggerate), you could say that this is the border between northern and southern Ticino – or the boundary between the continental tectonic plates of Europe and Africa. A red line on the platform marks the spot.

Swiss extremes

Higher, farther, faster, more beautiful? In search of somewhat unconventional Swiss records

This edition: Cardada-Cimetta – the sunniest spot in Switzerland



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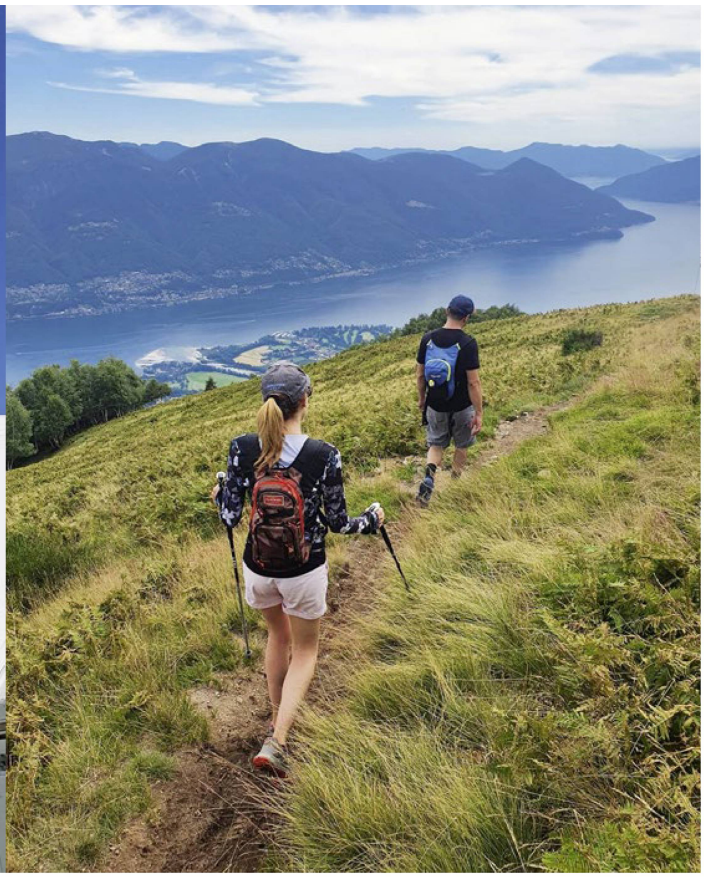
Impossible to ignore, a number of MeteoSwiss measuring devices are situated directly below this viewing point. These measure the sunshine duration, explains MeteoSwiss meteorologist Nicola Gobbi, who works at the Locarno-Monti weather station. On the roof of the MeteoSwiss offices sit an SPN1, the cutting-edge precision instrument now used to record sunshine duration, and a Solar 111 B, an older measuring device manufactured by Hänni (and still used up at Cimetta). On the Solar 111 B, solar cells are shaded successively at short intervals by a set of quickly rotating blades. All periods during which a minimum difference is exceeded between uninterrupted radiation and the value when shading occurs are defined as periods of sunshine.

Michele Bianda of the IRSOL solar research institute. Photo: Gerhard Lob



From ski resort to hiking destination – nearly all the ski lifts at Cardada-Cimetta have been dismantled. Photo: ascona-locarno.com

Switzerland has around 260 automatic monitoring stations like the one at Locarno-Monti. This ground-based network goes by the name of SwissMetNet.

The MeteoSwiss base in Locarno is a scientific hub that produces statistics and evaluates weather data. Situated in its garden, the Specola Solare Ticinese is a solar observatory that was built in the International Geophysical Year of 1957. The Specola Solare Ticinese is dedicated to counting the relative sunspot number (or "Wolf number"). Until 1980, it was an external observing station of the former Eidgenössische Sternwarte (federal observatory) at ETH Zurich. It has been privately operated since then, providing data to the Royal Observatory of Belgium, the institution responsible for publishing the relative sunspot number. Fun fact: sunspot maps are still drawn by hand.

Another solar research institute, the Istituto Ricerche Solari Locarno (IRSOL), is situated a little further up the mountain, slightly hidden amid the verdant greenery. IRSOL is devoted to solar physics. The German university of Göttingen founded IRSOL in 1960 and managed it until 1984. It had scouted out various locations in Europe but eventually settled on Locarno as the most suitable place, due to its position and its abundant hours of sunshine. There were partnerships with a number of universities in the 1990s, including ETH Zurich in particular. IRSOL is now affiliated to the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) in Lugano. Michele Bianda worked as managing director at IRSOL for many years but is now retired. "We have a special device at our disposal, called ZIMPOL. It is a high-precision solar polarimeter," he says.

Good for science, bad for skiing

Science and research evidently play a key role on the Cardada-Cimetta mountain. However, climate change means there are drawbacks to having so much sun. Cardada-Cimetta was a ski resort for a long time. Gliding down freshly prepared pistes above Lake Maggiore used to be a magical experience. In point of fact, there was a ski lift that predated the cable car. Snow at intermediate altitudes has become less frequent, which is why the decision was taken in 2019 to close the ski lifts. Nearly all of these lifts have since been dismantled, not least because they are too expensive to maintain for the rare times they are used. Cimetta is now geared to summer activities instead. In winter, some people still come to go walking, snowshoe hiking, or ski touring when it does actually snow.

Sunshine is good for body and soul. But the sun astonishingly plays only a minor role lin helping to advertise Cardada-Cimetta as a resort, even though it is depicted in the tourist logo. The mountain is being pushed as a recreation and hiking area for the whole family. It was a different story during the pioneering days of tourism in Ticino at the end of the 19th century, when the Gotthard railway opened. Some official posters back then compared sunshine hours in Locarno and Lugano with those in London and Hamburg. The cliché of Ticino as Switzerland's sunniest place is now just that – a cliché.