

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 74 (2008)
Heft: [7]

Artikel: Sisterly love rejuvenates old hotel
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943666>

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Sisterly love rejuvenates old hotel

It is unusual enough to come across large Swiss families nowadays, and extremely rare to meet eight sisters running a hotel and restaurant.



The eight Wyss sisters of Willisau

Eight is definitely the lucky number at the Mohren in the central Swiss town of Willisau: eight peas in a pod decorate the menu cover; a mixed salad starter costs SFr8.80, and if you want to stay the night there are, of course, eight rooms to choose from. Doris, Berti, and Agnes manage the place; Conny is in the kitchen; Claudia and Madeleine are in the back office and Helen and Pia help out wherever they can. Any one of them may take your order.

The Wyss sisters grew up in the picturesque countryside not far from Willisau. They remained best of friends into adulthood, even after starting their own families, often meeting up or taking holidays together. Then one day over drinks

at the Mohren, they learnt that the 16th-century establishment was going to be leased. The sisters jumped at the opportunity to do the one thing together they had never done before: run a business. The only woman wary of the idea was their mother. The sisters have done a gentle makeover of the Mohren, careful to maintain the rustic and convivial atmosphere of the wood-panelled dining rooms.

Its charm is one reason to eat or sleep here, but it is the sisters who set the Mohren apart since there are plenty of cosy inns and eateries in this area of Switzerland. Yet Pia admits this is only one ingredient for success. "The eight sisters attracts people to the place and the cook makes them come again. We have a very good chef," she told swissinfo.

The very good chef is George Bocxe. Heating a frying pan to prepare a dish of char with fresh lemon and parsley, he is nonchalant when asked what it is like to answer to eight sisters. "It doesn't matter whether I work for men or women," he says.

The bookkeeper, and youngest sister, says she soon expects the Mohren to be in the black, quite an achievement in the one-and-a-half years the octet has been running the place. An added bonus of

spreading the responsibility means none of the sisters has to work full-time, with most maintaining the jobs they had before.

They have even found a solution to keeping the Mohren open when they go on holiday – together of course: their four brothers have promised to take over in their absence.

swissinfo

Novartis enters five-year tuberculosis deal

The Novartis Institute for Tropical Diseases and the non-profit Global Alliance for TB Drug Development have announced a five-year research and development agreement.

The Novartis Institute – a Singapore-based research centre managed by the Basel-based Novartis pharmaceutical firm – said that the partnership would work to develop new tuberculosis (TB) medicines, including for drug-resistant strains of the virus.

The partnership would also lead to the development of drug regimens that could be safely used by patients with HIV/Aids, Novartis said in a statement.

Tuberculosis killed over 1.5 million people in 2006, according to the World Health Organization.

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