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Berne: The insider view

Adrian Blaser

Adrian is the President of the Auckland Swiss club and immediately recognisable by his lovely Bernese accent.

What is your special connection with Berne?

From the age of 12 (year 7 at school) I travelled to Bern every day to attend Untergymnasium Neufeld (pre-High School), then 4.5 years of Gymnasium Neufeld, followed by 4.5 years of study in Chemistry and 4 years of PhD. I know the city quite well.

What are your most favourite things to do?

I like the old part (in the U of the Aare). The main streets have the covered walkways (Lauben) where you are protected from the rain. In summer you can take a swim in the Aare. Although I haven't seen it yet but I think the new bear area "Bärepark" on the river bank of the Aare is very nice (next to the old bear pit "Bäregrabe").

What are your fondest memories of the city?

I like it when you can take visitors up the Münster clock tower to show them the city from above. And of course you have to see the Zytglogge Tower.

How would you describe the people of Berne?

Bernese people are friendly and talk **s l o w l y** so that the others can follow.

Berne is Switzerland's capital – how does that affect living in Berne?

There is always stuff happening. Security can be high, but if you have a chance, go and do a tour around the Bundeshaus.

Simone Roggen

Simone is New Zealand born (and Oscar Roggen's daughter). She is a fabulous violin player who has chosen Berne as the centre of her musical universe. She is part of the well known Faust Quartett.

What brought you to Berne?

I came to Berne to study the violin at the Hochschule. At first I lived in Baden and I commuted to Berne for my lessons.

After six months of commuting early in the morning or late at night, I was sitting in the tram going across the Kornhausbrücke with a new colleague of mine. I wasn't reading and the sun had decided to shine.

We had just survived a winter (my first in Switzerland) and I looked out of the window when we were about halfway across the bridge. To my absolute astonishment (and to my colleague's) I saw the mountains for the first time. What an amazing sight! I totally fell in love with Berne at that moment, and moved into an apartment a couple of months later.

In which part of Berne do you live?

When I first moved to Bern, I lived in Breitenrain, quite close to the school where I studied for three years. I now live in Burgerziel right next to the Czech Embassy with their beautiful garden and entertaining parrot.

How do you get around?

I get around mostly by tram, but do travel in the summer by bicycle and go jogging down by the Aare.

What are your all-time favourite things to do?

Two of my all-time favourite things to do are walking down by the Aare River and going swimming at Weyermannshaus in Ausserholligen. This pool used to be a small lake but it got concreted and cleaned, and is now an enormous swimming pool with a little island in the middle, and a 50 meter area to do lengths off to the side. Surrounded by trees and grass, it is a great place just to go and relax.

What are the three best places to visit in Berne?

Definitely go and visit the Bear Family in their amazing new enclosure. Instead of the hole in the ground, it is now an entire hillside including a part of the Aare River where they can swim if they want.

Go up to the Gurten and check out the view.

And my favourite restaurant is Lötschberg - where the salads are incredible. Famous for its big selection of organic cheeses and wine. It's where all the locals go - a good sign!

How would you describe the people of Berne?

I like the people of Bern the most. They have time for a smile :-).



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