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HELVETIA



MAGAZINE OF THE SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

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YEAR 79

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Swiss-New Zealand life history:**
Hanz Fitz
- **Ambassador's Swiss National Day Speech**
- **Swiss Society Medal Winners**

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Swiss Wine Route: Lavaux Vineyard Terraces

Covering 800 hectares, the Lavaux Vineyard Terraces on the northern shore of Lake Geneva comprise the largest contiguous vineyard region in Switzerland. The daringly constructed hillside terraces have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2007.

In all, 30 kilometres of vineyards stretch along Lake Geneva's shoreline, plunging steeply towards the lake. The southern exposure of the vineyards, together with light reflected off the lake's surface, ensure that the grapes bask in the full sun. It is thought that already the Romans had cottoned onto these ideal wine-making conditions, although the main development of the vineyards occurred during medieval times.

The vineyards offer one of the most spectacular panoramic views in the world. Travellers on the train between Berne and Lausanne enjoy breathtaking sights of terraced vineyards, Lake Geneva and the nearby mountains.

The Lavaux vineyard region counts eight places of production: Lutry, Villette, Epesses, Calamin Grand Cru, Dézaley Grand Cru, St-Saphorin, Chardonne und Vevey-Montreux. The region mainly produces Chasselas wines which are fruity and dry with subtle aromas.

The Swiss Wine Route is a 11 kilometre long walking trail through the vineyards between Saint-Saphorin and Lutry. The medieval hillside village of Saint-Saphorin alone makes a visit worthwhile. Its lovely old church, narrow alleys and winegrowers' houses dating from the 16th to 19th centuries are a heart-warming sight.

From Saint-Saphorin, the trail leads uphill and downhill through the vineyards to Lutry. The trail is of medium difficulty and takes about three hours for those who take the direct route. However, many will be tempted to stay for a full day to explore the many enticing detours, views and opportunities to sample local wines.

On some days of the week, the "Lavaux Express", a mini motorised train, takes tired hikers and other visitors on a trip through the region.

There are many wine cellars dotted through the region, traditional and welcoming places located in the heart of the villages. Here, you can taste the wine from the different vineyards of the area and partake in the atmosphere of centuries of wine-making.

Sources: http://www.swissworld.org/en/switzerland/swiss_specials/unesco/lavaux/, <http://www.montreuxriviera.com/en/page.cfm/>



The village of Saint-Saphorin, with views over Lake Geneva towards the Bernese Alps in the east
www.swissworld.org