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TOURIST NEWS

LUCENS CASTLE BECOMES A LIVING MUSEUM

The castle of Lucens, situated between Murten and Lausanne, was recently restored by Pierre Koller of Zurich, one of Europe's biggest auction firms. Now enhancing its rooms are valuable tapestries and paintings, silverware and pewterware, four-poster beds and Chinese vases, giving the impression that some 18th or 19th century lord of the castle is in residence. The former Sherlock Holmes Museum in the castle will also continue to be open to visitors. The castle is open daily from Wednesday to Sunday from 10.00 to 18.00 hours.

GRUYERES CASTLE - EXHIBITION OF PIPES

A special exhibition "The Pipe" is held in the medieval castle of Gruyères until the end of the year. The castle also houses rare exhibits of tapestry, arms and booty from the Burgundian Wars. Opening hours are 09.00-18.00 daily.

WINTERTHUR - PACKAGE ARRANGEMENT

During the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975, the city of Winterthur (canton Zurich) is offering a cultural package consisting of two nights' accommodation and the following features: welcome drink, sightseeing tour, unlimited travel on municipal transport, free admission of museums, collections, castles and exhibitions, city documentation. All-inclusive price from Sw Fr 85 (bed and breakfast) and from Sw Fr 109 (demi-pension). Winterthur houses the famous Oskar Reinhart Art Collection "Am Römerholz" and the Oskar Reinhart Foundation.

NEW HOLIDAY SCHEME IN THE CANTON VALAIS BY AMBASSADOR HOTELS

"Fifty Swiss francs a day" is the motto of the nine hotels belonging to the Ambassador Service chain in the Valais resorts of Arolla, Brig, Crans-Montana, Leukerbad, Martigny, Saas-Fé, Visp and Zermatt. In first-class hotels this price covers overnight stay (in twin room with bath) and breakfast.

In standard-class hotels it includes a main meal as well. This special arrangement is offered until 20 December this year. Visitors on a round-trip who spend nine nights in Ambassador Hotels in the Valais get a 10th night free of charge!

RIEDERALP - NEW AERIAL CABLEWAY

The former aerial cableway linking Mörel (canton Valais) to the Riederalp (6,243 ft) has been replaced by a new aerial cableway with larger cabins. The sunny plateau of Riederalp, which is inaccessible by car, may now be reached in a mere seven minutes.

In the Atlesch area, hiking is a favourite pastime, and according to one's preferences and capacities, one can join a guided hiking tour, traverse glaciers, scale the peaks, or simply take leisurely strolls through the villages and their environs. Weekly packages are available from Sw Fr 316.

ALPINE GUIDES ON SWITZERLAND

Alpine guides on the Bernese Alps, Bernina Alps, Bregaglia, Central Switzerland, Dents du Midi, Engelhörner, High-Level Route, Pennine Alps, Ticino and Zermatt are obtainable from West Col Productions, 1 Meadow Close, Goring, Reading RG8 0AP. Tel: 04914 3187.

Prices vary between £1 and £5 according to volume of the guides.

BY CAR THROUGH SWITZERLAND'S RAIL TUNNELS

The Swiss railways have made it possible for motorists to cross the Alps by rail in their own cars through three great tunnels: the Gotthard, the Simplon and the Lötschberg. Car-carrying trains pass through the Gotthard from Göschenen to Airolo and vice versa every 20 minutes from 10.00 to 19.00 hours and less frequently during the night. The 15-minute crossing from one side of the Alps to the other costs Sw Fr 28 and saves the motorist a drive of over 24 miles.

The 20-minute rail journey through the Simplon costs Sw Fr 35 while the road across the Simplon between Brig and Iselle is over 35 miles long. There is no passable road for motorists across the Lötschberg. The crossing through the Lötschberg Tunnel from Kandersteg to Goppenstein therefore means a saving of about 60 miles compared with the road via Berne and Brig across the Grimsel Pass or even 100 miles via Vevey and along Lake Geneva - and all that for a modest sum of Sw Fr 28.

It is even possible to ship the motor vehicle for the entire Lötschberg-Simplon route, from Kandersteg to Iselle, which necessitates a transfer at Brig. The fare for this "car-ferry" service amounts to Sw Fr 65.

A booklet giving details of timings and fares is available from the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, London W1V 3HG.

ORBE - UNDERGROUND CAVES

More than 100,000 people have so far visited the Orbe underground caves which were first opened to the public in April last year. A walk through the caves is a fascinating experience, revealing countless stalactites and stalagmites and a variety of limestone formations and pillars. The medieval township of Orbe (Canton Vaud) also boasts several well-preserved Roman mosaics.

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