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TOURIST NEWS

SKI-ING AT PRE-SEASON RATES IN SWISS WINTER RESORTS

More and more Swiss resorts are organising December pre-season ski-ing courses in which visitors can get into condition in readiness for the ski-ing season — and at really reasonable rates. The all-inclusive arrangements, starting at about Sw.Fr. 400, generally cover six or seven overnight stays, half board, ski-ing pass and alpine or cross-country ski-ing instruction. In Graubünden, for instance, these arrangements are available at Arosa (27th November-18th December), Bad Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera (12th-19th December), Bivio (5th-18th December), Brambrüesch (12th-18th December), Celerina (27th November-21st December), Davos (18th November-19th December), Disentis (12th-19th December), Flims (5th-19th December), Klosters (5th-11th December), Laax (4th-18th December), Lenzerheide (5th-18th December), Pontresina (28th November-19th December), Savognin (11th-18th December), Silvaplana (from 14th November), Splügen (from 12th December) and St. Moritz (27th November-21st December).

In Eastern Switzerland the Flumserberge (5th-19th December) and Malbun (12th-19th December) offer one-week courses and Wildhaus two weekend courses (5th/6th December and 12th/13th December). In Central Switzerland special offers are available at Andermatt (5th-19th December), Engelberg (12th-18th December) and Sörenberg (5th-19th December). The Bernese Oberland region is also taking part: Grindelwald (4th-18th December), on the Hasliberg (27th November-19th December), at Lenk (5th-19th December), Wengen (4th-18th December) and Zweisimmen (from 13th December) combined with tennis coaching. Les Diablerets has an arrangement (4th-18th December) in which dinner is taken at a different restaurant every night. The 1976 ski-ing courses of the Swiss Ski School Federation take place in Crans-Montana (4th-18th December). Also in Canton Valais are wedel courses on the Bettmeralp (11th-18th December), where trick ski-ing is also taught, on the Riederalp (12th-19th December) with, among other things, a ski-acrobatics week under the direction of Art Furrer, at Saas Fee (11th-18th December) and at Zermatt (20th November-17th December).

In addition to alpine ski-ing courses, ski-roaming and cross-country ski-ing courses can also be booked at Andermatt, Arosa, on the Bettmeralp, at Celerina, Engelberg, Flims Grächen, Laax, Lenk, Lenzerheide, Pontresina, on the Riederalp, at Saas Fee, Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera, Silvaplana, St. Moritz and Zermatt. Cross-country weeks only are to be held in Gsteig (4th-11th December), Kandersteg (5th-18th December), Maloja (from 17th December), San Bernadino (27th November-19th December), Samedan (5th-19th December), Sils (12th-18th December) and Zuoz (22nd November-7th December). In most places the all-inclusive rates are reduced for non-skiers.

DAY OF THE ONION

One of Switzerland's oldest autumn festivals — the Berne Onion Market — will be staged this year on 22nd November. Always held on the fourth Monday of the month, the event dates back nearly six centuries. More than 350 market stalls are spread over the city centre squares, along the tree-lined Bundesgasse in front of the Swiss Parliament buildings, and spill over into the side streets as well. In addition to selling some 40 tons of golden, glistening onions the stalls also offer hot chestnuts, confectionary (onions made of peppermint and marzipan), as well as antiques, handicrafts and a variety of other goods. Towards the late afternoon and evening a fun fair gets into full swing, a confetti battle develops, and the crowds move on to Berne's restaurants and cafés to sample the special dishes of the day — made, of course, from onions.

NEW TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTION IN THE SWISS TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Over the last few months the Swiss PTT has completely remodelled the Telecommunications Section of the Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne and brought its contents and display techniques right up to date.

The exhibition illustrates the past, present and future of the telephone and telegraph system as well as radio and television. The centre of attraction is a huge map of the world 1292 square feet in area on which visitors can see what happens when an international call is made. There are also many other models and apparatus which visitors can operate themselves and which help them to understand the working of complicated technical equipment. The Transport Museum is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily until 30 November.

"GANSABHUAET" AT SURSEE — AN ANCIENT SWISS CUSTOM

Sursee is now the only place in Switzerland that still recalls Martinmas (11 November), which was once an important date on which rents fell due, and the Martinmas Goose, which played a role in pagan rites as a sacrificial animal in ancient times. The custom of

"Gansabhauet" takes place in front of the town hall in the afternoon. A dead goose is hung up on a wire and blindfolded members of the public try to cut it down with a single sword stroke.

BAD RAGAZ — ATTRACTIVE IN WINTER, TOO

Bad Ragaz is a resort that loses none of its attraction in winter. Aimed particularly at the older generation is an all-inclusive arrangement, valid from 27th November to 17th December, 1976, and 3rd January to 31st March, 1977, for seven days' bathing holidays (from Sw.Fr. 210 in room without bath, including breakfast and reduced admission charges to thermal baths).

The low altitude location (1,706 ft), freedom from fog and good position as a starting point for excursions into the Graubünden countryside, together with the thermal baths make Bad Ragaz an excellent place for health holidays.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WITH A DIFFERENCE

Christmas shopping in a museum? The people of Berne have been doing it for years. Every November local craftsmen stage a sale of their work at the Swiss capital's Gerwerbemuseum, offering a wide variety of top quality, low priced hand-made products created in their own workshops. This annual sale gives the small craftsman a rare opportunity to present his work to a wider public — and gives local shoppers a chance to purchase out-of-the-ordinary Christmas gifts. This year's sale lasts from 26th November to 24th December.

PREMIERS IN THE THEATRES OF BERNE

Municipal Theatre:

28th November — "Die Letzte am Schafott", opera by Francis Poulenc

9th December — "Der widerspenstigen Zähmung", comedy by William Shakespeare

Atelier-Theatre:

10th-November — "Der zerbrochene Krug", comedy by Heinrich von Kleist

GENEVA TO BUILD NEW EXHIBITION AND CONGRESS CENTRE

On 26 September 1976 the Geneva electorate sealed its approval of state participation in the construction of a new complex to house exhibitions and congresses on the outskirts of the town, in the immediate vicinity of the N1 motorway exit and the future Swiss Federal Railway station at Cointrin Airport.

The total cost of the project, apart from the access roads and an underground garage for 2,000 cars, will be Sw.Fr. 110 million, of which the state will put up Sw.Fr. 45 million.

This new complex is due to be completed by spring 1980 and will

KEEPING ABREAST OF THE TIMES

Adapting its fleet to present market requirements, Swissair intends to sell one of its McDonnell Douglas DC-9-32 jets to the U.S. carrier Texas International Airlines Inc. The handover of the aircraft is still subject to the completion of some contract details, but is planned for 8th November, 1976.

The aircraft concerned, registration HB-IFH, is the third oldest DC-9 in Swissair's fleet and was bought from the manufacturer on 22nd October, 1967.

Texas International is based in Houston, with a large network in Texas and services to Mexico City.

provide optimum facilities for the International Motor Show and nearly a dozen other regular feature exhibitions, several of which are unique in the world.

The building will also contain extensive congress facilities, of which there is still a dearth in Geneva, for up to 2,000 delegates.

The future Exhibition and Congress Centre will stand in an attractive 25-acre park, and will be served by Geneva's large hotel infrastructure, comprising some 14,000 beds. It will also boost Geneva's ability to withstand the lively competition among cities throughout Switzerland and the world to host exhibitions and congresses.

SWITZERLAND'S BALANCE OF TOURIST TRADE IN 1975

The gross receipts of the Swiss tourist trade in 1975 totalled 5.38 billion francs. They comprise the expenditure of foreign visitors in Switzerland (32.3 million overnight stays in hotels and other accommodation) and international transport. The small increase of 40 million (0.7%) over the figure for the previous year can be accounted for above all by the decline in visitors' expenditure on incidentals and frontier traffic.

The uncertain economic situation and the high value of the Swiss franc also had a negative influence on the spending habits of foreign tourists. The gross expenditure of Swiss tourists on their holidays and travel abroad totalled 2.87 billion francs in 1975. The increase of 60 million or 2.1% over the previous year is due among other things to the large number of Swiss tending to take their holidays abroad and to increased purchases in the frontier regions. These figures result in a favourable balance of 2.51 billion francs for Swiss tourist trade as a whole, i.e. a slight falling off of 20 million (0.8%) compared with 1974.

In the Swiss balance of revenues for 1975, Swiss tourism thus once again comes third for net receipts, after revenue from capital (5.15 billion) and "other services" (2.95 billion) — a heading that covers licence fees, the expenditure of international organizations, bank commissions, etc. On the European level, her gross tourist receipts of 5.38 billion francs place Switzerland in 7th position.



A Swissair DC-9-32 similar to that which is being sold to Texas International Airlines.



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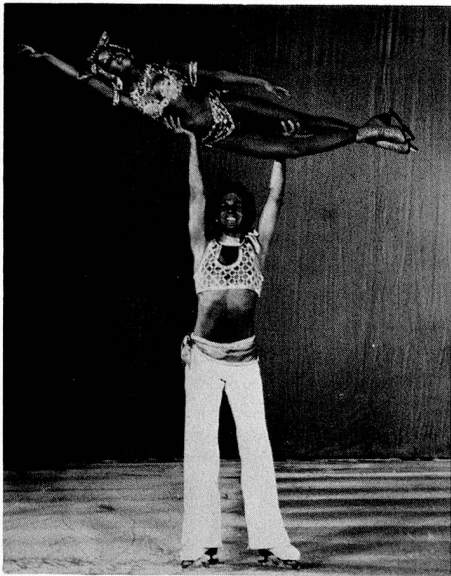
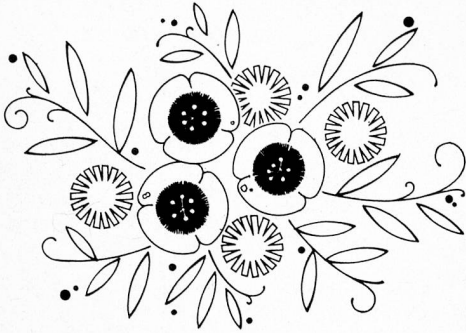
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MOVING — PACKING — STORING — SHIPPING

ICE EXTRA-VAGANZA

Performers from Switzerland are among the 70 ice stars from 20 countries currently touring Europe in the spectacular United States "Holiday on Ice" revue. A feature of the 1976 show are the 1,000 costumes, worth half a million dollars, designed in Italy and produced in Britain and France. The show was first introduced to Switzerland 26 years ago by Berne tourist official Werner Strahm – who still handles the annual Swiss tour arrangements.

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A big backstage welcome was laid on for Berne tourist office official Mr. Werner Strahm when the American "Holiday on Ice" revue made its annual tour of Switzerland this month. For Mr. Strahm was the man responsible for introducing the show to Switzerland in 1950 – and has been handling the annual Swiss tour arrangements ever since. These two Canadian and American beauties were among the 70 ice stars from 20 countries who turned out for the behind-the-scenes welcome for Mr. Strahm when the show made its traditional visit to Berne.

