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LUXURY STILL IN DEMAND

Switzerland's luxury hotels are increasing their share of the nation's tourism business, claims the 36-member "Leading Hotels of Switzerland" group.

According to Mr. Urs Meierhofer, representative of the Lausanne-based five star group: "Statistics just released by the Swiss National Tourist Office indicate quite clearly that an increasing number of tourists here want only the very best hotel accommodation.

"The figures show that luxury Swiss hotels are even increasing their share of the overnight bookings from foreign visitors — despite the unfavourable currency exchange rate."

The Swiss National Tourist Office statistics reveal that hotels in the upper price category — that is, more than Sw.Fr. 80 per person per night — increased their share of all overnight bookings in Switzerland from 6.7 per cent in 1974 to 9.2 per cent in 1976.

Over the same period the same hotels increased their share of bookings from foreign visitors from 9.7 per cent to 13.2 per cent. With Swiss tourists the figure increased from 2.2 per cent to 3.4 per cent.

NEW MINIBUS SERVICE TO LINK ZÜRICH AIRPORT WITH HOTELS

Transport between Zürich Airport and six local hotels has been improved by the introduction of a new minibus service. It is provided by International Hotel Management Prohotel Ltd.,

Swissair's associate hotel management company. The hotels to be linked with the airport by the minibus service are the Zürich, International, Nova-Park, Atlantis, Continental and Airport. The fleet of five 14-passenger minibuses will make 12 round trips daily to a fixed timetable between 06.00 and 20.00 hours.

Fares range from seven to eleven Swiss francs depending on the hotel's distance from the airport, all well below the corresponding taxi fares. The new service replaces two 36-seat coaches providing five round trips daily between the airport and the hotels.

ZWEISIMMEN — NEW CROSS-COUNTRY SKI-ING FACILITIES

The resort of Zweisimmen has readied a new facility for cross-country skiers in the Sparenmoos — Neuenberg district, where more than 12 miles of trails are prepared and maintained by machines.

The new cross-country area lies at 5,260 ft — an altitude at which snow is certain. The trails range from nearly four to some six miles in length and are of varying degrees of difficulty. An innovation this winter are special cross-country weekends in January. The charges, varying from Sw.Fr. 98 to Sw.Fr. 161 includes two overnight stays with full board, ski-school instruction and transportation. The equipment can be hired. Bookings should be made at the Tourist Office, CH-3770 Zweisimmen.

TROUBLE WITH THE FURKA-OBERALP TUNNEL

The construction of a railway tunnel beneath the Furka Pass has been plagued with difficulties which have more than doubled costs. The Furka-Oberalp Railway Company (FOB) has threatened legal proceedings for damages against the project's main engineer, Mr. Albert Coudray, who was sacked in March of last year for technical mismanagement.

The Company has demanded 2.3 million francs of damages from the engineer, who rejected the various charges levied against him. He is in particular accused of having made mistakes over the piercing of a ventilation tunnel, and the FOB charges that he had already covered himself with a million-franc civil responsibility assurance.

Meanwhile, costs have escalated. The 70-million franc subsidy voted by Parliament in 1971 had to be more than doubled last year with a further 80 million francs. The National Council voted in favour of releasing the funds, but voiced strong criticism of Mr. Robert Bonvin, former Head of the Department of Transport and Communications, who fathered the project.

BROKEN LEGS COST A BILLION FRANCS

This year's ski-ing season has seen a record number of accidents in the Swiss Alps. According to a doctor in Sion, Dr. Bernard Morand, if trends recorded so far continue till the end of the season, the cost of the thousands of broken legs to the economy will top a billion francs.



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NEW SHIPS ON SWISS LAKES

At the beginning of May an addition was made to the fleet of ships operating on the Lake of Zürich. It is the diesel motor vessel "Ufenau", accommodating 150 passengers. The newcomer replaces the motor vessel "Stäfa", withdrawn after nearly 40 years in service and it is to start operating in summer, when it will be used for non-scheduled trips, carrying private parties.

The Lake of Walen is also getting a new motor vessel, the "Churfürsten", seating 200 people, 90 of them under cover. Since World War I no navigation services have operated on the Lake of Joux but this summer tourists will again be able to take trips on this rather Finnish-looking lake.

The first motor vessel with which the navigation is resuming operations formerly plied on the River Rhine. It weighs 70 tons and can take 40 people.

LAUSANNE CATHEDRAL MUSEUM OPENED

Only two years after the major exhibition marking the 700th anniversary of the consecration of Lausanne Cathedral, a permanent Cathedral Museum has been opened in Lausanne's historic Bishop's Palace. Grave-offerings, fragments of fabrics and valuable liturgical items testify to Lausanne's status as an episcopal see in which no fewer than 53 dignitaries resided.

The most important exhibits in the Museum are the original figures of the apostles from one of the portals and

pieces of the earliest glass paintings. Many illustrated documents and plans provide information about the history of the Cathedral and its surroundings. Located right next to the Cathedral, the Museum is open every day except Monday.

EUROPEAN NOVELTY IN ZÜRICH BOTANICAL GARDEN

Zürich University's new Botanical Garden was officially opened at Whitsun. It includes a European novelty: three domed hothouses in which tropical, sub-tropical and savanna vegetation will be presented in a natural unity. Admittance to the garden, at Zollikerstrasse 107 (tram 11 or bus 31, alighting at the Hegiback stop), is free.

ONE TICKET FOR 600 POSTAL COACH SERVICES

The Swiss postal coach undertaking has launched a new season ticket for holidaymakers — one that can be used on 600 postal coach services. It was introduced to supplement the season tickets offered by the railways and to enable motorists on holiday to get around without their cars.

Valid for one month, it gives entitlement to completely free travel on any three days and to half fares on the other days on all scheduled postal coach services, including those in Valais, Ticino, Graubünden and the Principality of Liechtenstein which cross the frontier into other countries.

The new ticket costs Sw.Fr. 40 for adults and Sw.Fr. 20 for children and holders of holiday tickets, half-price and

TOURIST NEWS

full season tickets. Explanatory leaflets in German, French and Italian can be obtained free at many post offices and the larger railway stations.

NEW SUMMER ATTRACTIONS IN THE ENGADINE

The Engadine region of Canton Graubünden will have some new attractions to offer this summer. Visitors will be able to keep their weight down on the new woodland trail at Madulein or the indoor tennis courts of the Lyceum Alpinum in Zuoz.

The popular polenta tours and deer-breeding inclusive weekends in the National Park have been restarted. Novelties are the weekend arrangements in which walking enthusiasts can cover the length and breadth of the National Park accompanied by a hunter, and game watching at twilight.

Active sportsmen can join in the "pedal tours" along the River Inn. Bicycles can be hired from the Tourist Office.

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Also on the programme are visits to alps and on 1 August — Switzerland's National Day — a "free cheese buffet" will be held in the village square. Walking and tennis inclusive arrangements, angling in the Engadine lakes, golfing at Samedan and sunset and moonlight trips to Piz Lagalb are among other attractions offered.

MOTELS IN SWITZERLAND

The new list of motels published by the Swiss National Tourist Office contains more than one hundred establishments all of which are located near major highways.

Particularly well provided with motels are the Bernese Oberland and Western Switzerland. The publication gives addresses, telephone numbers and essential information about meals obtainable, car parking facilities, petrol stations and repair services.

A LUCKY MAN

A one-week holiday in Switzerland for two has been won by Mr. J. N. Gilder of the British Home Stores supermarket chain in a lucky draw contest in London. The draw was held during the workshop organised by Interchange Hotels of Britain and Independent Hotels of Europe for travel trade and business personnel. Mr. Gilder's prize includes the return flight by Swissair, the Swiss Holiday Card for unlimited travel by rail, postal motor coach and lake steamer, and

one week's accommodation at any of the 80 hotels nationwide belonging to Switzerland's Ambassador Service Hotel group.

INELTEC 77 — PARTICIPATION FROM EAST AND WEST

Well before the start of INELTEC 77, the Exhibition of Industrial Electronics and Electrical Engineering, which will be taking place in the halls of the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle from 6th to 10th September, 1977, the area occupied by INELTEC 75 has already been equalled. As more registrations are still being received, an expansion of the specialist exhibits can be expected. Already the products of more than 1,700 suppliers from 25 countries have been announced.

Particularly worth mentioning is the participation of the U.S. Department of Commerce with a joint national stand, as well as, for the first time, of the V/O Energomachexport, Moscow/USSR and the ELEKTRIM, Polish Export Company for Electrical Engineering, Warsaw. Both state trade organisations are taking part in the electrical engineering sector.

With the participation of important trade partners from East and West, INELTEC 77, both as a trade fair and as technical convention, acquires an even more significant importance as an international information exchange forum for both of the increasingly important fields of "industrial electronics" and "electrical engineering".

SWISS WOMEN ACROSS THE CENTURIES

That was the title of a talk given by Dr. Verena Bodmer from Zürich on 28th April. She addressed an Open Meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique at the Swiss Embassy. Dr. Bodmer is a lecturer and author of repute on the subject of Swiss women, and her lively and interesting talk was illustrated by excellent slides. She took the audience right through the centuries, and told of many outstanding women who left their mark. The large gathering which included the wife of the Swiss Ambassador, Madame Thalmann, showed their appreciation in no unmistakable way.

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