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Spring in the Ticino

This month's covers show scenes from Switzerland's "Sun Balcony", the Ticino.

Weather statistics justify this description: Lugano enjoys on an average 2,250 to 2,800 hours of sunshine a year. The Ticino has, thanks to its exceptionally mild and sunny climate a luxuriant, subtropical vegetation and in Spring the air is heady with the fragrance of orange blossom, mimosa and other flowers and palm trees flourish alongside oleander, agaves and magnolias.

But even the Ticino has bad patches of weather. I remember one particular holiday spent mostly in dank clothes, huddled in rugs on our hotel balcony or in various grottos, emptying a considerable number of *boccalinos* in order to escape from the constant heavy downpour. But the locals were very friendly and most sympathetic towards the unfortunate wet *turisti*.

The Ticino has an abundance of attractions for the tourist and can offer something for every inclination, with its lakes and mountains, its picturesque towns, gardens and art-treasures. Almost every kind of outdoor activity is available.

The number of tourists is likely to increase further when the great north-south motorway from Basle to Chiasso through the Gotthard will be completed in September.

But not all Ticinesi profit from the tourist-business. In the valleys above the lakes the old villages have preserved their character. Their inhabitants lead a sober life, earning very little by tilling their small, stony fields or their vines. In order to prevent the young from deserting their native villages, factories have been built in some of those valleys and old handicrafts, such as spinning, weaving and braiding straw have been reintroduced.

As distinctive as the scenery of southern Switzerland is the gracious hospitality of its people. The Ticino has often been described as a harmony of contrasts: a carefree Latin attitude, combined with the Swiss sense of order.

After the grey, dull winter months a little Italian sunshine, flower-scented air and joy seem to be just the right tonic for the city-dweller who is lucky enough to get away for a spring holiday in the Ticino.

mhm

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This month's covers

Front cover: Ponte dei Salti near Lavertezzo in the Verzasca Valley (Ticino)

Back cover: Summer evening in the Ticino (upper left)

The Pilatus railway between Alpnachstad and Pilatus Kulm (Central Switzerland) (upper right)
Morcote on Lake Lugano (Ticino) (bottom of page)

We apologize for the late appearance of the April and May issues of the SWISS OBSERVER, due to events beyond our control (industrial action at our printer's).