

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

**Band:** - (1982)

**Heft:** 1790

**Rubrik:** Woman's Observer

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 15.04.2026

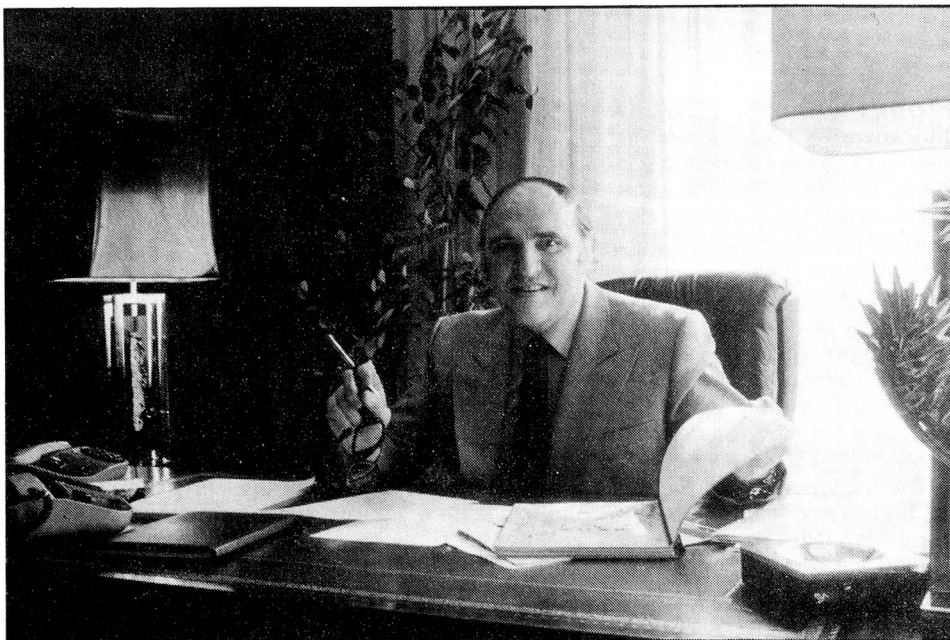
**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

René Hatt

## Sumptuous comfort in the René Hatt style



Interior views of the Nova-Park



## Where the royal suite costs £3,500 a night

**- excluding breakfast!**

THERE is a hotel in the heart of Paris where Jacuzzi-style baths are sunk into the bedroom floors, where each guest is welcomed with champagne and fresh flowers, where visitors and guests can choose from six restaurants and 10 bars and where the royal suite costs a staggering £3,500 a night, exclusive of breakfast.

The hotel is the Nova-Park Elysées, conceived, designed and owned by a 55-year-old Swiss, René Hatt.

Ten years ago René Hatt built his first hotel, the Nova-Park in Zurich, followed by the Alhambra Nova-Park in Jeddah. Then, in

1978, he bought the first of two buildings in Paris which were ultimately translated into today's luxury hotel.

But the Nova-Park is more than just sumptuous fittings because René Hatt is a man deeply involved in philosophical and sociological studies.

He has spent a considerable time studying the writings of existential philosopher Karl Jaspers and of Jung; he sees the hotel not just as a financial investment but also as a place of encounter which meets the needs of modern man.

Because of this concept all hotels of the Nova-Park group offer a unique range of services and entertainment opportunities. Luxurious, yes, but also planned to meet more than just physical needs.

The minimum rate for just one night is this extravagant setting is £100, which will secure one of a dozen single executive rooms, but even here the emphasis is on luxury.

Don't look for miniatures in the room bar - only full bottles are available. And don't worry if New York keeps you tied up on one phone; you can always ring Switzerland on the other one.

Remember that an audiovisual centre and multilingual secretaries are available to help you to do business, and that underwater massage, discotheque, swimming pool and six restaurants can while away your leisure hours.

And don't forget to pay the bill!



"HAIR," says Pierre Alexandre, "has been around me since the day I was born. I played with it as a child in the back room of my parents' hairdressing salon in Basle."

Against the wishes of his father, young Pierre set out to make his mark on the hairdressing profession. He came to England, initially for a year to learn the language, but liked the country so much that he decided to stay.

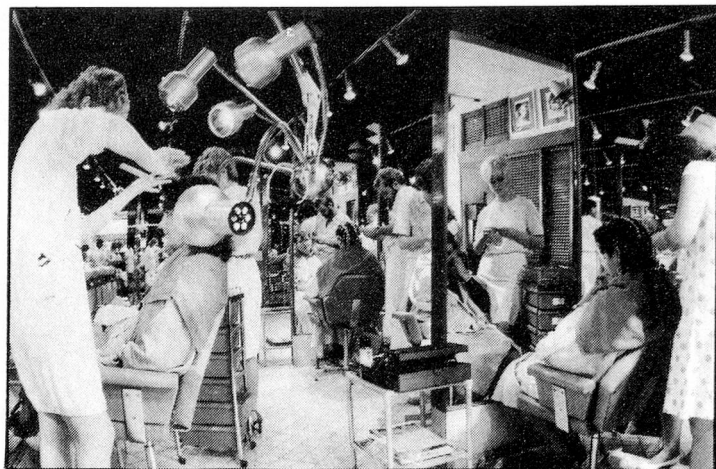
The focal point of Pierre Alexandre's international operation is Manchester.

"People told me that it would be impossible to become recognised worldwide from Manchester," says Pierre. But the challenge spurred him even harder and won him the hearts of his adopted city when he succeeded.

Perhaps Pierre Alexandre's major contribution to the way women look was his introduction of soft, upswept styles at a time when all other trend-setting hair



Pierre Alexandre . . .



. . . and his Manchester salon.

# HAIR APPARENT

dressers were styling hair down and straight. He has always believed that a hairdresser should make women look beautiful and not just different.

His work has appeared in major fashion and hairdressing magazines, in national newspapers and on television throughout the world, and he has

toured extensively, training, demonstrating and inspiring.

Through his academy, Pierre Alexandre is ensuring that his techniques and philosophies are passed on to another generation of hairdressers who should, he

believes, be knowledgeable about much more than just hair.

"Today's young hairdresser," he says, "must also know about investment, management techniques, even a little accountancy and law."



Pierre Alexandre's creativity at its best: hairstyles which capture the style of a new film about the great actress Joan Crawford.

## SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO SWITZERLAND

All our tours are arranged on reliable, scheduled flights from Heathrow and Gatwick.

You can fly to one destination and return from another if desired.

**BASLE  
GENEVA  
ZURICH**

**Also available direct return flights ex Gatwick to Berne**

Telephone us for details, no extra costs, fuel surcharges, etc.

**HAMILTON  
TRAVEL**

**3 Heddon Street, London, W1  
01-734 5122**



The "Verena Bath" in Baden, 1815

# Swiss spas then and now ...

THE Romans already knew the therapeutic and curative value of natural springs, and relics of thermal baths from pre-Christian times were found in places like Leukerbad, Yverdon and Baden. In the late Middle Ages the heyday for baths began, when doctors prescribed thermal springs as cures for all kinds of sickness.

Bathing establishments were often wretched huts or wooden shacks. Bad Attisholz in the Canton of Solothurn at first consisted of a room and a dozen gloomy cabins. The water gushed from the centre of the room where small pails on a wheel emptied it automatically into a channel and hence into two large copper cauldrons where it was heated and then taken to the bathing-machines.

But soon the economic value of spas was recognised and better accommodation was provided. The sick and the invalid went in large numbers, although it became more and more costly. At the end of the 16th century a three-week stay in a curative spa could easily cost a month's wages of a tradesman.

In some spas social life was most important. In fashionable Baden one dined at floating

tables, enjoying rich food and plenty of alcoholic beverages. Music and dancing were provided, special ladies' fashions were displayed. "Society" gathered in famous spas once a year, marriages were arranged and business contacts established.

Very often medical instructions went by the board, and the local authorities found it necessary to introduce strict regulations. In Enggistein, in the canton of Berne, fines were imposed if a guest was found indulging in lechery or had appalling manners, such as fouling the water in any way.

In the 16th century the Basle physician Heinrich Pantaleon warned of taking the waters, either orally or bathing, before one had undergone a "Purgatz", a thorough purge. Only then could the body benefit from a thermal water treatment.

It is not surprising to learn that apart from genuine medical advisers in any thermal resort, large numbers of charlatans and quacks did lucrative business.

From the turn of the Middle Ages to the Renaissance period we have the first balneological literature, at that time still in Latin. Famous medical men like

Paracelsus and the Bernese Fabricius Hildanus visited the most important spas of their times and tried to compare the various springs and to find various indications as to their effect.

By that time, too, the new printing methods became popular, and rich documentation has survived. The knowledge of the different springs was purely empiric, and it was not until the 19th century that the chemical contents could be analysed and used to advantage in therapy.

The Swiss Society for Balneology and Climatology was founded at the beginning of this century and was to a large extent responsible for training specialists and for rules and guidelines governing the various Swiss spas.

Where were they? Many of them have disappeared. In the canton of Berne alone there were more than 100. Some vanished in the wars, as well as quite a few in the Grisons.

Today Switzerland boasts some 250 mineral springs. Many of them are world famous. We shall mention just a few.

*Bad Ragaz* (1,575 ft) on the Zurich-Chur route is open all the year round. A stay there in winter may be combined with a round of

winter sports.

The mineral spa of *Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera* (3,750 ft) has a great variety of accommodation varying from cheap pensions to luxury hotels. The National Park is not far away.

Switzerland's highest mineral water spa is *St. Moritz* (5,325 ft). The first baths were built at the carbonic and ferrous spring in 1832.

*Leukerbad* (*Loeche-les-Bains*) has over 20 warm springs in the depths of the Dala valley. Already the Romans recognised the healing powers of the water at 51°.

At a much lower altitude lies *Schinznach* (1,050 ft) with buildings dating back to the 17th century and a tradition of social life. Its sulphureous springs are among some of Europe's strongest.

*Rheinfelden's* new department for medical diagnosis and therapy was opened in 1974 and has a large saltwater swimming pool. It lies at 840 ft above sea-level and also has two precious mineral springs.

The lowest of all is *Zurzach* (132 ft) and has Europe's biggest open air pool. Its mineral thermal spring is at 40° and gushes out of the ground to a height of 1,380 ft at a rate of 1,000 litres a minute.



*The modern open air thermal pool in Baden*

The springs were opened in 1955 and have since been expanded. Special "Badezüge" get day bathers from Zurich there and back.

Some of the oldest baths are in *Baden*, Aargau (1,164 ft). They were built and developed by the Romans who called them "Aquae Helvetiae". Roman finds suggest that the spring was used to flow direct into a basin in which one could stand up to one's chest.

Marble slabs, mosaic stones, leaden water pipes, signet rings and coins were found, and even today one can look down a deep shaft where the Romans had their first spa.

Two tracts remain of former spa inns, the "Schindenhof", later called "Hinterhof". The 17th century "Stadhof" testifies to the heyday of the *Baden* spas. Incidentally, the remains of the

Roman settlement of *Vindonissa* is close to *Baden*.

A million litres of hot water bubble up daily from 19 springs. The rich curative waters are particularly beneficial in rheumatic and arthritic complaints, and in the treatment of muscle and bone injuries.

Today the new garden thermal bath (34°) and swimming pool lie in the middle of the resort area, and 10 well-reputed spa hotels with their own bathing facilities can accommodate guests.

The spa park and the shady promenade along the river *Limmat* are further attractions. There is a *Kursaal* and a traffic-free shopping area. Although one of the biggest engineering concerns, *Brown Boveri & Co.*, has its factories in *Baden*, the quaint old town makes it a very pleasant thermal resort.

Well-known personalities still visit *Baden*, such as *Friedrich Duerrenmatt*, the playwright and author. Famous visitors from the past include King *Rudolf of Hapsburg*, Empress *Eugénie*, King *Frederick III*, Emperor *Haile Selassie*, princes, composers and authors from afar (*Richard Strauss*, *Paul Hindemith*, *Alexandre Dumas père* and *Hermann Hesse* – some of his writings originated in *Baden* – also the painter *Kokoschta* and Count *Zeppelin*, the airship builder).

The nature of spas has changed, and the modern version of the old comprehensive thermal treatment includes keep-fit programmes, gymnastics, massage, sauna and a number of sports.

Some of the spas are more suitable for certain complaints than others, according to their mineral contents. Detailed

information on Swiss spas may be had from the Swiss National Tourist Office at the Swiss Centre in London.

They will be able to send you information, too, on health resorts with beneficial therapeutic properties. Dr med. *J.S. von Deschwanden* of the Bioclimatological Research Centre at *Adelboden* has written a short vade mecum, "Klima in der Therapie".

Anyone interested in the history of Swiss spas and life in thermal bathing resorts in the past should read *Hans Peter Treichler's* book "Wonnige Badenfahrt", published by *Orell Fuessli*. It is full of fascinating information and written with a great sense of humour as well as with remarkable relevant knowledge of history and culture.

**Mariann Meier**