

News from Berne

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NEWS FROM BERNE

Swiss Parliament's Winter Session in Berne

On 25th November – the same day as the onion market – the two Swiss Houses of Parliament will open their winter session in Berne. The two Houses are the National Council (representing the people) and the Council of States (representing the cantons). In Switzerland as well it is a tradition that parliamentary proceedings are conducted in public, so that the people can see for themselves how the political affairs of the nation are conducted. It is encouraging to see that more and more school groups are taking this opportunity to see Swiss democracy in action. Visitors are also invited to take advantage of the free guided tours of the Swiss parliament buildings, built between 1896 and 1902. These tours take place throughout the year – except during the

four annual parliamentary sessions – at 9.00, 10.00, 11.00, 14.00 and 15.00 on weekdays and Sundays. In addition there is a weekday-only tour at 16.00.

Christmas Exhibition at Berne's Kunsthalle

Berne's Kunsthalle is again presenting – from 7th December to 5th January – its traditional Christmas exhibition, devoted to the work of Bernese painters and sculptors. Local artists (even when they are working abroad) welcome this once-a-year opportunity to present their work to the public in Berne.

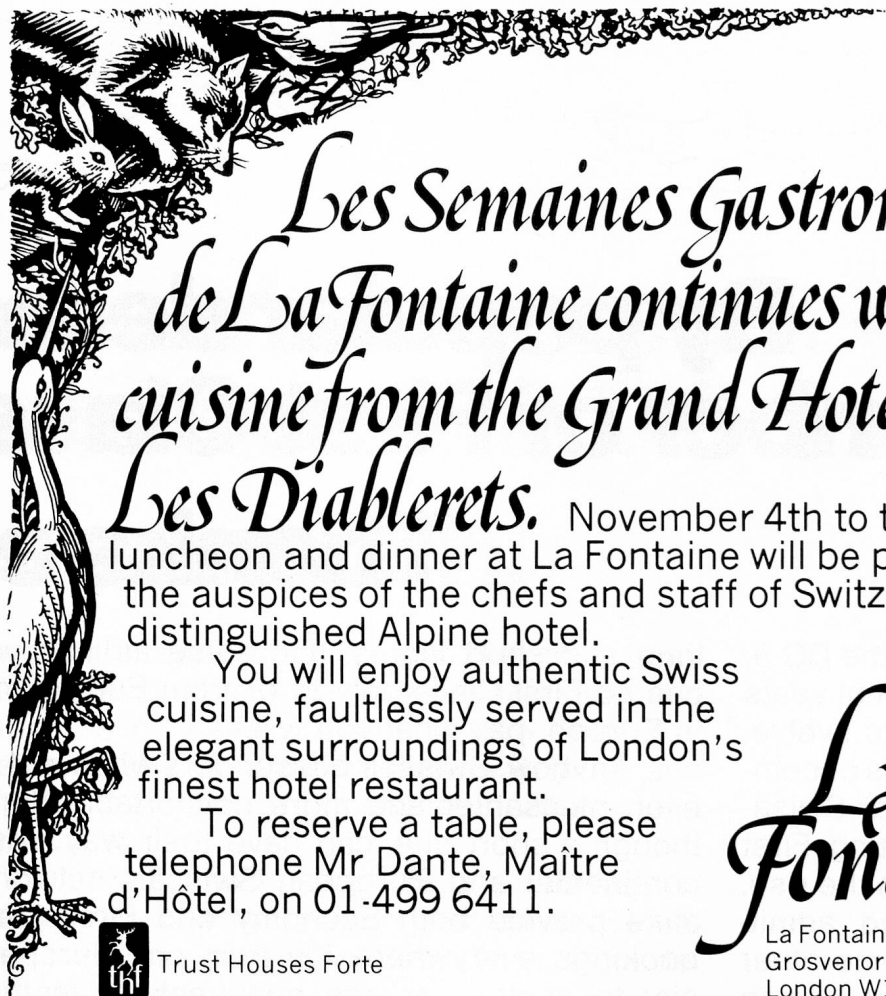
New Life in Berne's Old Squares

Only a few years ago two of Berne's neighbouring squares, Bärenplatz and Waisenhausplatz, were filled with the noise and smell of bumper-to-bumper traffic. Since then they have become a paradise for pedestrians – closed to vehicles and flanked by colourful restaurants and boulevard cafes. These squares have now become the setting for a four times a week market, which the Bernese call their "Bäre-Märit" (Bear Market). The stalls offer an exciting variety of products, and operate only on those days when Berne's bigger traditional market is not held – Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Just in front of the Käfigturm, there will soon be a zone with a merry-go-round for children, a platform for speeches, musical

performances and other entertainment, and also a hot-dog stand. The Mayor of Berne has expressed the wish that visitors to the city and the Bernese themselves should experience a new feeling in Switzerland's Federal capital – that of leisurely social contact in the city squares.

New Restaurants in Berne's City Centre

Two new restaurants have opened in Berne's city centre in recent weeks and are already winning a big reputation for their respective specialities. On the premises of the former "Au Premier" Restaurant in Neuengasse, there is now the new and original *Ristorante Pizzeria Pomodoro*. It has places for 112 guests and serves Italian specialities, with no less than 12 different types of pizza being offered by proprietor Mario Lusardi and his experienced pizza-chef. The other newcomer to the Berne scene is the *Aarbergerhof Café*, focal point of the newly-opened Aarbergerhof Centre in Aarberggasse. The Café has been built in the style of an old Viennese coffee house and is making every effort to offer "house" specialities at reasonable prices. The Aarbergerhof Centre – meeting place for the young and young-at-heart – also incorporates an excellent shopping complex. Among others, there is a book shop (which also includes an art gallery), a record shop called Musicland, two boutiques (Lord Kitchener and Liberty U.S. Trading) and a shoe shop (Andy Illien).



Les Semaines Gastronomiques de La Fontaine continues with Swiss cuisine from the Grand Hotel,

Les Diablerets.

November 4th to the 9th, luncheon and dinner at La Fontaine will be prepared under the auspices of the chefs and staff of Switzerland's most distinguished Alpine hotel.

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