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Auf dem Langensee sind bis 27. September für den internationalen Verkehr Arona–Locarno die beiden Schnellboote «Freccia del Verbano» und «Freccia del Ticino» eingesetzt. Photo Stanley Mason

Jusqu'au 27 septembre, les deux bateaux rapides «Freccia del Verbano» et «Freccia del Ticino» relient Arona et Locarno

Sul Lago Maggiore, il traffico internazionale Arona–Locarno sarà svolto, sino al 27 settembre, dalle due motonavi rapide «Freccia del Verbano» e «Freccia del Ticino»

On Lago Maggiore until September 27 there have been put into service on the international run between Arona and Locarno the two high-speed craft «Freccia del Verbano» and «Freccia del Ticino»

ALISCAFO

While air travel has made huge strides in half a century and jet liners can already carry hundreds of people above the clouds at speeds faster than sound, progress on the water, though it has been going on for several millennia, has been incomparably slower. Why should this be so? The reason lies in the much higher density and viscosity of water as compared with air. As soon as a vessel travels fast in the water, it has to take a serious battering. Conditions are not so bad below the surface, and the submarine is here at an advantage; but submarines are not very suitable for carrying passengers. At the interface of air and water, however, turbulence is at its greatest, and designers of highspeed waterborne conveyances are soon faced by formidable problems. One of the recent solutions to these problems is the hovercraft, which gets away from the water surface altogether by creating an air cushion between water and vessel. Another is the hydrofoil, with which a large part of the ship's hull is raised out of the water by fins when the vessel is travelling at speed.

No hovercraft services are in operation in Switzerland as yet, but those who would like to sample the experience of hydrofoil travel have a unique opportunity to do so when in Locarno. From here the Freccia del Ticino (or Ticino Arrow) shown in our picture goes from Locarno to Stresa and Arona in Italy three times a day. It covers the Locarno–Stresa run, with stops, in a little more than an hour, which is only about one third of the time taken by the lake steamer service.

The principle of the hydrofoil is borrowed, as its name implies, from the aerofoil, water fins replacing the wings of an aircraft. By meeting the resistance of the water at an angle, these fins lift the front part of the hull as soon as the propeller begins to give a powerful thrust, thus reducing the contact with

the water to a minimum. When travelling at speed, the hydrofoil boat—known in Italian as the aliscafo—might be said to glide on its fin surfaces. Passengers taking the aliscafo from Locarno will find seating facilities, ventilation nozzles and other amenities closely resembling those of a modern aeroplane. The pitching and tossing of ships of the old dispensation has gone, replaced by a vibration that again resembles that of an aircraft. The passenger accommodation is fully enclosed, so the gentle fanning of the lake breeze through one's hair has to be sacrificed, but in return transportation is speedy, and one saves two hours even on the popular trip from Locarno to Stresa—an invaluable advantage to the tourist who has little time to spare.

For those who are interested in technical details, the aliscafo is just over 21 metres long, has a lightweight displacement of 24 tons and is propelled by turbocharged diesel engines rated at 1250 h.p. It can carry eighty seated passengers at a cruising speed of 66 kilometres, or about 41 miles, per hour. It was built in Messina by Cantieri Navali Rodriguez.

The destination of most tourists who take the aliscafo from Locarno is the Italian resort of Stresa and the three islands that can be reached from it: the Isola Bella, Isola Madre and Isola dei Pescatori, known collectively as the Borromean Islands. The day trip is a rewarding one that reveals, at so short a remove, the difference of two cultures and two ways of life. For the Borromean palaces and gardens have all of that Italian grandezza that will be sought in vain in Switzerland. Here are the larger-than-life statues, the huge stone urns, the encrusted fountains, the peacock-visited vistas, all the pomp and grandiloquence of a spacious past—with a fast, up-to-the-minute vessel waiting to carry one back into the present.

Segelschiffe auf dem Bodensee im grossen schweizerischen Segelrevier vor Romanshorn. Photo Lauterwasser ►

Voiliers sur le lac de Constance, dont la rive occidentale est suisse

La tranquilla distesa lacuale dinanzi a Romanshorn offre un porto sicuro ai velieri

Sailboats on the Lake of Constance in the waters favoured by many Swiss sailing enthusiasts off Romanshorn



