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Video Reviews

BLS Lötschbergbahn

MITV - Iron Way-Granite Alp series

We have become used to the high quality of image and sound from this company. These tapes are no exception. Digital mastering has reproduced broadcast quality, sharp prints and fine colour.

This starts with cameos of what is to come and then conducts us to one of the main attractions of Brig, Schloss Stockalper. A brief visit to Italy through the Simplon introduces the source of much of the traffic. We join the EC 'Verdi' at Brig for the run to Thun. The doubling of the line is examined in some detail with some particularly good shots of some of the viaducts.

For the railway modeller, the rock styles and vegetation, avalanche protection and retaining walls are worthy of note.

Returning to the Lötschberg tunnel, archive pictures enhance the telling of the history and there are scenes of the very successful car shuttles. Before leaving Kandersteg, fine views in the locality, including the Öschinensee.

The descent to Blausee includes mention of the BLS North Ramp walk. There is a descriptive booklet in English available from the BLS. A side trip to Blausee is followed by a visit to a remarkable box making factory and its museum at Frutigen. The journey into the town and rail centre of Spiez is interrupted by a climb by funicular to the summit of Niesen from which there are spectacular views over Thunersee and the distant Brienzersee. There follows a helicopter shot of the train passing Spiez works and depot and its approach to the station.

After a look at Spiez harbour and the nearby castle, the scene moves to one of the founding companies, the Bödelibahn, which ran from Bönigen on the Brienzersee through Interlaken to a spot near Därligen station where there was a ship connection to Thun. Again, good use has been made of archive material.

Following a glimpse of the BOB at Interlaken, Spiez works features, in which the loco history up to the powerful new class 465 is discussed.

Final scenes include a race between the BLS's restored paddle steamer and a diesel ship.

Glacier Express - Part 1

MITV

Following the scene setting shots, unusually starts at the top of a mountain, the Gornergrat, with classic views of the mountains. The metre gauge rack line, the Gornergrat Bahn, is used to descend to Zermatt where, after a look at parts of the old town and its car-free streets, the Glacier Express, composed entirely of new panorama cars, is boarded.

The variety of views on the descent to Visp includes some of the mountain slide and rail diversion at Herbriggen although the diversion is not mentioned. The aerial shots at Brig are beauties. The train reverses, loses its BVZ loco and gains a FO loco and a single RhB restaurant car which makes an interesting comparison with the panorama cars. We have a quick look at Brig and the surprisingly picturesque Natters just across the Rhone before setting off on the rack assisted climb towards the Furka.

There are more fine helicopter shots and then there is a diversion at Betten where a large cable car is succeeded by a small one to look upon the Aletsch glacier from high in the mountains.

Münster, with its FO steam loco in the small shed, gives an opportunity to look at loco history with the use of stills (look where the Rhone glacier descended to at the turn of the century and where it is now) and great archive cine film includes a snow plough in action on the Furka and the erection of the Stephanbach bridge.

From Andermatt, a side trip is made down the Schöllenen gorge to Göschenen before a look at the village in summer and winter. The video continues with the Glacier Express in winter and, in my opinion, follow some of the best train and air pictures on tape. Look out for the effect of the oblique sun on the shadows on the snow.

At Oberalpasshöhe, summer returns as the express winds down to Disentis with its fine monastery. Effectively, part 1 ends here with the loco change to the RhB, but there are tantalising shots of scenes to come in Part 2 as the train heads for St. Moritz.

Both videos are highly recommended.

A.J. Pike

Video Review

By Rail to the Glaciers

Eisenbahn Video, distributed by MITV.

This video showcases the railways of the Jungfrau Region. As might be imagined, the route is fairly predictable, forming a round trip from the Harder Kälm above Interlaken to Jungfraujoch via all points, as seen during the summer months. Production quality is excellent, giving the impression that the sun always shines in the area! The only variation to the expected route is to visit Mürren after leaving Eigergletscher, using the promotion of the Jungfrau line by Albert Guyer-Zeller (after visiting Mürren) as a link.

Conceived as a general video, the program concentrates on the latest stock on the rack lines, with the new coaches on the Schynigge Platte and the Jungfraubahn dominating these lines. Those viewers who can't stand the 'Knorr Soup' units should be warned that they dominate the Wengernalpbahn footage. There should be little surprise that few technical details are given,

although the different gauges of the lines are discussed and a trip is taken round Eigergletscher works.

'Heritage' (pre-first world war in this area) stock makes its appearance on the BOB (ex Brünig HG3/3 1067 providing the power), BLM, JB and naturally, the SPB, but the post war stock on the WAB and JB are almost completely invisible!

Overall this video which is aimed at a general audience, and which concentrates on the stunning scenery without tying itself up in technicalities.

Within these restrictions it succeeds admirably.

N. Freezer

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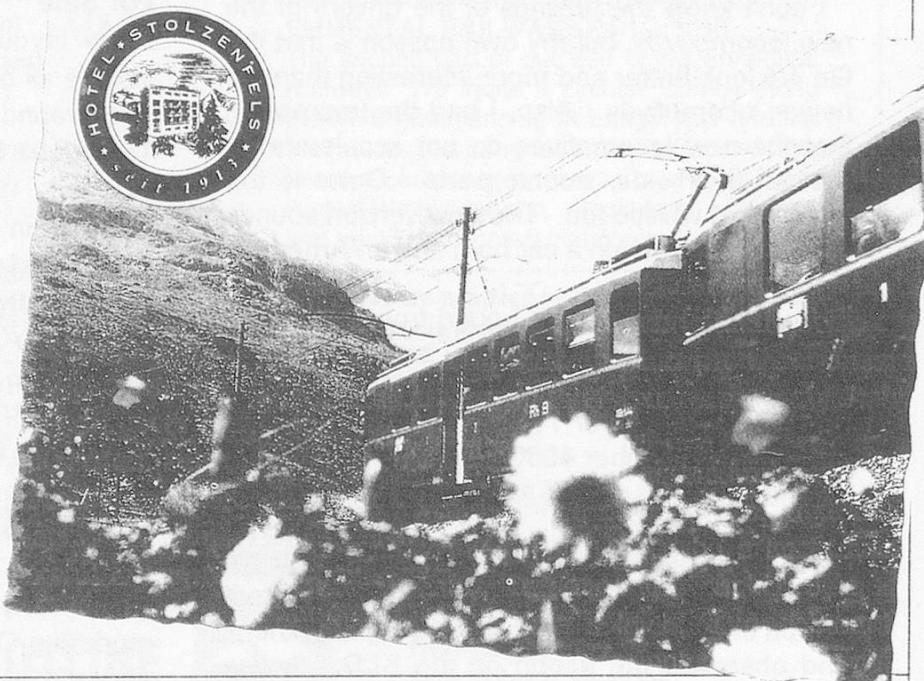
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Fascination

RHAETIAN RAILWAY

It is really a very special landscape which presents itself to the natural lover. And it is also a very special adventure for every fan of railways. It is simply one of the most beautiful ways to travel through the Swiss mountains.

The Hotel Stolzenfels in Davos has organized for many years in cooperation with the Rhaetian Railway the popular train adventure weeks for its guests, the so-called "Fascination Rhaetian Railway". Would you like to share this fascination with us? Then please request our information on dates and prices from the address indicated below. We are already looking forward to welcoming you as our guest!



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