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La Suisse des chemins de fer privés. (Presse Coop, CP 2550, 4002 Basel) Sfr. 14.

Nearly twenty years ago Dr Fritz Bandi brought out his splendidly illustrated two-volume work on Swiss Private Railways (Die Schweizerische Privatbahnen) published by Avanti Verlag. Strongly and elegantly bound, and in German, it quickly claimed an honoured place on library shelves and brought over sixty private lines into immediate view.

Now comes a bright, light-weight companion, in French (also available in German): La Suisse des chemins de fer privés (Private Railways in Switzerland) which turns the scales at just over 250gr, opens easily thanks to a strong but elegant white spiral binding, and costs only 14 francs. Each opening gives you three useful colour illustrations. The engine plus train on the left, while the right provides a description of a train (boat) hike (telecabin) excursion, as brief as 1^{1/2} hours or as long as a full day. The third picture, an enlarged map showing terrain, transport, and trails has reference numbers to the Swiss time-table and the phone number of each appropriate transport authority.

The main text recounts line-history and points out special features of interest to the traveller. Some rank as cliff-hanger stories, with a financial rescue organisation always there to protect and preserve, unlike some of our smaller railways. Sixty-five lines are covered, from No.1 (Lausanne - Bercher) in the west to No.65 (Samedan - Scuol Tarasp) in the east, the whole country being divided into six main districts. I found that all but seven of the lines are accessible to holders of the Swiss Pass, which of course offers discounts on super journeys such as Jungfrauoch and Gornergrat.

This attractive booklet will intrigue and enlighten enthusiasts without making too heavy demands on their French. Write to 1997 Presse Coop, CP 2550, 4002 Basel. Try a few arm-chair outings!

Denis Stevens

Die schönsten Fotostandorte, Les meilleurs emplacements. Presented by BLS. Price Sfr 8 from any BLS ticket office.

Next time you pick up your Arrival and Departure sheet from any station, consider this useful and inexpensive adjunct to a photographic tour. Among a neatly arranged sequence of colour photos, large and small maps, and hints as to where to stand when photographing trains you can find tips relating to best time of day, nearest station or bus stop, and background views. Information is in French, German and pictograms. Detailed maplets are keyed to a master showing the general lie of the land on the four main segments: Thun-Interlaken; Spiez-Kandersteg; Goppenstein-Brig; Spiez-Zweisimmen. More than 40 illustrations, so you can recognise the engines and rolling-stock. Warning: don't go too near the line, because speeds are 100 - 140 km/h!

Denis Stevens