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Switzerland Experience

Authors: Roland Baumgartner and Heinz Keller. Photographers: Robert Bösch, Roland Gerth, Marcus Gyger, Max Schmid, Christof Sonderegger and others. Published jointly by Switzerland Tourism and AS Verlag A.G., Buhnrain 30, CH-8052 Zürich. Languages: German, English, French and Italian. 208 pages, 200 photographs in full colour. Format 11 x 9 inches (approx.), hardcover. ISBN 3-909111-30-0. Price in Switzerland: SFr. 78 or 50 Euro. Internet: www.as-verlag.ch

This is not a book about trains, but you will want to buy this book for the beautiful photographs, mostly full page, of locations which can only be reached by an effort, very popular with a lot of our members, i.e. hiking! As we have become used to, with books from the A.S. Publishers, the photographs are very well reproduced. The pictures were taken by many different photographers. This way, you get a very wide range of impressions. As the texts are in four languages, including English, they are of necessity short and to the point. Although hiking tips are given, there are no maps in the book. This would have taken up unnecessary space: dedicated hiking-maps are available for every location imaginable. For the same reason, locations for overnight stay are suggested, but without any details. These also are available in plenty of other publications or on the web. For every area, some more general travel tips are given in the back of the book. In all, 28 areas are covered in the book: the National Park, Aletsch Glacier, Lake Uri, Verzasca Valley, Glacier and Bernina Express Country, Lake Geneva, Gruyères, Jura, Jungfrau, Appenzell, Via Spluga, Soglio, Maienfeld, Allalin Glacier, Val d' Annivers, Zermatt, Pilatus, Muotatal, Gotthard, Monte Tamaro, Monte Generoso, Les Diablerets, Jurassien Vaudois, Creux de Van, Emmental, Oberhasli, Alpine Passes and even a few pages on one of the best open-air museums in Switzerland: the Ballenberg Museum. As you can see, a huge selection of the different types of landscapes this wonderfully scenic country has to offer!

Don't be put off by one of the first hiking suggestions in the book, about the Swiss National Park – incidentally the oldest in Europe – which states: ...starting at Scuol, four challenging day trips cover more than 140 km (90 miles) and climb more than 4000 m (13,000 ft) through impressive mountain landscapes... They are not all like that! Although you do not have to be an experienced mountaineer, it is fair to say that all hikes in sub-alpine and alpine regions require a certain amount of competence and stamina, quite apart from proper hiking shoes. I have looked more closely at the areas around my home in Kandersteg, which I walked in my younger days and can say that the descriptions are fair as far as the required effort is concerned. Right in the front of the book, on Page 6, is one of my favourite areas, the Schynige Platte. The views, the little trains and the Alpine flowers are always breathtaking. I do love flowers, to look at that is. But remember, you are not allowed to pick them. These very fragile beauties only look right in their equally fragile environment. Let other people enjoy them too. As the Director of Swiss Tourism, Mr. Jürg Schmid, says in his foreword, people keep coming back to Switzerland for its breathtaking diversity of nature and landscapes – and, of course, trains!! (This last one is obviously my own addition – sorry Mr. Schmid). I would recommend this book as both a source for ideas and as a memento for when you get back home and start thinking about the next trip to Switzerland.

GMH

Railway Update – a new English language magazine.

Minirex AG, the publishers of both "Schweizer Eisenbahn-Revue" and "Eisenbahn-Revue International", have added the above magazine to their stable.

The magazine is mainly focussed on the railways of Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France and Italy. It is in A4 format with full colour and has about the same number of pages as "Today's Railways". The first edition had "News Pages" and then articles on "Upgrading the Swiss Rail Network until 2030", "Night time ETCS operating on the SBB", "SBB rolling stock strategy for the next decade", "High speed network in Italy", "Europrinter ES64F4", and "The Stadler Flirt Railcar". The latter two articles were of a technical nature. "Railway Update" will be issued four times a year at a cost, including postage, of SFr79.80 or 49.80 Euro and subscribers can pay by credit card.

I have written to the Editor and he tells me that they are looking for a UK outlet who will distribute the magazine or a Model Shop who will sell it. If any member would like to buy a copy of the magazine before subscribing then individual copies are SFr19.80, plus a further SFr4.00 postage. The address to write to is Minirex AG, Verlag and Versandbuchhandlung, Maihofstrasse 63/ Postfach, CH-6002, Luzern. You can use a credit card for the purchase, or pay money direct into their Bank Account, although this is a more expensive method of moving money.

I think that this venture would be welcomed by SRS members who wish to be informed of the current European scene, and I will let you know when I receive any further information from Minirex.

Roger Ellis

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