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'FINISHED WITH ENGINES'

Mario Gavazzi reports on the end of two eras on Lake Luzern




MS Schwyz seen leaving Flüelen on Sunday October 21st. 2012.

All photos: Mario Gavazzi

One of the most beautiful motor ships in public service in Switzerland is the *MS Schwyz*, that was built between 1956/59 by the SGV (Schiffahrtsgesellschaft des Vierwaldstättersees) in their own shipyard. The ship has a classic silhouette that is very similar to the great ocean liners of the 50s, especially the Italian ones. Sunday 21st October was the last day in service for the ship's two original Sulzer Type 6 TW24 450hp diesel engines. The *MS Schwyz* is undergoing a refit this winter prior to returning into service in May 2013 with two new engines. The last trip from Luzern to Brunnen was a privately organized special event run by a private institution "Schiffs-Agentur" (www.schiffs-agentur.ch) in association with the Swiss Transport Museum and the SGV. Also involved was a new association 'VBL Historic' that has been set up to preserve 'oldtimer' vehicles from the fleet of the Luzern Transport Organization – the VBL. As the ship cruised along the lake it was followed by guests travelling on 'oldtimer' bus No. 81, an FBW/Hess vehicle dating from 1955, which made several photo stops that gave the opportunity for photographers to capture excellent pictures of the ship. From Brunnen all the bus passengers returned on the final sailing powered by the over 50-year-old engines.



Earlier in the month, on a cold, wet, and dull October 7th another SGV vessel went into the history books. This was the last day in operation of the much-loved *MS Reuss* and the

atmosphere was very suitable for this sad occasion. Built in 1926 by Werft Sachsenberg at Rosslau (Germany) the *MS Reuss* had spent many years sailing on the Urnersee between Flüelen and Brunnen with the daily local service, especially in the wintertime. Towards the end of the life of this classic ship she had been used as the reserve boat for local service in the bay of Lucerne especially between Luzern and Meggen. With the introduction into service of the ultra-modern *MS Saphir* in May 2012, the management of the SGV decided to withdraw the *MS Reuss* at the end of the season. Many friends of this very nostalgic ship used her final timetabled service as the last chance for a trip and it is hoped that she may find a new place for service as the SGV hopes to sell her to a private operator or there is a chance that the 86-year-old vessel may find a new life as a private yacht. 



LEFT: VBL Historic FBW/Hess bus No.81 and driver Kaspar Bechter at the Swiss Transport Museum.

ABOVE: *MS Reuss* in nice weather at Luzern.

RIGHT: The last crew of *MS Reuss*. Thomas Amrhein (and Andreas Schoenbaechler in the cabin) say goodbye to the final passengers on Sunday October 7th 2012.

