

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2018)
Heft: 133

Artikel: Full steam ahead for commuters : Mario Gavazzi makes his dream commuter trip
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-853719>

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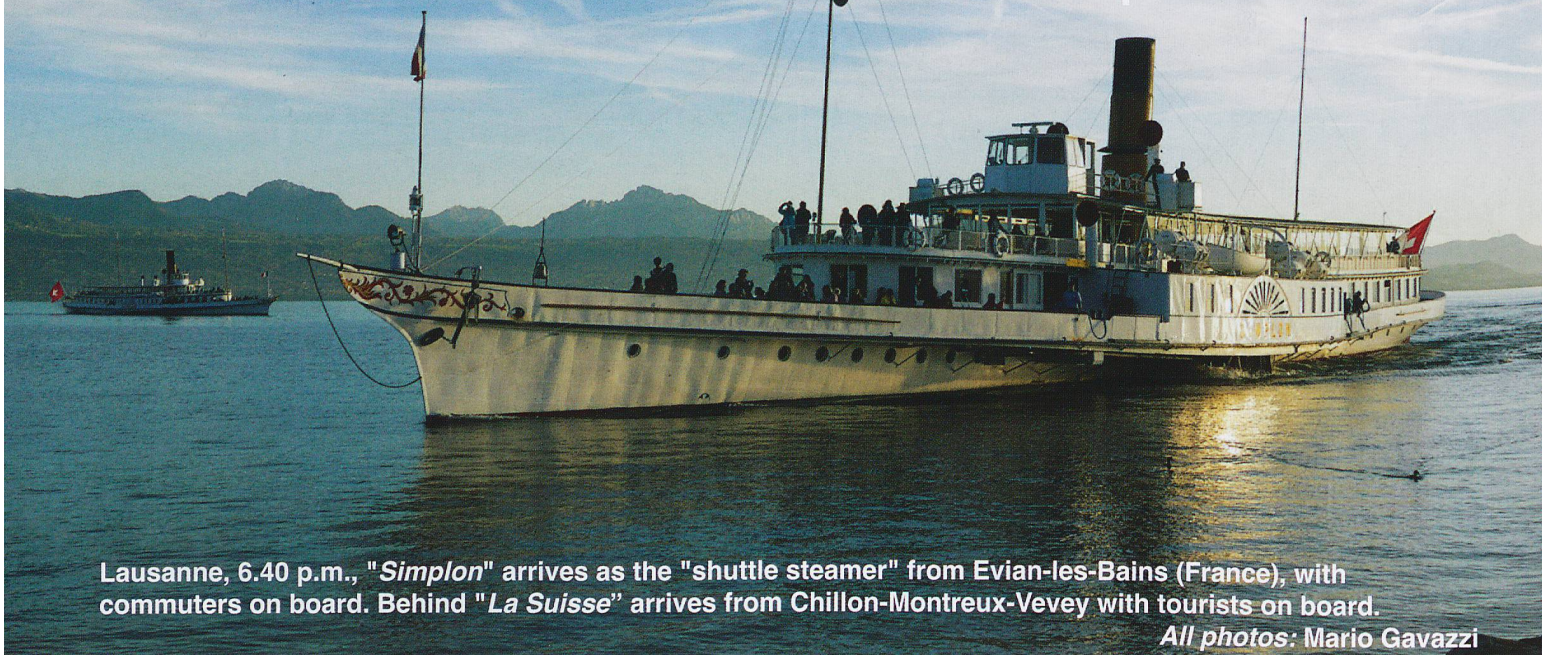
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Full Steam Ahead for Commuters

Mario Gavazzi makes his dream commuter trip



Lausanne, 6.40 p.m., "*Simplon*" arrives as the "shuttle steamer" from Evian-les-Bains (France), with commuters on board. Behind "*La Suisse*" arrives from Chillon-Montreux-Vevey with tourists on board.

All photos: Mario Gavazzi


Forget alpine pastures. Forget magnificent mountains. Switzerland is a country of commuters! Many amongst them are probably steam enthusiasts and perhaps dream of their daily trips taking place using steam traction. For some their dream has become reality. I have been fortunate enough to join them.

More and more, day-by-day, people use public or private transport to get to work, or to access education, or even to go shopping, and to return home in the evening. Most of them are stressed as they use trains, buses, trams ... and especially

private cars. But some of them must be lucky people - for example some of those who commute by ship across Le Léman between Lausanne and Evian-les-Bains in France. This is a busy two-way traffic as many French and Swiss travel daily in both directions to their jobs. It must certainly beat the overcrowded 07.15 from Olten - or the 08.00 from Surbiton! The Compagnie Générale de Navigation sur le Lac Léman, www.cgn.ch (CGN) normally operates large motor ships between the two cities. On their other international lines CGN uses small fast ships, but between Lausanne and



Great and beautiful - "*La Suisse*" arrives at the Lausanne pier.

Evian every day several thousands of passengers cross the lake going to work, and back home in the evening. The passenger figures are increasing year by year. So CGN uses big ships. Sometimes, when one of the diesel ships is in the shipyard for repairs, or necessary renovation, CGN is obliged to operate the commuter trips in the morning and evening, with one of the big steamboats. At the end of September and into early October 2017 Europe's largest lake paddle steamer, 'Simplon' was in regular service on these commuter trips, much to the enjoyment of many of the regular daily travellers. Imagine checking your emails, or catching up with the newspaper, next to the sight and smell of the massive steam engines! I understand that the CGN will also use the ship on this busy commuter route for up to six weeks in spring 2018. I travelled to Lausanne in the autumn to join the regulars and enjoy a dream commuter ride. So please, why not check the CGN website, travel to Switzerland next year, join the lucky regulars and me and come on-board. Let us realize that it is not a dream - enjoy the happening of "full steam ahead" on Le Léman! 



1. Incredible - unbelievable – impossible, but true: hundreds of commuters leave the steamer, as hundreds are waiting ready for 'steaming' home to Evian-les-Bains.
2. Some tourists on board, and those who finished working or reading, are outside and enjoying the beautiful scenery.
3. Evian-les-Bains - time to get off. See you early next morning.
4. Same picture every day: Commuters disembarking to go home.
5. Lausanne arrival 19.50. The last commuters leave the boat, engineers Markus Graf (r.) and Sven Aviolat prepare the engine for the next trip to Evian.