

Welcome to the autumn low season

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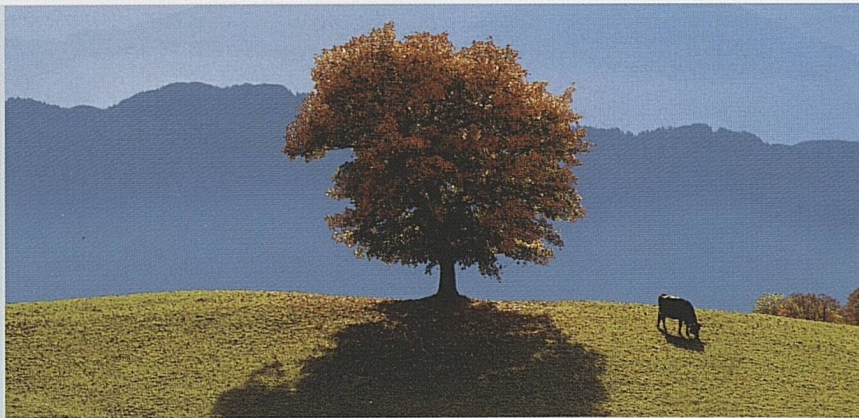
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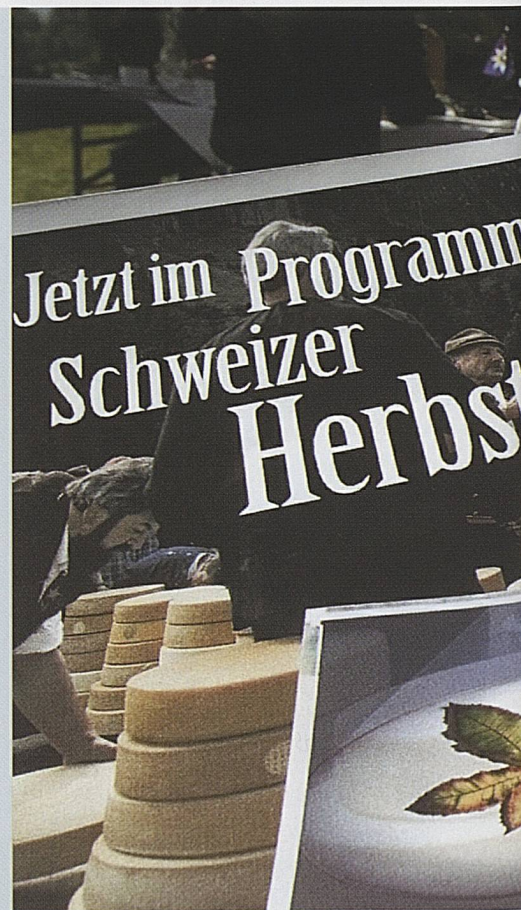
Autumn is Switzerland's golden season and the ideal time to explore its nature and culture on foot. And with a new network of adventure trails the regions and destinations are tempting visitors with a range of attractive hiking holidays. Yet autumn is also the time of the harvest, (wine) festivals and a rich cultural offering ranging from yodelling to blues and choral music. More than 400 of these autumnal highlights, some of which are directly bookable, were put together for the various communications channels, in particular the autumn brochure and the Internet.

The «Welcome to Autumn.» campaign was a hospitality offensive. Mountain railways, for example, gave away luscious apples to hikers, hotels in the Graubünden region left a «Scarnuz Grischun», a basket of specialities produced by local farmers, in their rooms, head chefs took visitors along to the autumn market, village teachers offered guided walks through beautiful autumnal forests, and farmers issued invitations to an autumnal breakfast in Alpine meadows. All these efforts were inspired by a national competition for the best autumn promotion ideas, aimed at improving Switzerland's hospitality image and offering low-season visitors genuine value added in the form

of the «Herbstmümpfeli», a surprise gift.

The campaign boasts some impressive figures. A quarter of a million brochures were distributed throughout Switzerland via Railtour/RailAway, and «Welcome to Autumn» posters were displayed at 2,000 railway stations. The campaign message was carried on one million bottles of mineral water. Interhome and Migros wrote to thousands of customers and distributed leaflets at the 56 largest Migros outlets. For the first time ever tram posters with booklet dispensers were deployed in six cities. And a 15-minute autumn holiday programme was broadcast in five local television slots on Globe TV, also for the first time.

In Germany the campaign adopted a hard-hitting, high-profile approach at important, highly frequented locations. At 250 m², the largest advertising poster in Germany was displayed at the main railway station in Frankfurt. Giant posters were also employed in southern German cities such as Stuttgart and Munich. An advertising campaign spread the «Welcome to Autumn.» message in newspapers such as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Welt am Sonntag and Die Welt. The campaign brochure appeared as an insert in Stern,



Spiegel, Geo-Saison and Feinschmecker magazines. Twenty media representatives were invited to experience Switzerland's autumn holiday offering at first hand, thus generating a large number of media reports. And finally, the autumn brochure was placed in the seat pockets of all Crossair planes on German routes.

«The autumn low season still has great growth potential. That is why Switzerland Tourism is investing a total of 1.8 million francs aimed at generating some 35 million francs in revenues in autumn», said Jörg P. Krebs, responsible for leisure marketing at Switzerland Tourism, laying down the yardstick.

Each franc invested in marketing is intended to generate 22 francs in autumn sales. This is the target of the «Welcome to Autumn.» promotion, with its three experience-based themes - nature, wine & dine and culture.



Partners

«Welcome to Autumn.» was a broad-based, partner-oriented promotion backed by the Swiss Hotel Association, GastroSuisse, the Swiss Tourism Federation, the tourism regions and destinations and, new this autumn, the Public Transport Association and the Swiss Cableways. The associations and the individual providers were actively involved in the promotion, extending an autumnal welcome to visitors in a variety of ways.

The trend towards adventure trails

Visitors can learn about the soft whey cheese known as ziger on the «Ziger Highway» above Mollis, for example. Or discover the story of the transit routes across the Alps on the Via Spluga from Thusis to Chiavenna. And the wind turbine trail in the Toggenburg valley, the Obwaldnerland butterfly path, the scarecrow path up to the vineyards above Morges and the dinosaur trail on Monte San Giorgio all awaken interest for autumn hiking.

Weighty award

On 30 October 2001 the product manageress of the 2000 autumn promotion, Ladina Giovanoli, was awarded the «Switzerland Milestone Tourism Prize» by the trade magazine hotel + tourism revue. She received the award for the best young manager not only for her expertise but also for the hard work she put into the successful planning and implementation of the autumn campaign in 2000. Switzerland Tourism was also presented with the Milestone award for its young talent policy.

