

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

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**Didier Burkhalter elected
as Federal Councillor**

**Eicher, Hunger, Happy & Co.:
new trends in folk**

Switzerland's getting older

IMPORTANT:
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Switzerland – a nation of culture

MANY FOREIGNERS STILL ONLY ASSOCIATE Switzerland with magnificent mountains and delicious chocolate, as a study commissioned by Presence Switzerland has once again shown. People do not really seem to be aware of just how much culture there is to be found in Switzerland that they can enjoy along with the mountains and chocolate. Few other countries have as much to offer culturally as Switzerland in all areas of the arts.

Is the Culture and Convention Centre Lucerne the most modern and magnificent concert hall in the world, or, at the very least, does it possess the best acoustics? The “Salle blanche”, designed by the brilliant French architect, Jean Nouvel, is most definitely an architectural gem with outstanding sound. And the Lucerne Festival is perhaps the world’s most prestigious musical event – and not just since Claudio Abbado began bringing the finest orchestral musicians together each year in his Lucerne Festival Orchestra to mesmerise the international music world with this extraordinary ensemble. The musical elite take the stage for five weeks in Lucerne – a showcase event for all the great orchestras, conductors and soloists. When the “Salle modulable” is completed in a few years’ time, even opera will be performed in the summer in Lucerne. And all this will be achieved with hardly any government funding.

While the Verbier Festival primarily aims to promote young artists, Gstaad’s Menuhin Festival has developed, over its 53-year history, from its origins in the church of Saanen into a major event featuring more than 40 performances and attracting 20,000 visitors. Since the year 2000, the large symphony concerts have been held in a 1800-seat marquee. 70% of visitors to the Gstaad festival attend regularly, and 76% come from Switzerland.



Heinz Eckert

Prince, in addition to many other artists, flew in especially from the USA for two exclusive performances at the Montreux Jazz Festival this year for a fee of CHF 1.5 million. The open-air events, from Berne’s Gurten Festival to Sittertobel in St. Gallen, from Interlaken to Frauenfeld, and from Gampel to Zofingen, always boast first-rate line-ups.

Basel, the city of art, attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors wishing to see world-class art. Van Gogh’s landscapes could be marvelled at in the Kunstmuseum, while Giacometti’s magnificent work attracted visitors from all over the world to the Beyeler Foundation in Riehen. The “From Cézanne to Rothko” exhibition was held in Lausanne, while “From Courbet to Picasso” was on display at the Giannada Foundation in Martigny.

Zurich offers musical festival weeks and traditional theatrical performances. And Locarno has the film festival.

There is art and culture aplenty.

The splendid calendar of events, which Switzerland offers twelve months a year, is possible thanks to the country’s general prosperity. Only a wealthy nation has sponsors able to spend large amounts of money on culture, even in times of economic crisis. World-class culture does not come cheap. Ultimately there also has to be a demand for events, which can sometimes be expensive, and an audience who can afford them.

We should not take the large spending on cultural events all over Switzerland for granted. It allows Switzerland to stand out, making us a cultural superpower.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Cover picture: **Didier Burkhalter (FDP) has been elected as Pascal Couchepin’s successor in the Federal Council and takes over the Department of Home Affairs. Photo: Keystone**

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Congratulations

I was extremely impressed by the last edition of your magazine. The article on the economic crisis is one of the best I have ever read on the topic. Of course, it is not an exhaustive report – nor indeed could it be – but the main points are set out with great clarity. Many congratulations! The same is also true of the review of René Zeyer's book. It will stand out from the many publications on this topic. However, I was very saddened to hear that "Swiss Review" will only appear four times a year in future. Of course, one has to live within one's means, but I cannot understand Parliament's budget cuts.

W. GEISER, GELSENKIRCHEN,
GERMANY

Fantastic

The new online version of "Swiss Review" is great. I really like the option of clicking on links in the text which take you to other pages and/or information. I also appreciate having access to the editions in other countries. Thank you so much.

F.J. RÖLLI, SANTA MARTA,
COLOMBIA

Swiss humour

I once again took great pleasure in reading "Swiss

Review", in particular the articles on Erni and Swiss humour. The cover page to illustrate Swiss humour was one of the most interesting yet. It was created by a Swiss German artist to illustrate how the French-speaking Swiss are seen by the Swiss Germans. It could equally well have been produced by a French-speaking Swiss to gently poke fun at the Swiss Germans. One of the strong points of Swiss humour is that it can be read in two ways, as such making it universal.

A. CHARBONNET, ATHENS,
GREECE

Bell-ringing

Your article in the August issue about bell-ringing was fascinating. Another reason to tune in to Swiss radio.

J. GRIFFITH, LIVERPOOL,
GREAT BRITAIN

Outlooks and insights

As a Swiss person abroad (20 years in Germany), I read the printed version of "Swiss Review" and enjoy sharing it with my family. We then pass it on to other people or simply leave it on our reading desk for guests. As you cannot always access the computer, I carry "Swiss Review" in my briefcase so I can read it whenever I want.

The printed version of the magazine may cost more and be less environmentally friendly, but it does have a much greater impact and attracts a significantly larger readership. There are insights as well as outlooks.

D. BIANCONI, OBERSCHÖLLENBACH,
GERMANY

"Which famous character was created by the Swiss author Johanna Spyri?" This is the type of question you will find in the parlour game *Helvetiq*. The answer is, of course, our very own Heidi. You will also discover where the artistic movement of Dadaism was born (Zurich) and which 19th-century Russian author lost a fortune at the casino in Saxon (Dostoevsky). Hadi Barkat, a graduate of the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), came up with the idea for the game whilst going through the naturalisation process. This entrepreneur, investor and engineer from the canton of Vaud lives in both Boston and Switzerland. While the game was originally designed to help future applicants for naturalisation to prepare for communal interviews, its

creators quickly realised that Swiss people would also be interested in playing the game to satisfy their appetite for knowledge about Switzerland. *Helvetiq*'s red box contains two games – a quiz and a politics game. The quiz is a small board game, illustrated with a traditional "poya" scene of cows climbing to the mountain pastures. There are 150 cards which contain two questions, one on either side, with one side giving the answer to the other. For example: "Which famous Swiss sweet was introduced in the 1930s by the company Suchard?" And on the reverse side: "Which Swiss company launched the Sugus sweet on the market?" After answering the question, the player throws between one and three dice, depending on the risk incurred and the validity of the answer. In the politics game, each player represents a political movement and attempts to increase his or her influence by entering positions of power in the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies at communal, cantonal and federal level. The winner is the player who climbs the highest up the political ladder.

A fair amount of time is required to learn the rules and how to play the game. A visit to the www.helvetiq.ch website, which offers tips in video format, is recommended. After playing a game, you will begin to understand the strategies and finer points of the game to become a master of the tactics of political gamesmanship. It is a matter of manoeuvring five pieces to climb the rungs of the Swiss political system. You will need votes, special cards and laws, avoiding referenda and relying on initiatives, to score maximum points.

You don't have to be of voting age to play *Helvetiq*. The quiz can be played by 2 to 4 players aged 8 and above, and the politics game by 3 or 4 players aged 10 and above. The game is also aimed at communes and cantons to prepare new voters for citizenship, to foster the integration of immigrants or to provide a tool to support the naturalisation procedure. The game has been an immediate success with more than 7000 sets already having been sold in French-speaking Switzerland. It is set to be equally well received in German-speaking Switzerland, where it has been available for several months. Available in French, German, Italian and English, *Helvetiq* can be ordered on the www.helvetiq.ch website.