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DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

July 28, 1994

Digging Out

Come burrow with me through a desk littered with newspaper clippings, unanswered subscriber correspondence, guide books, press releases, faxes, travel brochures and scribbled phone notes. Let's see if we can make something of it.

□ In its August issue, the conscience of the travel industry, *Consumer Reports Newsletter*, in a review of more than 20 travel newsletters, made *Gemütlichkeit* an "Editor's Choice" and called it "a real find for the frequent visitor to German-speaking Europe." I'd bow but things are getting a little thin on top and it's embarrassing.

□ For the first time, **Balair** (officially now Balair-CTA), the Swissair subsidiary, will continue to operate its Tuesday flight from San Francisco to Zürich through the fall and winter. The stopover city will change from Halifax to Calgary, thereby shortening the trip by one hour. Also, starting November 2, Balair will offer a year-round Zürich-Calgary-Honolulu flight.

□ Subscriber Herbert St. Goar hopes when we do our story on Baden-Baden that we will mention **Steigenberger Badischer Hof**, a hotel Mr. St. Goar chooses because it is the only one with an inside thermal pool. Baden-Baden is on our publication schedule for this fall, but we missed the Badischer Hof so it won't be part of our story. You'll have to take Mr. St. Goar's word (for which I unhesitatingly vouch) on it. He also recommends the **Restaurant Stahlbad**, where he says the food is much better than at the **Brenner's Park**.

□ Bill Stall, a *Los Angeles Times* writer and *Gemütlichkeit* sub-

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

NEUCHÂTEL & LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

Our Bruce Woelfel is just back from the Swiss Canton of Neuchâtel with an enthusiastic report on the beautiful lakeside city of Neuchâtel and nearby La Chaux-de Fonds, the cradle of the clock-making industry.

Neuchâtel is an incredibly beautiful medieval and renaissance city at the foot of the Jura, facing the Alps. It borders the shore of Switzerland's largest inland lake and is surrounded by gently sloping vineyards. A 12th century castle and collegiate church dominate its perfectly preserved buildings of honey-colored stone. Adjoining the lake are flowering quays, green parks, promenades, marinas and luxury hotels, some of the latter enclosed by the shells of the older buildings they replaced.

A wonderful city! My greatest appreciation came seeing it from the edge of the lake early on a Sunday morning after a rainy night, with the city still asleep, when there was clear air and fantastic, dramatic lighting. It was a skyline of sharp roof tops and soft colors, etched in sunlight against a background of hovering dark clouds.

I strolled the pristine white rock waterfront

Harbor view from guest room in Hotel Touring au Lac

which stretched far into the distance; the entire lake front is available to city dwellers for boating and swimming. Then I toured the city, walking narrow alleys of irregular ancient buildings with glassed-in displays of merchandise, and into little plazas with gilded, medieval statues.

Aside from its beauty, Neuchâtel is remarkable for its extensive pedestrian areas, and on its streets there is little traffic, only a few cars, even at rush hour. Three intersecting main roads have been buried beneath the ground. The quiet streets and beautiful shoreline are the result of this recently

completed tunneling which took 15 years of exacting work. Rock excavated from the project was used to line the waterfront.

The city's history gives clues to its independent and progressive character. A part of Burgundy during the 11th century, Neuchâtel was governed by the Holy Roman Empire, then allied with the Swiss confederation from the 15th century on. It became independent in 1648 and remained an autonomous principality, although in 1707 it chose Frederick of Prussia as its prince. It became a Canton of Switzerland in 1814, but was still claimed by Prussia until 1857.

Neuchâtel has benefited by its acceptance of religious and political nonconformity, especially during the period from 1665-1685 when King Louis XIV persecuted Protestants and finally revoked the 1598 Treaty of Nantes which had defined the

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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scriber, visits Switzerland frequently to ski, hike and mountain climb. You may have read his articles — which are picked up by newspapers across the country — in the travel section of your local paper. In a recent note to us he described the three-star **City Hotel** in Bern as “run down and seedy” and the staff “largely invisible and not terribly helpful.” He called the Einstein apartment at 49 Kramgasse, where Einstein wrote the theory of relativity, a “real treat.” And we are in agreement that Bern’s famed bear pit is rather sad.

□ We have had many positive comments about our 1992 Hotel of the Year, the **Geiger** in Berchtesgaden. However, not everyone has come away enamored. J. B. Jamieson of Atherton, CA, termed his experience there “Godawful.” His room, Number 12 in the main building, had no heat in September and “secondhand, Salvation Army furniture.” In the dining room, after a series of loud crashes from the kitchen, the waiter said there would be a short delay with dinner. The meal took three hours. He said he saw no sign of the Geiger family — father or son — and the desk person was a “teenager.” The Jamieson’s cut short their visit, leaving after one disastrous night.

Another subscriber, whose name I have misplaced, told me about a major malfunction of his room’s toilet. The problem was never resolved, even after several discussions with management.

Our own experiences at the Geiger have been terrific, but it’s been a couple of years and things change. Anyone been there lately?

□ The Jamieson’s did, however, ask us to pass along their recommendation for a short excursion from Poschiavo, in the southeastern tip of Switzerland. Heading south from Poschiavo the train stop is Le Prese. From there it’s a short distance to **Hotel Le Prese** (phone 82/50333, fax 92/50835) on Lago di Poschiavo where they report a delightful lunch on the hotel’s terrace overlooking the lake. They also liked **Hotel Grüner Baum**,

Gemütlichkeit’s 1993 Hotel of the Year.

□ In a series on the world’s best restaurants, the *International Herald Tribune*’s restaurant critic, Patricia Wells, picks the top tables in Switzerland. Her choices are: #1 **Restaurant Fredy Girardet** in Crissier, near Lausanne, phone 21/634 0505; #2 **Restaurant Pierroz (Hotel Rosalp)** in Verbier, phone 26/31 63 23; and, #3 **Petermann’s Kunststube**, in Küsnacht, a Zürich suburb, phone 1/910 0715. For what she terms “casual dining” the top three picks are: #1 **La Grappe d’Or** in Lausanne, phone 212/323 0760; #2 **Au Vieux Valais**, in Verbier, phone 26/31 69 55; #3 **Kronenhalle**, in Zürich, phone 1/251 66 69. *Gemütlichkeit* has reviewed four of the six restaurants, having not yet been to Girardet or Au Vieux Valais. We like all four but Kronenhalle is the most entertaining “place to be” and La Grappe d’Or has the best food. I’m not sure how Ms. Wells defines “casual dining” but to me it’s blue jeans and prices that don’t resemble my monthly mortgage payment. None of these six qualify on either score. The least expensive is Kronenhalle where you figure to drop about \$50 per person for a two or three course meal and ordinary wine. At Girardet, dinner for two with a bottle of appropriate wine will be from \$300 to \$400.

She says Switzerland is a “nation where the food can be frankly frumpy (you’ll still see lots of veal cordon bleu on the menu).” This from someone who hails from the land of chicken fried steak and hot roast beef sandwiches? Lighten up, Patty. Even France isn’t immune to “frumpy” food. Ever heard of french fries...er, I mean *pommes frites*?

□ Earlier this month I spent a week in our retail travel store — **Travel Essentials** — in Ashland, Oregon. As usual for this time of year, the town was full of tourists, most of them to see Shakespeare and other plays in the three festival theaters. It gave me an opportunity to talk to people on their way to all corners of the world, including some to Europe. I came away with a couple of impressions: Americans don’t like to spend money on maps. “Hey, just give me a map of Europe.” “Oh, I got a nice map of Germany from

the tourist office.” It is unthinkable that even the smallest California hamlet would not appear on a map of the state. But that’s not true in Europe. A few months ago, for example, we published a letter from a subscriber about the charming village of Regensberg, north of Zürich. We soon began receiving calls from readers asking if we hadn’t confused Regensberg with Regensdorf, a small town, also north of Zürich. Well, there really is a Regensberg. It just isn’t on every map of Switzerland, including the one distributed free by the Swiss Tourist Office. I suppose since California is substantially larger than Germany, and we need only a single map to guide us around the state, it seems logical that we ought to be able to get along with just one map in Germany. You, who have been there, know otherwise, but the concept of toting five or six maps (at \$5.95 a pop) to cover only a portion of a small country is one I had trouble getting across. (Incidentally, if you’re Ashland bound, the three best restaurants in town are Thai Pepper, Cucina Biazzi and New Sammy’s Cowboy Bistro.)

My second impression is that there are a lot of very good travel guides that have come on the market in the last few years.

For budget travelers, the *Rough Guide* series, published in London, the new *Berkeley Guides*, and Australia-based *Lonely Planet Guides* are fat references full of practical advice, phone & fax numbers, addresses and destination information. Unlike the more straightforward old standbys, such as Fodor’s and Frommer’s, the authors of these books don’t shy away from expressing an opinion. You may not agree with the point of view but it makes for livelier reading.

The most spectacular new travel books are the *Eyewitness Guides* from Dorling Kindersley of London. These gorgeous guides to London, Paris, Rome and New York feature 3-D graphics, hundreds of full color photos, a rugged binding and are beautifully printed. Good gifts for anyone heading to one of these cities. Equally elegant are guidebooks entitled *Vienna* and *Amsterdam*, published by Knopf.

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

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HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

Rating Category	Scale	Hotel Rating Criteria	
Unacceptable	0 - 3	People/Service	30%
Adequate	4 - 7	Location/Setting	15%
Average	8 - 11	Guestrooms	30%
Above Average	12 - 15	Public rooms	5%
Excellent	16 - 20	Facilities/Restaurant	20%

Special Designations

G By virtue of location, decor, special charm, warmth of management, or combination thereof, an especially pleasant establishment.

\$ Offers significant value.

Restaurant Criteria

Food 65%
Service 20%
Atmosphere 15%

NEUCHÂTEL

Continued from page 1

rights of French Protestants. These actions drove many highly skilled workers and artists from France, and some found safe haven in Neuchâtel.

In 1762, Neuchâtel provided temporary refuge for French writer and philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, who fled the ecclesiastical authorities of Paris and Geneva. The city contains the mansion of Du Peyrou, Rousseau's friend, protector and publisher. Later, in the 19th century, it sheltered writers Andre Gide and Alexander Dumas.

The region has prospered during the 19th and 20th centuries. Neuchâtel, Le Locle, and La Chaux-de-Fonds in the same canton, have become famous throughout Europe for watchmaking. The region is also known for chocolate, tobacco and cheese production, and its vineyards produce wines of distinction, the whites with a bit of sparkle, and the Pinot Noirs rich and mellow.

A university town and business center, Neuchâtel is renowned for the quality of its spoken French language, reputedly the best anywhere. Its university attracts many students from outside Switzerland and contributes to the cultural life of the city. I attended a delightful French restoration comedy in the small city theater, enjoying a sandwich and taste of white wine in the theater café before the performance. Dance, music and cinema are also available here during the summer months.

The city has a distinctly French flavor. Its center throbs with a fresh, energetic atmosphere reminiscent of the area around Pompidou Center in Paris. Lunching on a cobblestone terrace in front of **Restaurant Hotel Le Marche**, which looks like a chateau with its medieval pointed towers, I felt like I was in a mini-Paris, without the rude waiters. But there was something else, more Swiss in character: the atmosphere of a university town combined with a business center.

NEUCHÂTEL

Population: 40,000

Altitude: 1,518 feet

Approximate Travel times

	Auto	Rail
Bern	45 Mins	40 Mins
Basel	1.5 Hrs	1 Hr 40 Mins
Geneva	1.5 Hrs	1 Hr 10 Mins
Zürich	1.5 Hrs	1 Hr 50 Mins
Paris	6 Hrs	4 Hrs

Tourist Information

Federation Neuchâteloise du Tourisme
Rue du Tresor 9, CH-2001 Neuchâtel
Phone: 038 25 17 89 Fax: 038 24 49 40

Events

The last weekend of September is the high point of the year, when the three-day **Fete des Vendanges** (wine harvest festival) brings thousands of visitors to enjoy a variety of entertainment including a procession of floral floats.

Places and Activities of Special Interest

- **Walking Tour of the City.** During July and August on Thursday morning at 9:30 in front of the Tour de Diesse on the rue du Chateau. Price 8.50 Sfr. (\$6.50) for adults, 3 Sfr. (\$2.25) for children.

- **Boat Trips.** Lake Neuchâtel, the largest lake wholly in Switzerland, is connected by navigable canals to the lakes of Bienne and Morat. A wide variety of crossings and cruises operate during the summer, many with snack and dining facilities. Details at the Port or the Tourist Office, 7 rue de la Place d'Armes.

- **The Jaquet-Droz Automats.** Museum of Art and History, 1 Quai Leopold-Robert, Neuchâtel. Performances the first Sunday of the month at 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.. Admission 8 Sfr. (\$6)

- **Guided Tours of the Castle.** The Chateau and Collegiate Church of Neuchâtel form one of the most important groups of historic buildings in Switzerland. Tours: April 1st to September, on the hour, Monday to Friday 10 a.m. through 4 p.m.. Sundays and holidays 2-5 p.m. Admission free.

- **Au Gor du Vauseyon.** Beautiful natural area in the heart of town, with gorges, waterfalls and ruins of 16th century mills. Trails and bridges link with paths leading to the town of Valangin. Take No.1 bus from Place Pury, direction Cormondreche.

- **Vine and Wine Museum** at the Chateau de Boudry. Tracing the history of wine-making from ancestral practices to the most modern techniques. The Chateau is the birthplace of Jean-Paul Marat. Thursday through Sunday 2-5 p.m.

All around me, students and young business people engaged in vigorous conversation as they enjoyed the bright sunshine and unique setting.

An area that prides itself on its technology, Neuchâtel has superb rail connections to France and to other Swiss cities. Two direct daily TGV runs reach Paris in only four hours and other express trains leave hourly for major Swiss cities. Road access is also good. It is only a few kilometers from the Swiss motorway network heading east (Bern, Zürich, Basel), to the west (Lausanne, Geneva), or to the south (Valais, the Alps). Quiet and efficient transportation within the city is provided by electric trolley buses and a very comfortable light rail line which runs along the shore.

A special attraction is a demonstration of the **Jaquet-Droz Automats**, miniature figures built 1769-1780, the first Sunday of each month at The Museum of Art and History. These consist of three figures: a woman 30 inches tall with tiny fingers articulated in great detail. She breathes (the bosom moves in and out) and plays music on a wind piano. Of the two 24-inch child figures, one draws different objects (a dog on this occasion), and the other writes ("*Je pense, donc J'existe*") with a pen on paper. The attendant who conducted the demonstrations showed great pride in the intricate and complex figures (the writing child has 6500 parts), and charmed watching children by opening the automats backs to show the intricate insides and carrying them around to be examined in detail. The museum also has exhibits of furniture, gold artifacts, paintings and scepters, of the 16th and 17th Century rulers of Neuchâtel.

Neuchâtel Hotels

Hotel Beaufort

By far the city's most elegant hotel, on a stunning site at the edge of the lake. The striking new building resides inside what was originally a 19th century apartment. This 5-star "boutique

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

NEUCHÂTEL

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hotel," with only 70 rooms, retains the exterior of the magnificent older building, although a screen of glass, to enclose the old walls, has been added on the lakeside ground floor. The large, sumptuous restaurant and lobby offer panoramic views of the lake.

Guestrooms are spacious, luxurious and expensive, befitting the hotel's rating. A bargain can be obtained for top floor rooms which are equally large and luxurious, but with lower ceilings (9' instead of 12') and smaller windows, a result of the necessity of preserving the exterior facade. All rooms have big, segmented bathrooms with separate showers and large tubs; walk-in closets; a separate bar unit combined with safe, and several other special features. The suites are particularly lavish, some with two bedrooms and terraces facing the lake.

The restaurant offers three-course lunches (typical: tomato and lettuce salad, lake fish filet, potatoes and cream tart) for \$25. Dinners of four-courses (typical: soup, filets of lake perch, fricasseed rabbit with mushrooms, green beans and polenta, chocolate profiteroles) for \$40. A bottle of Neuchâtel white wine is \$20, a bottle of Swiss beer \$2.

Address: Hotel Beaufort, 1, Esplanade du Mont-Blanc, 2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Phone: 4138/24 00 24

Fax: 4138/24 78 94

Location: Opposite Place Pury, facing Lake Neuchâtel

Rooms: 70 doubles

Proprietor: Duncan Shakeshaft

Prices: Weekend special top floor 160 Sfr. (\$119), singles 160-310 Sfr. (\$119-\$230), doubles 280-380 Sfr. (\$207-\$281), suites 600 -700 Sfr. (\$480-\$560)

Meals: All available

Facilities: Outdoor terrace, extensive public rooms and convention rooms

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access

Closed: Never

Parking: 400 spaces under building, 10 Sfr. (\$7.50) per night.

Rating: EXCELLENT 18/20 **G**

Beaulac

A new four-star hotel overlooking the lake, marina and port. Modern, elegant interior. Three restaurants and lakeside terrace. Large rooms with lake views, but without balconies, a result of retaining the original exterior facade. The building was constructed to accommodate guests who require extremely high security. It has its own heliport with a separate entrance, as well as a floor which can be closed off from the rest of the building. All rooms are above average in size and have big bathrooms with huge tubs,

Address: Hotel Beaulac, Quais Leopold 2, CH-2001 Neuchâtel

Phone: 4138/25 8822

Fax: 4138/25 6035

Location: Overlooking the port on Quai Leopold-Robert

Rooms: 4 singles, 66 doubles.

Proprietor: Fabien Chatelat, Director

Prices: Single 150 -170 Sfr. (\$111-\$126), double 185-260 Sfr. (\$137-\$193), suites 290-550 Sfr. (\$215-\$407), including American breakfast

Meals: All available

Facilities: Banquet rooms accommodating from 10 to 330 persons

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: 4 rooms especially equipped

Closed: Never

Parking: 18-20 spaces available own garage for 10 Sfr. (\$7.50) per night plus outside curbside spaces

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE 15/20

Touring Hotel

A smallish hotel with an outstanding location and view of the lake, port and marina. The ground floor restaurant and lobby are bright and attractive although the small lobby is a bit pinched with the elevator door opening too close to the check-in counter.

Upstairs the rooms are pleasant albeit plain, but drab brown halls and worn spots in the carpet indicate the need for some spiffing up. Singles are above average in size and have large bathrooms. All rooms are the same price and decor, lakeside and city side, so ask for a room facing the water. The restaurant serves an attractive and reasonably priced lunch: trout filets, *frites*, salad bar, 1/3 bottle local wine (very good), 34 Sfr (\$25). Also in the restaurant: a good breakfast included in room price; croissants, fresh rolls, cheese,

Address: Hotel Touring au Lac, 1, place Numa-Droz, CH 2001 Neuchâtel

Phone: 038/25 5501

Fax: 038/25 8243

Location: Adjacent to port and marina

Rooms: 10 singles, 32 doubles

Proprietors: Bondolfi family

Prices: Singles 105 Sfr. (\$78), doubles 165 Sfr. (\$122)

Meals: All available

Facilities: Small conference rooms

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access

Closed: Never

Parking: Free space for 3-4 cars. Curbside spaces also available

Rating: AVERAGE 10/20

Hotel du Vaisseau

A very pleasant country inn facing the lake front, below fields of ripening grapes in the little town of Cortailod, 8 km (5 miles) west of the center of Neuchâtel. Most rooms look out toward the peaceful countryside with a view of the terraced vineyards. Accommodations include a pair of two-bedroom family apartments. All guestrooms have a homey, informal atmosphere.

I enjoyed excellent French cuisine for Sunday dinner in the restaurant adjoining the lobby. I chose the plate of the day: medium rare slices of duck in brown sauce

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

EUROPE TRAVEL BRIEFING

(For more information about most of the programs and events listed below contact the national tourist office of the appropriate country.)

Austrian Tourist Office
Los Angeles 310-477-3332
New York 212-944-6880

German Tourist Office
Los Angeles 310-575-9799
New York 212-661-7200

Swiss Tourist Office
Chicago 312-630-5840
Los Angeles 310-335-5980
New York 212-757-5944

- An inexpensive week in the **Black Forest** town of Freiamt starts at 177 DM (\$115) and includes bed, breakfast, group hike, tour, use of indoor pool, sauna and extras. Info: Verkehrsburo, Badstrasse 1, D-79348 Freiamt, phone 7645/644, fax 628.

- Tauberbischofsheim, near Würzburg, has a three-day **week-end bicycle program** with two nights accommodations for 155 DM (\$100). The program includes a Tauber Valley bicycle tour, a wine tasting in a castle cellar, a Franconian supper and one other meal. Info: Kultur- und Fremdenverkehrsamt, Postfach 1480, D-97934 Tauberbischofsheim, phone 9341/80313, fax 80389.

- Trier, in the heart of the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer wine region, offers a program, called "**Wine and Sekt-making in Germany's Oldest City**," (sekt is Germany's sparkling wine) which costs 148 to 325 DM (\$96-\$211) per person, depending on accommodations. It includes two nights' lodging plus a city tour, a group lunch and a wine and sekt tasting. Arrival can be any day except Saturday. Info: Tourist Information, Postfach 3830, D-54228 Trier, phone 651-978080.

- Bad Dürkheim in the Palatinate offers **culinary/wine week-ends** (Friday - Sunday) from 299

DM (\$194). For program and dates, contact: Verkehrsamt, D-67098 Bad Dürkheim, phone 06322-935156 fax 935159.

- The **two finest hotels in Germany**, according to *DM*, a German magazine, are the **Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten** in Hamburg and the **Hotel Nassauer Hof** in Wiesbaden. Both can be booked through the Leading Hotels of the World reservation service, 800-223-6800.

- The mountain resorts of Davos, Arosa and Lenzerheide-Valbella now offer a **luggage-free hiking package**. While guests walk from one alpine resort to another, luggage is transferred to the next hotel. Packages for four to seven days are available through October 16 from \$235 to \$435 depending on hotel category and length of trip.

- Through October 2, Zürich celebrates "**Magic America**" on Sechselauten Square in the heart of the city. Attractions include dance shows with fire and water games, jazz nights at the "Cotton Club," multimedia shows and a NASA exhibit.

- **Conny Land**, an amusement center in Lipperswil (Canton of Thurgau, Eastern Switzerland) has added a new attraction. An electric jeep takes visitors on a prehistoric journey past 14 dinosaurs and all sorts of other long-gone creatures. The largest dino is 45 feet long and weighs 7.5 tons. The atmosphere is enhanced by sound and lighting effects. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- The newly renovated **Basel Hilton Hotel** now pays special attention to the needs of disabled and elderly guests. In addition to rooms being especially equipped for disabled, blind, partially sighted, deaf and hearing impaired guests, the hotel also features rooms for allergy sufferers and for very tall persons. The hotel has introduced a training program to enable its staff to better serve disabled and elderly guests. Basel Hilton, Aeschengraben 31, CH-4002, Basel, phone 61/271 66 22, fax 61/271 52 20.

- Vevey on Lake Geneva hosts an **International Festival of Street Artists** August 26-27 and, on September 10, a **lakeside wine festival**.

- Montreux offers "**Brunch at 2,000 Meters**," a package that includes transport via cogwheel train to Rochers-de-Naye for buffet brunch at the panoramic restaurant. The splendid view is of Lake Geneva, the Valais, the French Alps, Fribourg and, in the distance, the mountains of the Jura. Afterwards, return to the midway station, Caux, via steam train. Departures on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through September 11 from Montreux station at 8 a.m.; open ticket return on the hour.

- **Idyll Hotel Schweiz** is a new association of 24 inexpensive, family-operated Swiss hotels in rural locations. A brochure with information about the hotels is available from the association's U.S. agent, Boldt International, 3123 Deep Canyon Drive, Beverly Hills CA 90210. Boldt is the U.S. booking agent not only for the Idyll but the **German Ring Hotels**, as well. The company's owner, Hans Boldt, guarantees the lowest possible rates at these properties by reserving through his toll-free number 800-558-6850. Ring Hotels booked via Boldt currently offer a \$59 per person rate double occupancy and \$79 single, though in major cities such as Munich and Berlin rates are slightly higher.

- Graz, one of Europe's great undiscovered cities, offers its **Concerts at Eggenberg Palace** every Monday evening through mid-September. The music is presented by candlelight in the resplendent Baroque palace.

- The **Anton Bruckner Festival** in Linz goes from September 11 through October 2 and this year features The Vienna Philharmonic under Ricardo Muti and Milan's Orchestra della Scala conducted by Carlo Maria Guilini.

- Replacement of the hydraulics

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EUROPE BRIEFS


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system of the stage and substage has set back the opening of the **Vienna State Opera** from September 1 to mid-December. In the meantime, the company will tour Japan for several weeks and stage a series of five performances of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at **Theater an der Wien**. The Staatsoper will reopen December 14 with *Elektra* by Richard Strauss and then continue as usual through June 30, 1995.

- Bicycle routes have proliferated in Austria over the past few years and many hotels and inns are now geared to the needs of cyclists. A list of such hotels, plus maps which show bike paths that separate bike riders from motorized traffic, are available through the Austrian Tourist Offices in the U. S. Bike rental in Austria is available through the *Fahrrad am Bahnhof* system operated by the federal railway. The system allows a renter to pick up a bike at one railway station and drop it days later at another in a different city. The regular daily rate for a standard bike is 90 AS (\$8.50) and 200 AS (\$19) for a mountain bike. The five-day rate is 360 AS (\$34) for a standard bike and 800 AS (\$76) for a mountain bike. By showing a valid rail ticket or rail pass these prices are reduced by about 35% to 45%.

- The Austrian National Tourist Office has begun an educational program for U. S. travel agents known as **ACTS (Austrian Certified Travel Specialists)**. Some 200 agents have completed the one week training program in Austria and earned certification. Travelers looking for an agent with this speciality can request a list of ACTS from the Austrian Tourist Office.

- Vienna's **Museum of Fine Arts** (Kunsthistorisches Museum) offers a buffet dinner every Thursday evening right in the museum. For 90 AS (\$9) entry, and 270 AS (\$26) for the three-course buffet, visitors can leisurely enjoy the

magnificent Gallery of Paintings with its masterworks by such artists as Cranach, Dürer, Holbein, Brühel, Rembrandt, Rubens, Raphael, Tintoretto, Titian and Velázquez. 

NEUCHÂTEL

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with little carrots, turnips, onions and scalloped potatoes 22 Sfr. (\$16). Also available: fresh salmon with rice pilaf. A complete meal including the main dish plus paté, cream of chicken soup and a parfait of ice cream and prunes was 36 Sfr. (\$27). The hotel bottles and serves its own white wine from local vineyards, which I found to be delicious, with a clean dry taste.

Address: Hotel du Vaisseau, Petit-Cortailod Plage, CH-2016 Cortailod

Phone: 038/42 1942

Fax: 038/42 1092

Location: Along Lake Neuchâtel, 8 km southwest of Neuchâtel

Rooms: 22 doubles

Proprietor: Fabien Chetelat

Prices: Singles 100-110 Sfr. (\$74-\$81), doubles 180-200 Sfr. (\$133-\$148), two-bedroom apartment 2000 Sfr./week (\$1481)

Meals: All available

Facilities: Meeting rooms

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access

Closed: Never

Parking: Outdoor spaces beside building at no charge

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE 14/20 **G**

Restaurant Suggestions

Hotel Restaurant du Marche
Place des Halles 4

Three restaurants; the most formal and most expensive is on the top floor, the least formal and cheapest is outside. Lunch outside at Marche: steak with green butter and garlic sauce, *pommes frites*, vegetable, green salad, small carafe of good local Merlot 34 Sfr. (\$25).

Brasserie - Cafe du Theatre
Place Numa Droz

An informal and reasonably

priced upbeat place close to the town center, usually filled with young people. Very friendly English-speaking waiters, including, when I was there, a young bilingual French-Canadian. Special: tomato and mozzarella salad, duck in cider sauce, *rösti* potatoes, vegetables. Entree only 22 Sfr. (\$16), complete meal 32 Sfr. (\$24). Steak *Parisienne* with *frites* and salad, 22 Sfr. (\$16), melon and ham (\$11). Also a large selection of a la carte items and beverages.

LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

Neuchâtel and La Chaux-de-Fonds, each with about 40,000 inhabitants, are the canton's second and third largest cities, smaller in population in French-speaking Switzerland only to Geneva.

Although only 40 minutes rail distance apart, they are very different in character: Neuchâtel, in a picturesque location along the north side of Neuchâtel Lake, is medieval; La Chaux-de-Fonds, in a valley of the Jura, without the scenic site, is a business and industrial city best known for its production of watches and its excellent concert hall (hotels were filled with musicians attending a convention when I arrived).

Though it doesn't possess the sheer beauty of Neuchâtel, La Chaux-de-Fonds is definitely worth a visit for its cultural attractions. They include the world's largest and most important museum of clocks and watches, an important museum of art, and the early buildings of the architect Le Corbusier, born in La Chaux-de-Fonds and famous for his influence on the design of United Nations headquarters in New York.

The city's most interesting area is near the northeast end of the main street — boulevard Leopold-Robert — by a small plaza and lovely fountain, across from the **Fleur de Lys Hotel**. Nearby are the museums and music hall, two blocks away is an attractive shopping center in an elaborate four-story glass and concrete building with a selection of shops and

EDITOR'S CHOICE

restaurants. But to me these were secondary attractions; I wanted to see a building by Corbusier.

A former architect, I studied Corbusier as a student at Ohio State and have great admiration for his work. In an architectural period which glorified the past, he dreamed of cities which used the mobility of the automobile to lift inhabitants aboveground, reserving most of the land for gardens. He was also a painter and sculptor, and his skills in shaping concrete are evident in his design of the chapel at Ronchamps, France.

I had visited his "Cite d'Habitation," a huge high-rise block in Marseille, complete with hotel, two-story apartments, shopping, kindergarten and running track (but not his greatest completed design, the Indian City of Chandrigar), and was curious about what he had done early in his life. I asked my hotel concierge: "If you could only visit one of Corbusier's buildings in La Chaux-de-Fonds, which one would it be?" The answer came back: "Villa Schwob."

Most of Corbusier buildings in La Chaux-de-Fonds, done during the beginning of his career, are neoclassical and interesting only as curiosities. Villa Schwob, known as the "Turkish Villa" is an exception. It is an exquisite Art-Deco structure of delicate design, with some Frank Lloyd Wrightish touches but none of the bleaker characteristics of his later buildings.

Another La Chaux-de-Fonds attraction, the **International Museum of Horology** is intriguing and fascinating. It contains more than 3,000 time measuring instruments, watches and clocks. One enters past a series of frescoes illustrating the history of time measurement, and several tower clocks, monumental in size and reminders of the first mechanical clocks.

On the first level, in spherical showcases, dramatically lit by halogen bulbs are instruments for time measurement from ancient times until the 19th century, arranged by era. On the next level

are tools and machines used from the 18th to the 20th century for handcrafting and later industrial production. Above is a gallery containing precision clocks used by observatories, and a panorama of the manufacture of watchcases and movements (weight-driven, spring-driven, balance, tuning fork and

animation, colored and luminous, unlike anything I had seen before.

An adjoining building houses the **Museum of Beaux-Arts**. In addition to a painting by Corbusier, there are important paintings by Van Gogh, Renoir, Matisse, Chagall, and Modigliani, and an interesting collection of minimalist abstract art and contemporary sculpture.

LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

Population: 40,000

Altitude: 3888 Feet

Approximate Travel Times

- **By car from Neuchâtel:** approx. 1 hour
- **By rail from Neuchâtel:** 40 minutes (service every half-hour)
- **By rail from Bern:** 1.5 hours (direct service hourly, changes in Neuchâtel for other destinations)

Tourist Information

Office du tourisme
de La Chaux-de-Fonds
Rue Neuve 11
2301 La Chaux-de-Fonds 2
Telephone: 039 28 13 13
Fax: 039 28 29 21

Museums

- **Musee International d'Horlogerie** (International Clockwork Museum), 33 rue des Musees, La Chaux-de-Fonds. Open daily, except Mondays 10-12 a.m. and 2-5 p.m. Admission 8 Sfr. (\$6).
- **Musee des Beaux-Arts**, 29, rue des Musees. Open daily, except Mondays 10-12 a.m. and 2-5 p.m. Admission 8 Sfr. (\$6).

Architectural Interest

- **Le Corbusier House** (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret). 38, rue de la Serre, La Chaux-de-Fonds.
- **Villa Schwob**. (Turkish Villa). 167 rue du Doubs, La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Other

- **Animal Park and Vivarium**, Bois-du-Petit-Chateau, La Chaux-de-Fonds.
- **Festival**. Every two years La Chaux-de-Fonds has its Fair and Watch Festival

quartz), and an illustrated history of the wristwatch throughout the century. In a garden behind the museum is a monumental carillon, some 30 feet high, built in 1980. A combination timepiece and musical instrument, it is a fantastic sculpture of polished steel tubes with musical

La Chaux-de-Fonds Hotels

Club

A beautifully designed and decorated small contemporary hotel, close to the center of the city. Built in 1970, it offers 38 identical double rooms decorated in attractive pastel colors. Would be rated four-stars except for its lack of a restaurant. The bar and breakfast room is colorfully decorated in a modern style with bright colors and sculpture.

Address: Hotel Club, rue de Parc 71, CH-2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds

Phone: 039/23 5300

Fax: 039/23 9501

Location: Near center of town

Rooms: 38 doubles

Proprietor: Sonjia Richard

Prices: Singles 125 Sfr. (\$93),

doubles 190 Sfr. (\$141)

Meals: Breakfast only

Facilities: Bar, solarium

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access

Closed: Never

Parking: Outside curb spaces, no charge

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE 15/20

Fleur de Lys

An older hotel attractively located near the museum complex, shopping and the only fountain in town. Built in 1895 and remodeled five years ago. The best room is Number 343, a large suite with a view of the fountain. Number 344, a double, also overlooks the fountain. The restaurant and coffee house in the same building is independently owned.

Address: Hotel Fleur de Lys, Ch-

Continued on page 8...

LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS

Continued from page 7

2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds

Phone: 039/23 3731

Location: At the east end of the main street

Rooms: 2 singles, 28 doubles, 4 suites

Proprietor: Max Kocain

Prices: Single 110 Sfr. (\$81), double 140-170 Sfr. (\$104-126), suite 260 Sfr. (\$193), not including breakfast

Meals: Available in separately-owned restaurant, same building

Facilities: Sauna, solarium

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access

Closed: Never

Parking: Garage in rear of building, 12 Sfr. (\$9) per night.

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE
13/20

Moreau

An older place with marble halls and stairs and some very attractive suites. Moreau began life as a chocolate factory in 1882. The last renovation was three years ago. The single rooms are very small.

Address: Hotel Moreau, 45 avenue Leopold-Robert, Ch-2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds

Phone: 039/23 2222

Fax: 039/23 2245

Location: In center of town, 300 meters from railroad station

Rooms: 22 singles, 23 doubles, 3 suites

Prices: Singles 60-75 Sfr. (\$44-\$56), doubles 140-180 Sfr. (\$104-\$133), suites (\$150-\$205)

Meals: Two French restaurants in building, a brasserie and a rotisserie

Facilities: Meeting rooms

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access

Closed: Never

Parking: Six spaces in nearby public garage, no charge

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE
12/20

Restaurant Suggestions

Buffet de la Gare
Place de la Gare

Informal rustic atmosphere, reasonable prices, wines by the glass 4 Sfr. (\$3) and beers on draught 2.50 Sfr. (\$2). Baby lambchops with potatoes and vegetables 14 Sfr. (\$10).

Fleur de Lys
Coffee House & Restaurant.
13 avenue Leopold-Robert.

Independently owned, in the same building as the hotel. Reasonably priced breakfasts, snacks and lunches. ☐

READERS' FORUM

Hotel Near Heidelberg

I have been a subscriber to *Gemütlichkeit* for many years. I always enjoy reading it, and have used some of your suggestions on my travels to Switzerland and Germany.

Recently I spent four very enjoyable nights at the **Schloss Michelfeld** (ph. 7265/7041, fax 7265/279) in Angelbachtal-Michelfeld, Germany. The two rooms that I saw were fairly good size for German hotels. The dining room is superb, but it is French cuisine, not German. I suggest you take a look some time when you are driving

through the Heidelberg-Karlsruhe area. A nice hotel situated in a small, quiet town that offers many pluses.

Wrede H Smith, President
Jolly Time Popcorn
Sioux City, IA

(Ed. Note: Mr. Smith should know that Jolly Time white popcorn is the "official" popcorn of *Gemütlichkeit*.)

A Full Report

Again your hotels were right on target!
Hotel Adler (ph. 54/426161, fax 54/414440) in Stein am Rhein (Switzerland) closed for day, but the **Ilge** was a good alternative. Loved beds, bells, view and food at the **Hotel Hecht** (ph. 71/874780, fax 71/871047), Appenzell. **Villa Blanka** (ph. 512/892257, fax 512/893014) in Innsbruck, perfect for walking and nature. **Pension Wolf** (ph. 662/8434530) in Salzburg warm and cozy, Regensburg's (Germany) **Bischofshof am Dom Hotel** (ph. 941/59086, fax 941/53508), nice, and Nürnberg's **Weinhaus Steichele** (ph. 911/204378, fax 911/221914) excellent for location, room, restaurant and price. Tübingen we loved but ended up in a little pension as we gave up looking for anything else. Strasbourg's **Hotel Rohan** is superb...but you don't cover Alsace. Thanks for another good trip.
Janice & Bruce Struckman
Western Spring, IL

Hotel on Constance

You mentioned that in the future you would feature an article on Lake Constance (Bodensee) region. For several years

I have spent a week or more in Rorschach, staying at the delightful **Hotel Mozart** (ph. 71/410632, fax 71/41 99 38). Rooms are cheerful, baths are modern and the breakfast buffet, included, is ample and delicious. While there is no "formal" dining room, the cafe features light dishes, hot and cold, and incomparable pastry. And the rates are reasonable indeed, Sfr. 100 (\$74) for a single. The hotel is actually in Rorschach-Hafen and only steps from the station where frequent, free train service is available to Rorschach. As you well know, other places such as St. Gallen, Heiden, Vaduz (via Buchs), Stein am Rhein, Schaffhausen etc. are easily reached. There is also boat service to Meersburg in Germany and to the Insel Mainau Do look into it and see what you think.
Susi E Kanuch, Van Nuys, CA

Graz Review

We found **Schlossberg Hotel** (ph. 316/872 4902) Graz, Austria, to be a very pleasant hotel, convenient to the center of the city and the funicular up the Schlossberg Hill. We paid approximately \$191 per night for two persons in a double room, including breakfast buffet. Parking in the hotel garage is about \$14.50 per night (and there is no other place to park). The hotel is a little hard to find in heavy city traffic. Front rooms are noisy. Back rooms are OK.
Matthias Sheeleigh,
Smuuit, NJ ☐