

OSA news

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Valais wine from the foothills of the Himalayas

The spotlight is on the “Fifth Switzerland” this year at the Fête des Vignerons winegrowers’ festival in Vevey – the largest wine festival in Switzerland.



The Swiss winegrowing tradition is going from strength to strength, even on the steep flanks of the Yangtze Valley.

Photo: donated

Yves Roduit emigrated to Tibet in 2014, not to become a Buddhist but rather to continue the viticulture originally brought to the region by Christian missionaries. It is a very poor area that has experienced little of China’s economic boom, says Roduit. He also views his involvement as a way to strengthen the local village community in the Yangtze Valley (Yunnan province). Roduit does not believe that he is anywhere near the end of his journey, and he is looking for investors to help him expand in stages. In his eyes, the terraced slopes in the Yangtze Valley are made for winegrowing. He wants to win over the people with his calling card: his wine.

Chinese wine is actually not as exotic as it may seem from a Swiss perspective. The country has long since been among the top-ten wine-producing nations in the world. The People’s Republic of China ranks sixth behind the leaders Italy, France, USA, Spain and Argentina in terms of the volume of wine produced (2018). With over one million hectolitres, Switzerland is in position 20. (MUL)

The Fête des Vignerons is a unique festival. It only takes place every 25 years or so, but has been in existence since the 17th century. And the festival has long since been about more than just wine – it is a cultural highlight for the entire region. Since 2016, the Fête des Vignerons has featured on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and it was the first “living tradition” of Switzerland to even be included on this list.

This year, the festival organised by the local Confrérie des Vignerons (Winegrowers fraternity) is also placing the spotlight on the “Fifth Switzerland” by dedicating 25 July to the Swiss Abroad. Vevey is to become their capital for the day.

At the same time, people in Switzerland will learn more about Swiss citizens working abroad, such as

winegrowers who press superb wine in their second homelands. Thanks to a collaboration between the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and Swiss Wine Promotion AG, Swiss winegrowers can present their creations on the lake platform.

Swiss winemakers from the traditional viticulture countries and regions of Australia, Argentina, Bulgaria, France, Italy, California and South Africa will travel to Vevey. However, the oenologist Yves Roduit is also looking for a way into the huge festival. Roduit, who was born in Valais, now produces around 15,000 bottles of wine a year in Tibet. He believes that the local environment – 2,200 metres above sea level – is so perfect that the grape variety Petite Arvine, which is native to canton Valais, could be planted there.

- “Fête des Vignerons”, 18 July to 11 August 2019: www.fetedesvignerons.ch
- Day of the Swiss Abroad: ogy.de/aso-vevey

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From Switzerland out into the great wide world

The Swiss National Museum in Schwyz invites visitors to reflect on the topic of emigration with its exhibition "Switzerland elsewhere".



Let's start by taking a look at this photo. We see a young couple with a child sitting on top of a bulging suitcase. He is wearing high lace-up boots and a rather crumpled-looking hat; however, his tie knot is sitting perfectly. She in turn seems to be dressed for a fun Sunday outing. They both have a look of expectation. Or is it tension and insecurity? A number of things are not immediately apparent in the photo. We are in Zurich Main Station, around 1930, in front of the smoking section of a third-class SBB carriage – and the couple are part of a contingent of 40 destitute Swiss unemployed who are travelling to Brazil to start a new life as planters in the back country. It was in essence state-subsidised export of poverty. The Emergency Association for

Waiting to depart
at Zurich Main Station,
around 1930
Photo: Keystone

Settlement and Emigration (ANSA) agency was subsidised by the Confederation to support willing emigrants.

The remarkable exhibition "Switzerland elsewhere" in Schwyz touches on memories such as these of Switzerland as a land of emigration. The exhibition recounts the stories of past and present migrants, explores their reasons for leaving and their hopes and dreams, discusses the foundation of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA), and finally also reveals just how much migrant movements are the historical norm.

The exhibition is of particular value for visitors from "The Fifth Switzerland" who are on holiday in Switzerland, especially as they are directly addressed at various supporting events. To this end, the exhibition will transform itself into an "Office for Migration Stories" from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm on 11 and 22 September 2019. Visitors will be invited to share their family's migration stories and have them written down.

A new book lends additional depth to the exhibition. Leo Schelbert's work "Switzerland elsewhere" uses the examples of hundreds of Swiss men and women to show the diverse ways that a nation can make its mark in the world. With soldiers and missionaries, professional people and emigrants in search of the proverbial pot of gold and a better life. In this way, the book also underscores that nations have never been self-contained structures; rather, they have always been and will continue to be interconnected with the world.

(MUL)

■ "Switzerland elsewhere" exhibition, Swiss National Museum, Forum of Swiss History Schwyz, Zeughausstrasse 5, 6431 Schwyz. The exhibition runs until 29 September 2019. www.nationalmuseum.ch/e/schwyz/

■ Leo Schelbert: "Von der Schweiz anderswo. Historische Skizze der globalen Präsenz einer Nation." (German edition) / "Switzerland elsewhere. Historical sketch of the Global Presence of a Nation" (English edition); 320 pages, hardcover, Limmat Verlag, 8031 Zurich; 38 francs / 40 euros.

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The future is in sight

The Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Montreux from 16 to 18 August 2019 will address major questions about the future, together with leading experts.

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) has lined up prominent speakers on the core topic of the Congress – “What will tomorrow’s world hold”. Francesco Pisano intends to focus on the big picture in Montreux. The Director of the Library of the United Nations will address Agenda 2030, or rather the “programme to safeguard the future of the planet”. And renowned Professor in Applied Climatology at the University of Neuchâtel, Martine Rebetez, will give a talk on the globally relevant topic of climate change.

What will tomorrow’s working world hold? That is also part of the big question about the future. Pierre-Yves Maillard, the president of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, will address it in his capacity as the top representative of employees in Switzerland. Other speakers will include Cristina Gaggini, the Director of the Western Switzerland branch of the federation of Swiss business, *economie-suisse*.

What will the politics of the future be like? It will be shaped and above all challenged by digitalisation, a topic that Matthias Stürmer knows extremely well. He is the head of the Research Centre for Digital Sustainability at the University of Bern. The politics of the future will also probably be more influenced by think tanks than by the established parties. Salomé Vogt (Think Tank Foraus) and Laura Zimmermann (Operation Libero), will talk about this vision of politically-minded young people at the Congress. (OSA)

Further information on the Congress: ogy.de/montreux2019

Registration deadline: 26 July 2019.

A Swiss Abroad talks about studying medicine in Switzerland

educationsuisse advises young Swiss Abroad who come to Switzerland to study. Katia Steinfeld is one of them. She recounts her experience of studying at the University of Lausanne.

“I have Swiss and Brazilian roots, and I grew up in Rio de Janeiro. I began my medical studies there. I contacted *educationsuisse* because I was looking for a way to continue my studies outside Brazil. The organisation supplied me with information about studying medicine in Switzerland and assisted me with my grant application in my canton of origin. The University of Lausanne (UNIL) partially recognised my study time in Brazil, which meant I could continue my studies in Switzerland in 2016.

The first six months in Switzerland were difficult. I first had to get used to the lifestyle, cli-



Katia Steinfeld. Photo zvg

mate and being alone. I was also worried about the requirements of the university and my financial resources.

However, the quality of the teaching and the feeling of freedom motivated me anew every day. I enjoyed exploring the culture and country that is also mine, and building new relationships and strong friendships, which gave me the support that I needed.

I also threw myself into extracurricular activities that were important to me. For example, I took part in a competition advertised by the UNIL and the Clinton Foundation in 2017. I was selected to represent the University at the Clinton Global Initiative University in Boston (USA). Thanks to this competition, I was able to get my project *Escolhares* off the ground. It has now

grown into an association that has organised ophthalmological screenings and supplied more than 2,000 students in deprived districts of Rio de Janeiro with spectacles between 2016 and 2019.

Recently, I took part in the UNIL World’s Challenge Challenge competition. My team’s project, *EcoBlock* in Burkina Faso, won the first internal selection phase.

On an academic level, I am continuously astounded by the wide variety of courses and internships on offer at UNIL. I had the opportunity to discover the world of research, primarily during my Master’s degree in the field of fundamental neuroscience. These experiences changed my future plans and led me to where I am today: planning a PhD.

To sum up, I can honestly say that my move to Switzerland contributed significantly to my personal development. I have rediscovered my roots and now understand a part of my identity better as a result. I have also gained in confidence. I have become more independent, been able to establish relationships and develop new prospects for the future – all the while completing first-class medical training. Therefore, I would like to encourage other young Swiss Abroad to take up such opportunities.”

Experience reports from young Swiss Abroad are regularly published on the Facebook page of *educationsuisse*, and on www.educationsuisse.ch.

(RG)

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