

Beyond chocolate - understanding Swiss culture [Margaret Oertig-Davidson]

Autor(en): **Press, Craig**

Objekttyp: **BookReview**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **73 (2007)**

Heft [9]

PDF erstellt am: **13.09.2024**

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

Haftungsausschluss

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

Understanding the Swiss

Margaret Oertig-Davidson's
Beyond Chocolate – understanding Swiss culture

Margaret Oertig-Davidson (2002)
Beyond Chocolate - understanding Swiss culture
Bergli Books, Basel (240 pages)
ISBN 3-905252-06-6

Margaret Oertig-Davidson's book is a great starting point for outsiders like myself to better understand the unspoken assumptions that shape many Swiss behaviours and ways of doing things. It is also a highly entertaining read.

The central argument in the book is that many Swiss people's approach to personal and public space is different to people in Anglo-Saxon cultures such as New Zealand. Oertig-Davidson contends that these differences are evident in different social mores and values.

Many Swiss distinguish between their neighbours, colleagues and acquaintances as an outer layer of contacts, and friends and family as a tight inner layer of contacts. This distinction is typically less clear in Anglo-Saxon cultures.

Many Swiss are instinctively uncomfortable about sharing personal information and personal space with people in the outer layer, but are comfortable sharing their deepest thoughts and experiences with the people they know well who make up their inner layer of contacts. Oertig-Davidson contends that the limited mobility of Swiss life supports the development of trust and connections as part of an inner layer while the greater mobility in Anglo-Saxon cultures provides less opportunities to do so.

The chapters provide examples of how these differences play out in practice. Examples include discussion about the gradual and considered application of 'Du' and 'Tu' in Switzerland, compared with the rapid and overwhelming use of first names in Anglo-Saxon cultures. Other examples include differences in approaches to small talk, the use of direct and critical language, and the different levels of reliance on rules and reference to external authority.

Oertig-Davidson's argument is more than pop psychology. It is grounded in her own training and reading, the personal experiences of the people she interviewed, and other works by Bergli Books focusing on intercultural matters.

Her book integrates a number of threads and provided me with a range of 'eureka' and 'that's familiar' moments. It reminded me that what sometimes feel like frustrating and unnecessary misunderstandings across the Swiss - Kiwi divide, are usually grounded in real differences in language and thought. Although the Swiss and Kiwi involved in the same conversation might use the same word they will not necessarily select it for the same reason or to convey the same meaning, and what appears as diffidence or rude behaviour for one party, may feel completely appropriate to the other.

Craig Press

Molly Gianotti 90 Years Old!



Molly and family: Brian, Molly, Geraldine, Maurice and Bill

In December last year, Molly Gianotti celebrated her 90th Birthday, surrounded by her family and relations.

Molly was born in Kaponga, Taranaki, in 1916. When she was 18 months old the family moved to a farm on Stuart Road, Eltham. She was educated at Finnerty Road School and later at Eltham Convent.

In 1939 she married Rodolfo Gianotti. They had five children: Maurice, Peter (deceased), Bill and Brian and then Geraldine. Her husband, Rodolfo, died in 1980.

Molly still lives in Greenlane, Auckland, where her family went to live in 1956. Molly now lives in Tawhiri Road, still plays bowls, Canasta and Housie. She is also a passionate Jasser who would not miss a chance to play our favourite Swiss card game.

We wish Molly all the best for the next ten years!

YOUR SWISS CHEF, BERTA

TARANAKI'S TOP RESTAURANT
LODGE - CHALETS - FAMILY UNITS
FREE PHONE 0800 MOUNTAIN
(66 86 82)

www.mountainhouse.co.nz

Mountain House
MOTOR LODGE
Mount Egmont

FAERNWEH? HEIMWEH? WICHTIGI GSCHAEFTSTERMIN?

Looking for a travel consultant with over 22 years of experience in the industry that will meet your needs and with whom you can communicate in (Swiss)-German, French or English?
Looking for a travel consultant that travelled the world and can advise out of town experience knowing a lot of destinations personally?
Looking for someone to organise your trip back to Switzerland or Europe to visit the 'rellies' as well as your holiday, business, group- and special event trips?



Try me!!

Daniela Suter
UNITED TRAVEL HAMILTON
275 Barton Street/PO Box 19263
HAMILTON
Ph: 07 838 1100/Tollfree: 0800 756 789
Fax: 07 834 2032
Email: daniela@uth.co.nz

United Travel