

A stroll in the Niederdorf

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mainly from countries enjoying price advantages on raw materials, these have risen in the last 10 years from 0.7 to 7.4 per cent of consumption. Swiss exports in 1970 totalled 15,019 tons—4.4 per cent up on the previous year. Swiss chocolate manufacturers have been able to extend their market by creating new lines adapted to current consumer tastes, and thanks to a dynamic sales policy.

According to OECD statistics Switzerland is Europe's biggest fruit consumer by far. In 1970 statistics Switzerland is Europe's biggest fruit consumer by far. In 1970 annual consumption of apples per head of the population was 32.9 kg, against 25kg in West Germany and 23kg in the Netherlands. Compared with these fig-

ures Swiss banana consumption might seem poor at 9.5kg per head, but it is nonetheless highest in Europe (Germany 8.7kg, Finland 4.6kg, Netherlands 6.2kg). In trade circles it is considered that Switzerland probably tops the league of all industrialised countries in the world for this particular discipline. During the first half of 1971 some 34,580 tons of bananas were imported, against 31,997 tons for the corresponding period of 1970, representing an increase of 8.1 per cent. Last year more than 95 per cent of these imports came from only five countries: Panama (40.4 per cent), Ecuador (23.3 per cent), Costa Rica (12.8 per cent), Honduras (12.3 per cent) and Guatemala (6.8 per cent).

(OSEC)

A STROLL IN THE NIEDERDORF

The Niederdorf area of Zurich ought to compete with Pigalle and Soho. It is not unduly chauvinistic to say that it offers the same variety and scope of entertainment, of less avowable pleasures, than the fun-grounds of other European capitals. The following are notes taken during a quick walk through the Niederdorf on a bustling Autumn evening. This cannot, unfortunately, be adopted as a tourist guide to Zurich's playground because the list of bars, taverns and night clubs is incomplete. In addition, the author declines any responsibility for eventual misrepresentations!

The walk starts at the eastern end of the Niederdorf, which is bounded by the Limmat and the Rämistrasse. Engage in Oberdorfstrasse and very soon you will hear the first signs of Zurich's bar-land with the juke-box blare proceeding from a modern and trendy bar, the *Otter Bar*. Ignore the *Oberdörfli* tavern and its *Würstlibar*, which are not particularly distinctive of the Niederdorf, and the next swinging place which the stroller will come across will be the *Olga Bar*. It too is neat, dark and modern, with boogie-woogie erupting from a chrome-plated and illuminated box.

Oberdorfstrasse then emerges on to Grossmünsterplatz. It is quieter there. The *Karl der Grosse*, an excellent *Frauenverin* restaurant, is naturally closed and so is the girls school adjacent to Grossmünster. Zwingliplatz, too, is deserted. But as soon as you engage into Munstergasse life and people begin to bustle again. The next significant restaurant is the *Botegga Spanish Weinhandlung*, excellent for its paelas and tortillas and always thronged with youthful people.

A quick jaunt down the Schöffelgasse, a dark and narrow alley leading to the Limmatquai, will lead the explorer to the *Alt Zuri*, the nearest genuine thing to a London East End pub, with a rollicking pianist and a big jug of beer on his instrument.

Ride up the Napfgasse for a quick peep in the *Turm*. With the *Odeon* at Bellevueplatz it is the gathering centre of the towns growing hippy and artist population. It is a splurge of yellow lights, vapours, brass and noise. Anyone with short hair feels out of place. Walk out of this untidy den and take a deep breath of fresh air before the next lap which brings you along the Spiegelgasse to the delightful Leuengasse. This is in fact a small square and certainly the quaintest in Zurich.

The back entrance of the *Oepflkammer* is at number 6. Having crossed a cosy restaurant with wooden panels, one climbs up a flight of stairs to reach the famed *Gottfried Kellerstuebli*, a warm wine cellar with wooden benches, yellowed walls and always brimming with life. A corridor and a flight of oak steps, passing the historical "pissioirs" leads one on to the Rindermarkt where the first establishment that one comes across is, lo and behold, an English pub. It is called the *Oliver Twist* and must be less than three years old. They serve real English Bass beer in authentic pint glasses. Apart from the red upholstery and wall-covering the place is a fair reproduction of a British pub and packed with people.

Rindermarkt Street connects with the Munstergasse and the Niederdorfstrasse at their junction and it is necessary to walk back a few hundred yards along the Munstergasse to make sure that no significant establishment has been left out. Flashy neon signs an-

nounce the *Spielsalon Carioca*, a penny-machine parlor which must make a fortune on *Gastarbeiter* sweat money. The walker then falls on the *Stussihof*, a cinema specialising in groovy films. A look at the hoardings shows that this has not changed. "*Verbotene Sexualität, Eine Frau wagt sich an die letzten Geheimnisse der Erotik*".

The next cinema that the walker comes across as he threads the Munstergasse backwards is the *Etoile*, a serious cinema with good French films in the old days, but which had obviously given in to the law of least action and showing "*Sex Party*". Erotisch, zugellos, dynamisch . . .

Various havens of enjoyment are clustered around this cinema. There is the *Stügfässli*, a rather hybrid but inviting beer hall with a sausage bar. The *Red House* cabaret guarded by a liveried man. The *Perroquet Rotisserie* on a first floor. The *Big Fat Daddy's Jazz and Minstrel Show* opposite and probably tailored to American tastes.

Moving down the street in the westward direction again, and beyond the Rindermarkt, the walker will see the *Golden Bar* to his left. It is an intimate place with a quiet pianist. Successive places of interest are the *Scampolo Bar*, offering Hungarian specialties, the proletarian *Rhein felder Bierhaus*, the *Franziskaner Bar*, reputed for its snails, and to the opposite a new "*Art Coffee Shop*" with space-age furniture.

Then there is a small square with two similar concert inns of real, unshakeable Germanic character. They are the *Bierschipp Salmen* and the *Bierkneipe Trolianum*. Both are packed with unsophisticated people of all ages, drinking and singing to the twang of "Heimat" music. Escaping the din of this revelry, the explorer passes in front of a quiet restaurant, the *Biber*, excellent for its rice dishes. The neighbouring *Adler Fonduestube* is also commendable. At that level it is opposite to the *Wellenberg Cinema*, which, like the *Etoile*, is banking on sex and showing "Tropic of Cancer".

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Once again it is necessary to leave the main axis of the Niederdorf and make a detour through the Spitalgasse, only to make sure that the *Barfüsser*, the nation's top homosexual bar, is still in existence. Not only will the walker be reassured, but he will discover a new sex boutique just next door.

Back in the Niederdorfstrasse, our excursion brings us to the *Hirschen Gogohitparade*, a music hall with plenty of bouncing humour and people. Then the *Malatesta*, a restaurant and inn with the same regulars as the *Bottega*, only quieter. Next to it there is the Restaurant *Iberia* with its eerie and black frontage. A cataclysmic din reigns in the following place, the *Konzert Schöchli*, where beatniks listen quietly to a pop group amplified a thousand times by a battery of loudspeakers. The *Kontiki* to the opposite has a labyrinth of bars on the ground and first floors, dark recesses, piped music and the possibility of a quiet chat with the bar girls.

The Niederdorfstrasse crosses the Mühlegasse where the *Radium Cinema* usually caters to an Italian public. The film showing was "Pornorama"—an expected theme. The *Gaslight Club* with a "gogo girl parade" advertised, takes its inspiration from America. The bar on the first floor is thronged by men ogling a girl jiving in a garish red bikini under a spotlight. An electrifying anatomy. Leaving the Gaslight Club before things are out of control, the walker moves towards the end of the Niederdorfstrasse, passing the *Zur Schmiede* musical beer *Kneipe*. It is humming with revelry and guarded by stern *Securitas* watchman who will take no nonsense. The *Dorfnotte Bar* resounds with old German songs, reminiscent of Marlene Dietrich.

Two willowy whores await business before the *Calypso* discotheque. The *Golden Horn* bar looks more sleazy than the average. The *Gräbli* and the *Dörfli* are of the same ilk. The *Johanniter* is an honest restaurant where one can have a quick and cheap beefsteak-and-chips. Opposite to it lies the *Wolf*, a spacious cabaret with another entrance on the Limmatquai. The well visited *Chämibar*, the *Gans* restaurant (almost a twin to the *Johanniter*) and the *Resaurant Schonegg* (by contrast, an old-fashioned place frequented by elderly people) form the closing bastion of the Niederdorf.

Our expedition will however be completed by a quick pilgrimage to the neighbouring Zähringerstrasse. Walk round the corner of Centralplatz and you come across the *Alba*, a cinema with a record of valid presentations, but with a German sexual comedy on show. The main establishment in this street is the *Carousel* dancing. It is known to all the apprentices who come to the Limmat Capital for its weekly *Postillon d'Amour*—something

like Postman's Knock. A multitude of youths were dancing to the blare of a jazz band with a girl saxophonist. But the more soothing voice of Johnny Cash could be heard coming from the shadiness of the neighbouring bar, the *Safari*. Finally, the jazz specialist will regretfully note the disappearance of the *Africana*, an excellent jazz local in which many of the world's leading artists have performed at one time or

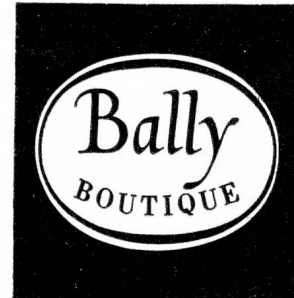
other. It has been replaced by a hotel.

The Niederdorf is not all Zurich, thank heavens. In the fields of theatre, music and art Zurich need not be ashamed of the comparison with capitals like London and Paris. But the man satisfied with the more basic pleasures of life cannot possibly complain that Zurich is short of opportunities.

(PMB)

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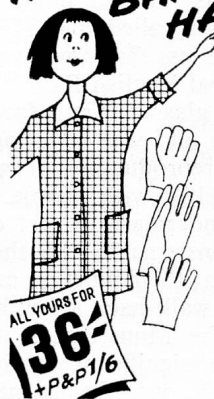


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