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LA FÊTE DES VIGNERONS 1977

This grandiose spectacle which takes place every 25 years or so, will once again be presented from 30th July to 14th August, 1977. Preparations for the "Fête des Vignerons" have been going on for a number of years already, and the little town of Vevey, on the northern shores of *Lac Léman*, is seized by festival fever of which every generation of the 17,000 inhabitants suffers.

We know that the reason behind these three-hour shows of folkloristic pageantry used to be serious: a medieval religious order used to inspect the vineyards and award prizes for good quality. The "Brotherhood of Vinegrowers" still exists, and so does its seal with its stern motto "Ora et Labora" — Pray and Work. Old documents show that there used to be some modest rejoicing after the awarding of prizes.

Around 1700, something happened at Vevey: some bacchanalian streak rose to the surface, and the originally simple ceremony of rejoicing became a festival with gods, fauns, song and dance. A parade developed, and more and more townspeople and regional vinegrowers participated. Soon it became too much to be organised every year, and it was held at a three- and later six-year interval.

It was because of the French Revolution, when the wars in all parts of Europe also affected Switzerland, that the interval grew to 22 years, and after the festival in 1819, the idea of holding a *Fête des Vignerons* at long intervals, but making the spectacle even more grandiose, caught on, and thus there are just the four festivals in a century.

The one in 1977 will be the biggest ever. There will be twelve shows, four giant parades, and the arena will hold 15,000 spectators. Over 4,000 participants in costume, singers, musicians and dancers will be there. It will surprise no one that the budget, too, is the biggest of all times — 17 million Swiss francs, most of it guaranteed by local banks and businessmen.

500,000 visitors are expected, and parking space, accommodation and local transport facilities will have to be well organised, especially on Sundays, when up to 180,000 visitors are awaited.

Choirs and bands will soon start rehearsing, and costumes are being ordered — participants pay for these themselves.

The wine every year differs from the previous one, and a good vintage is expected for this autumn; it is the one which will be drunk next year. And so a new variation on the theme of vinegrowing and the four seasons is being worked out, a new libretto, a new score and new costumes. The text will be by

Henri Deblüe, the music by Jean Balissat and the costumes are designed by Jean Monod.

Needless to say, such a spectacle has to be paid for by the spectators, at least in part, for much of the work done is on a voluntary basis. The prices range from Sw.Fr. 30 to 140 for matinée performances and from Sw.Fr. 40 to 160 for evening shows. There are seven day and five evening presentations. Four street parades will be held with 4,000 participants in costumes, 15 bands, the famous fifes and drums from Basle, horse-drawn carriages, and the flags of the vinegrowing communities of the Canton of Vaud.

Tickets are already on sale at Vevey, and soon they will be available in this country. Information may be had from the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, London W1V 3HG. Telephone: 01-734 1921. Telex: 21295.

Vevey 1977 — a date to remember.
MM

NEW APPENZEL MUSEUM AT URNÄSCH

The Appenzel region is rich in popular traditions such as the processions of cattle up and down from the high pastures, the herdsmen's ball at the Rossfall and the New Year "Kläuse".

Now a local museum has been opened in the oldest house on the village square of Urnäsch to present Appenzel's folk customs in vivid and appealing fashion. Fiddlers and "Hackbrett" players can be heard on tape recordings and a colourful slide show with sound commentary supplements the exhibits on cowbell makers, leather craftsmen and coopers.

There are also exhibits of traditional rustic furniture, herdsmen's art, photography and Appenzel interior decoration. Visitors can also have a go at "Talerswingen". The museum is open every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Friday evenings from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

PAUL KLEE: AT THE BERNE MUSEUM OF ART

It is the intention of the Berne Museum of Art to present the complete work of Paul Klee (1879-1940), which is well represented at the museum, in a series of exhibitions and collection catalogues. Following the publication and exhibition in summer 1973 of his drawing from childhood to 1920, Klee's panel pictures, colour plates, glass paintings and sculptures from the Museum of Art are on display this summer. Open until 29th August.

BROADCASTS FOR SUMMER TOURISTS

"Touristorama" is the title of a daily information programme, which will be broadcast in English, Mondays to Saturdays, until 11th September, 1976, on the German-language service of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (Radio DRS). On Fridays, the transmission will include a calendar of events.

The programme is a co-production of the Swiss Broadcasting and Television Corporation and the Swiss National Tourist Office. Details:

Monday—Saturday until 11th September, 1976.

08.30—08.40 — "TOURISTORAMA"

News and tourist information in English
Radio DRS 1 (Medium wave: 569.3 m =
527 KHz) and

Channel 5 of Telephon-Rundspruch/
Télédiffusion

SWITZERLAND PEGS PRICES

Visitors to Switzerland are benefiting from stable prices in a country with the world's lowest inflation rate, at present 1.3 per cent per annum.

This advantage is reflected in the cost of goods, in transport such as rail fares, on which there has been no general increase since February 1974, and in hotel and restaurant prices, which have shown little change for several years.

All members of the Hotel Association of Interlaken have announced their decision to maintain present rates for 1977, which means that this resort, so popular with British visitors, will have offered the same hotel rates for five years.

The standard of services, catering and goods is very highly regarded, and therefore holidays in Switzerland are still excellent value for money.

BASLE CITY PACKAGES

Basle, Switzerland's second largest city, offers a range of packages for 2 days (1 night), 3 days (2 nights) or 4 days (3 nights). The minimum price for 1 night is Sw.Fr. 48 per person for bed and breakfast in a standard-class hotel, including service and taxes, a two-hour escorted sightseeing tour, a day-ticket for Basle's public transport system, free admission to 23 museums and to the famous Zoological Garden, plus a detailed documentation, maps and coloured postcards.

The 3-day and 4-day arrangements also include a boat trip on the river Rhine and a coach excursion into France and Germany, respectively. A special leaflet is available from the Swiss National Tourist Office.

SION HAS WORLD'S OLDEST SERVICEABLE ORGAN

The Basilica of Valère in Sion, Canton Valais, houses the world's oldest organ still in use — an instrument mentioned in chronicles as long ago as 1390. Under the direction of Maurice Wenger, this exceptional organ has been played on six Saturday afternoon recitals of organ music.