

A salute to Lucerne

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1978)**

Heft 1742

PDF erstellt am: **17.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-688432>

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A SALUTE TO LUCERNE

On 18th April, 1178, the abbot of Murbach Monastery in Alsace, Konrad von Eschenbach, chose his brother Ulrich of Lucerne's Benedictine monastery to be the first priest of the newly-built Kapellkirche. It is this event that Lucerne celebrates in its 800th Jubilee in 1978. And in this year the city offers both resident and visitor, from spring to late autumn, an abundance of interest and entertainment – theatre, concerts, pop and rock festival, exhibitions, lectures, sporting events, markets and events of special interest for foreign visitors.

High points of the programme are the city foundation celebrations and procession under the motto "Lucerne yesterday", the city festival "Lucerne today" (1st July) and the youth festival "Lucerne tomorrow" (30th September). There is also the traditional lake festival (15th July) and the national and international costumes day (8th–10th September) which is expected to draw thousands of spectators.

Throughout the year the Lucerne Tourist Office is offering cheap stays – three days (two nights) from Sw.Fr.60 to Sw.Fr.164 in luxury hotels. The prices include breakfast, service and taxes. Each guest receives a book of tokens entitled "Lucerne invites you" and the tokens give – among other things – free rides on the city buses, entrance to the Transport Museum and a guided tour of the old city.

Additional information is obtainable from the SNTTO who also kindly supplied the photographs for this article.

LUCERNE – A SMALL TOWN WITH BIG-CITY STATURE

Lucerne is like an actor who is on the stage all summer playing to crowded houses and at home all winter resting in the quiet seclusion of his family. The contrast in the two faces of Lucerne – playground of the world and quiet provincial town – is striking. It is a small town with big-city stature.

Long, long ago Lucerne was a fishing and market village on the River Reuss. Its reputation grew under the favour of the monasteries and by the Middle Ages it had become a staging point for trade moving over the Gotthard Pass – the shortest route between the Po valley and the upper Rhine. And then, in the middle of the last century, the city

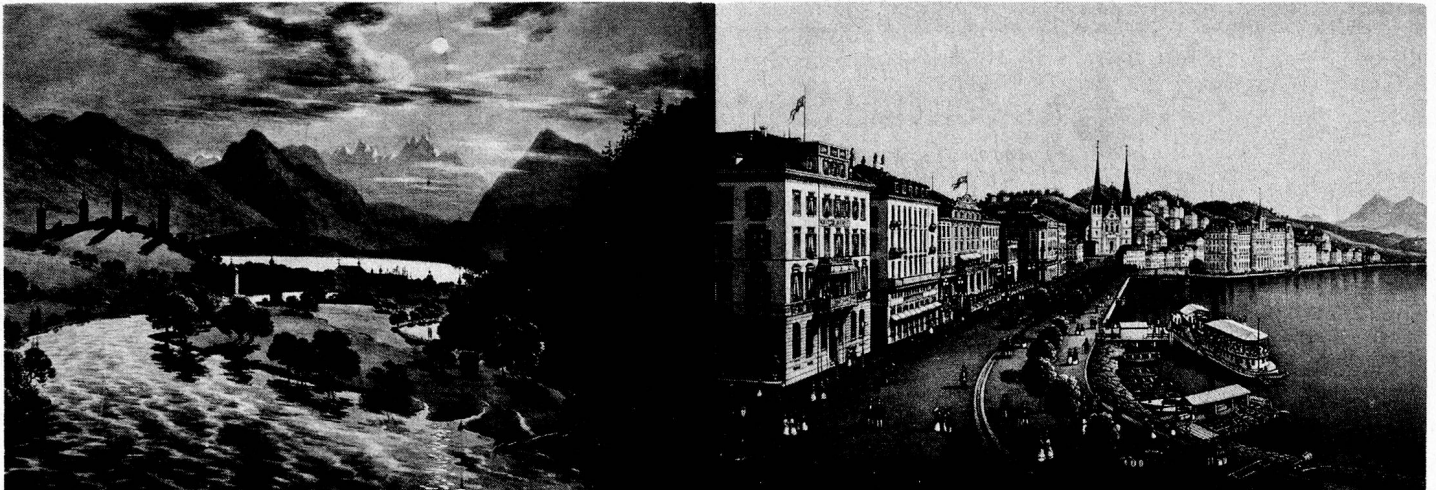
opened its gates to an every-swelling summer tide of tourists.

The stamp of the Middle Ages is revealed in its unmistakable Gothic skyline – the nine towers of the Musegg Wall, the pointed towers on the façade of the Hofkirche, the two covered wooden bridges, and the octagonal river water tower. But the characteristic styles of the Renaissance and Baroque are also frequently seen.

Lucerne is a long ribbon of a town sandwiched between lake, river and the rising hills behind it. When the "foehn" wind comes, the city is transformed, putting on its picture postcard face. But when the strange, warm south wind fades, heavy clouds gather and the lake turns grey.



A fragment showing six marching armed warriors from Lucerne's 15th century wine market.



This detail from a transparent painting by Franz Niklaus König gives an impression of what Lucerne was like at the beginning of the 19th century.

By the end of the 19th century Lucerne was already one of the most frequented resorts in Europe. Many poets and writers found inspiration there.