

# Yes, the Swiss really do like to travel...

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Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1979)**

Heft 1753

PDF erstellt am: **18.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690494>

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# YES, THE SWISS REALLY DO LIKE TO TRAVEL . . .

*as this current profile of one of our compatriots will again endeavour to prove. In a recent edition we profiled Louis Nard, Swissair's general manager for the United Kingdom and Ireland, an exercise which naturally posed the question of what better job could a person who likes travelling possibly have than to be a senior executive with a major international airline? Perhaps at least one possible answer might be to work within the more general framework of the travel trade, which is exactly what the "victim" of this current profile does.*



*Denise Charlotte Rossel, a lady with travel in her blood, has found her "niche" at Sunset Tours.*

Denise Charlotte Rossel, who was born in Bienne, would appear to have all the dedication to the travel industry to mark her out as yet another of those itinerants for which Switzerland has become famous.

She attended conventional primary and secondary schools, followed by a year at "Frauensschule" which, some cynics at least, would say is an institution designed to turn a girl into an efficient wife — the Swiss do love their efficiency, don't they? But if that was the purpose of her year there it was largely wasted because Denise has remained defiantly single. But some good did emerge from this year — her love of and expertise at — dressmaking. This elegantly clad and tastefully perfumed lady makes all her own clothes to a standard which must be the envy of many "à la mode" shops and boutiques.

Her formal early education was followed by three years at a "Berufsschule" coupled with an apprenticeship with Esco-Reisen AG. At the same time she travelled one day each week to Berne to pursue special travel trade studies.

And it was to be a choice of profession to which she was perhaps eminently suited from childhood. Like so many Swiss Denise is multi-lingual, having spoken German and French (and the Bienne patois) at home with her mother, father, brother and sister.

Having completed her studies in 1972, Denise remained with Esco-Reisen for a further 18 months. Next she joined Escolette,

one of her employer's subsidiary companies, an operation designed especially to cater for travel for young people.

During her time with Escolette Denise worked for four and a half months as a resident courier in Greece where, inevitably almost, she learned a little Greek. Back home again in Bienne she met a Greek family who asked her to accompany them to Britain as French teacher to their little girl. She came with them to London in 1975 and lived near Marble Arch for what she describes as six happy months.

Then it was time to return to her work as a courier, this time with Hotelplan conducting tours along the Rhine. Shortly afterwards Denise was offered, and accepted, a job as cashier at the Zürich Hilton where she stayed for ten months. Although too modest to say so, she must have been good at it because she was awarded a Hilton International Certificate in this relatively short time. This document was really to become her passport into the travel business.

Travel was really in her blood by now. On her Sundays off Denise would often spend the whole day at Zürich's Kloten airport just watching the aircraft come and go. Shades of Walter Mitty, perhaps?

Towards the end of 1975 Denise was "on the road again", this time to Senegal on a two year assignment with Hotelplan. But it was not to be. After six months she contracted malaria and had to return home to a job at Hotelplan's office in Bienne.

At the end of 1976 she resigned in order to return to London to study English at the Regent School of languages. Next, Denise joined GruppenReisen AG as their London courier whilst, at the same time, acting as the London representative for the Swiss/British Association.

In 1978 Denise started work to set up Sunset Tours, Gruppen-Reisen's new United Kingdom branch office. She likes this challenging job and feels particularly honoured at being chosen to set up the first overseas branch of a company that, in its seven years of operating has become one of the leaders in Anglo-Swiss travel. During this brief stay she has already got to know many of the Swiss community in London with her regular appearances at various Swiss functions.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Denise likes English humour — so far as she can understand it. But she's working at it. Apart from the long hours she devotes to her office (and dressmaking) she likes to listen to soul and pop music and to read as many historical novels as she can. She is a typically hard working Swiss but she does admit to liking British TV "Swiss TV is much too dry" she bravely says.

Her fundamental view of life is not complicated. She is a career girl and, as such, a firm believer in equal rights and opportunities for women. But she is NOT a womens' libber — "that's for the birds".

George Sommer