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hour Mass.

Spring in the Ticino

This month's covers show scenes
from Switzerland's "Sun Balcony",
the Ticino.

Weather statistics justify this
description: Lugano enjoys on an
average 2,250 to 2,800 hours of
sunshine a year. The Ticino has,
thanks to its exceptionally mild and
sunny climate a luxuriant, subtrop-
ical vegetation and in Spring the air
is heady with the fragrance of orange
blossom, mimosa and other flowers
and palm trees flourish alongside
oleander, agaves and magnolias.

But even the Ticino has bad
patches of weather. I remember one
particular holiday spent mostly in
dank clothes, huddled in rugs on our
hotel balcony or in various *grottos*,
emptying a considerable number of
boccalinos in order to escape from
the constant heavy downpour. But
the locals were very friendly and
most sympathetic towards the unfor-
tunate wet *turisti*.

The Ticino has an abundance of
attractions for the tourist and can
offer something for every inclination,
with its lakes and mountains, its
picturesque towns, gardens and
art-treasures. Almost every kind of
outdoor activity is available.

The number of tourists is likely to
increase further when the great
north-south motorway from Basle to
Chiasso through the Gotthard will be
completed in September.

But not all Ticinesi profit from the
tourist-business. In the valleys
above the lakes the old villages have
preserved their character. Their
inhabitants lead a sober life, earning
very little by tilling their small, stony
fields or their vines. In order to
prevent the young from deserting
their native villages, factories have
been built in some of those valleys
and old handicrafts, such as spin-
ning, weaving and braiding straw
have been reintroduced.

As distinctive as the scenery of
southern Switzerland is the gracious
hospitality of its people. The Ticino
has often been described as a
harmony of contrasts: a carefree
Latin attitude, combined with the
Swiss sense of order.

After the grey, dull winter months
a little Italian sunshine, flower-
scented air and joy seem to be just
the right tonic for the city-dweller
who is lucky enough to get away for
a spring holiday in the Ticino.

mhm

This month's covers

Front cover: Ponte dei Salti near Lavertezzo in the Verzasca Valley (Ticino)

Back cover: Summer evening in the Ticino (upper left)

The Pilatus railway between Alpnachstad and Pilatus Kulm (Central Switzerland) (upper right)

Morcote on Lake Lugano (Ticino) (bottom of page)

We apologize for the late appearance of the April and May issues of the SWISS OBSERVER, due to events beyond our control (industrial action at our printer's).

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