

Half the fun is in the planning

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HOLIDAY OBSERVER

HALF THE FUN IS



IN THE PLANNING

IF YOU are planning a holiday trip to Switzerland, you could find a journey through the latest batch of leaflets and brochures just as colourful – and almost as much fun.

Fancy a trip to Ticino? Then spread out the colourful pictorial relief map from the local tourist board and trace your fingers along the very valleys in which you will be driving come the summer.

Lake Como, Lake Lugano, the airport at Locarno – they're all beautiful drawn alongside other, less familiar, holiday destinations.

The English translation of the map offers some fascinating advice to female fortune hunters – perhaps not quite what the

authors intended. Nevertheless, there it is in black and white:

"The greatest concentrations of men and wealth in Europe are to be found in the Rhine basin in the north and the Po valley in the south."

Tourism is big business in Ticino with 28,000 hotel beds and 50,000 beds in holiday houses, flats and camp sites.

The area receives more than 1½ million visitors each year. Are you planning to be one of them?

Holiday packages are becoming increasingly popular. This is not necessarily because people are reluctant to plan their own holidays; a more likely reason is that the discounts available to package organisers make

them so financially attractive.

One such package is being organised by the Zurich Tourist Office. As well as bed and breakfast in your chosen category, the package includes a booklet of more than 30 vouchers for reduced or free admissions, drinks, transport etc.

You can use your vouchers to obtain a city sightseeing tour by bus or tram, reductions on day excursions, free admission to the outdoor swimming pool, a free drink in the Bazillus jazz club and many other holiday perks.

The leaflet on Gstaad offers a panoramic view of The White Highland, as impressive as anything you will see from a hotel bedroom. Symbols mark the ski-

lifts and cable cars, while the little wine glasses drawn on the mountainsides indicate (we hope) bars.

The Office of Tourism at Villars tempts us with Ski a Gogo – a fun filled seven-day package. The attractions include half board accommodation and a skiing season ticket for the whole of your stay which includes the unlimited use of lifts and drags.

The atmosphere, says the publicity, is young and gay and visitors can expect to enjoy Swiss specialities like raclette and fondue – and to take away a souvenir included in the price.

Half the fun of a holiday is in the planning, so get your brochures together now. And have a happy holiday.

Fewer overnights

OVERNIGHT stays in Switzerland dropped last summer and a survey reveals that the fall-off is expected to continue this winter. But bookings from Britain are still at a high level.

Summer hotel overnights were down 850,000, a fall of seven per cent.

The Swiss Federal Statistics Bureau says this was primarily due to a 17 per cent drop in visitors from West Germany, which is the Swiss tourist industry's best customer. The figures for Belgium, Holland and France were also down, but those for several other countries were up.

The latter included the US and Britain, because of the increased value of the dollar and sterling. Overnights by domestic tourists also went down.

In a survey of 40 tourist resort directors carried out by a leading Swiss bank, half expect worse results this winter, 10 per cent hope for better figures and the rest expect business to be similar to last winter.

Cut price in Lugano

THIRTY hotels in Lugano are taking part in a winter reduced-price arrangements scheme offered by the local tourist office.

The arrangements, available until March 21, cover seven overnights with breakfast, starting at Sfr. 168, or Sfr. 245 half board and Sfr. 294 full board. Also included are free use of local transport facilities and other concessions.

Despite its mild winter climate, the resort is close to the Monte Lema and Monte Tamara skifields.

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