

The face of Arosa

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

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Die Schweiz = Suisse = Svizzera = Switzerland : offizielle Reisezeitschrift der Schweiz. Verkehrszentrale, der Schweizerischen Bundesbahnen, Privatbahnen ... [et al.]**

Band (Jahr): - **(1948)**

Heft 11-12

PDF erstellt am: **01.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-776383>

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THE FACE OF AROSA

How changeful it is, the expressive face of Arosa, as the year rolls over this place of recreation and pleasure, of quiet meditation and of radiant beauty! We know Arosa best in its wintertime mantle of sparkling white; in the grateful warmth of the sun standing high in the cloudless sky; in the pure, clear air constantly stirred by the silvery tinkle of horsebells. The mornings are a picture of frozen stillness. The snow rings to the passage of the lone skier who, following the traditions of older times, has for hours been making his way through the woods up into the higher altitudes. There the rising sun bathes him in its rays, dazzles him with an abundance of warm light; and he stands entranced in a marvellous stillness. Cozy mornings these, when, in the comfort and warmth of the hotels, the visitors breakfast, make their plans and look forward to the promise of the

Ski-school on the practice grounds, in the neighbourhood of Arosa. — Die Skischule am Übungshang in der Umgebung von Arosa. — Ecole de ski sur la pente d'exercices, dans les environs d'Arosa.

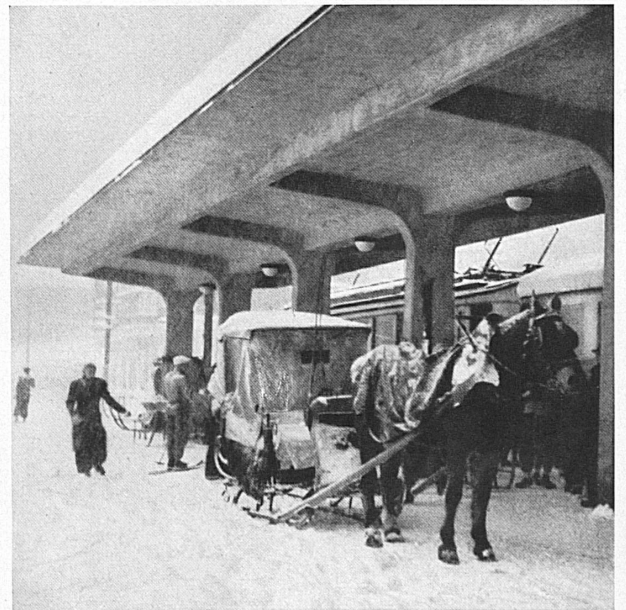
Right: The railway station of Arosa in whirls of snow. — Rechts: Schneetreiben beim Bahnhof Arosa. — A droite: La gare d'Arosa dans un tourbillon de neige.

Below: Arosa is surrounded by splendid forests. — Unten: Arosa ist von herrlichen Wäldern umgeben. — En bas: Arosa est entouré de magnifiques forêts.

Photo: Dabinden, Christen, Brunner

day that lies before them. Then the afternoon, golden with sunshine and tempting all and sundry to climb the highest peaks, to "do" the longest cross-country runs, to cut endless figures on the ice . . . and afterwards, the rhythm of the waltz, the tango and the paso doble.

At the Kulm ice rink you can sit in the sun, lazy, rather sleepy, watching the scene through half-closed eyelids or your sun-glasses, and imagine yourself at the cinema with a sequence of breath-



taking events unfolding before your eyes. There are always some who miss lunch, having no wish to adapt themselves to the rhythm of the hotel's daily life. This midday-hour up here seems to them far more worth while than any chicken with curry, mixed grill or braised beef lunch or whatever else the menu may hold, no matter how appetizingly prepared.

A lady ice-skating champion is training. Her pirouettes, her figures-of-eight and her other startling figures are like rippling scales and arpeggi on the piano; she displays so much grace, mobility and skill that one cannot see enough! Or, a father takes his little daughter on to the ice and—whilst the onlooker marvels that such tiny little skates can be made at all—she dances like a dainty elf, a flake of white on the mirror-bright surface.





Slowly the roads and the skiing grounds come to life. Queues are forming at the ski lift. Skis, skis everywhere! Sometimes they look like a miniature forest! And now it is her most vivacious, her most red-cheeked, her most laughing face that Arosa shows us! Hardly anyone stays indoors. Everybody wants to take his fill of what is offered here in such abundance: snow, air, light and sunshine; ascents, downhill runs, the company of fellow-beings; release from the humdrum; that exhilarating holiday feeling! With the setting sun comes the "promenade". It is almost like the Quai des Anglais at Nice, but transferred to an elegant winter setting, and once more it is fascinating to watch this coming and going, this endless parade, from a cosy little corner table. Again the incessant tinkling of bells. And the cold is on us again, hard and glassy. The places of entertainment fill up. The musicians tune their instruments. Outside, the sky takes on an opal hue, a translucence that almost hurts. Inside, the odour of

The little church of Inner-Arosa. — Das alte Kirchlein von Inner-Arosa. — L'église d'Inner-Arosa. Phot.: Pilet.

Below, left to right: The ski courses are reached by 4 ski-lifts. The longest of them, also the longest in Switzerland, takes skiers up to Hörnli Mountain. Part of the ascent is made by "chair lift" which operates winter and summer. — Unten, von links nach rechts: 4 Skiliffts führen von Arosa ins Skigebiet. Der längste von ihnen, der nach dem Hörnli, verkehrt jetzt teilweise auch als Sessellift. — Blick auf das winterliche Dorf. — En bas, de gauche à droite: 4 skiliffts conduisent les skieurs d'Arosa dans les champs de ski environnants.

Phot.: Jacob, Gemmerli.

cigarette smoke permeates the air; a confusion of voices and languages arises. This is what they call "the blue hour", an hour secretly included in the daily routine of every visitor to Arosa.

That is Arosa in winter.

But—what a sleepy, somnolent little mountain village is Arosa when all the visitors have gone. At the end of the summer season, for instance, when the last climber has taken his departure and the tennis courts are forsaken; when the last bathers have disappeared from the lake, and autumn slowly comes with its odour of barberries, its yellowing larches and its alpine pastures, no longer freshly green, from which the cattle has already been driven down into the valley. The stillness that then prevails is almost unnerving; a strange emptiness, a peculiar air of non-existence that must be experienced to be appreciated.

In the restaurants, huntsmen sit round the tables and relate—by no means for the first time!—their greatest deeds of valour and skill. The landlady knits. Her daughters knit. The waitress knits. All look up, rather reproachfully, when the door opens as though we were disturbing them in their snug retreat, in their well-earned idyll.

In the shop windows, even though the cold already sends shivers down our spine, we can still inspect the bathing suits and sun spectacles, diaphanous summer frocks and tennis rackets. The photographers have still not removed their summer snapshots from the stands outside their shops.

But one day the sky is grey and lowering; it has filled up with a damp, dark heaviness from which, unexpected and marvellously gentle, the first snow of the year floats caressingly down. And it goes on like that the next day, and the day after, and the day after that—in fact, for a whole week.

And, lo! The face of Arosa undergoes a transfiguration which, this also, must be seen to be believed. This wonderful face of Arosa opens wide its lustrous, knowing eyes.

Out come the brooms, the hammers and nails; wrought-iron gates are removed, roller blinds drawn up; people who have been awaiting this moment are brought hurrying in in response to letters, telephone calls and telegrams. The shop windows fill with pullovers and ski-suits, ice-hockey sticks and sealskins. The first green-aproned porter appears. Sleigh bells tinkle . . . Arosa smiles again, eager and ready. Let the visitors come!

