

# English

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plus en plus souvent. Notre hiver est fabriqué à Coire, dit avec sarcasme l'écrivain grison Leo Tuor («et de manière géniale»).

Suisse Tourisme recommandait: se balader sans stress. Les directeurs des stations et la horde de rédacteurs qui les entourent ne manquent pas de prodiguer des conseils avisés. Ce sont eux, les véritables poètes de la patrie. Ils ne prennent pas position, ils disent: «Quel que soit ton choix – tu ressentiras la blanche éternité de la neige.» Ils pia-notent sur leurs claviers, n'oublient pas l'air pi-quant du ciel bleu marine, ni les libellules au-des-sus des eaux calmes, ni la majesté des géants en habit d'hiver, ni que l'hôte pourrait ne s'intéresser qu'à une ultime décharge d'adrénaline, à savoir: au dernier sport branché et à l'équipement corres-pondant.

Actuellement, on nous conseille souvent d'être à l'écoute de son âme. C'est incroyable, le nombre d'endroits et de manières différentes qui permettent d'être à l'écoute de son âme: en pré-sence de sommets majestueux, c'est évident, mais aussi au bar de l'après-ski, lors d'une semaine de wellness, chez les marmottes sur l'alpage, à l'apé-ritif au soleil couchant ou dans une «metzgeta» (manger de la boucherie) en Engadine. Mais dans une Snow Party, ce n'est guère possible, parce que le cœur bat trop fort. C'est pareil lors d'un saut en parachute au-dessus des montagnes, lors d'un examen de parapente, lors des vols libres, en bal-lon ou en hélicoptère, c'est pourquoi, dans ces cas, il vaut mieux laisser l'âme là où elle se trouve.

Selon les critiques, la prolifération de ce type de sport d'aventure et de plaisir risque de détruire la montagne; le tourisme de masse tel qu'il est pra-tiqué aujourd'hui signifie la mort des Alpes. Les Suisses et les Suissesses parcourent chaque an-née douze milliards de kilomètres pour pratiquer leur sport favori. Cela représente presque 300 000 fois le tour de la Terre, mais ce n'est pas ce qu'ils veulent. Ils se satisfont des salles de gymnastique dans leur quartier, mais ils ne manquent pas pour autant une occasion de monter à l'air frais. En se mettant en mouvement, ils transforment la mon-tagne en engin de sport. Dans des coulisses inter-changeables, choisies en fonction de leur adéqua-tion, il n'est plus question d'édification et de dia-logue, mais d'assurer à tout prix à l'acteur sportif sa valorisation et sa satisfaction personnelles.

Les chercheurs disent qu'avec le réchauffe-ment climatique vraisemblablement provoqué par l'homme, le risque de glissements de terrain mas-sifs, d'inondations et d'avalanches s'accroît dans les Alpes. Il faut également s'attendre à une éléva-tion continue de la limite des chutes de neige, ce qui pourrait devenir déterminant dans la concu-rrence que se livrent les stations d'hiver. Les direc-teurs de stations prennent le problème au sérieux. Ils se procurent des installations d'enneigement ar-tificiel pour y faire face; la neige de demain ne tom-bera plus du ciel.

Le réseau routier fut développé en Haute-En-gadine lorsque le raccordement ferroviaire fut réa-lisé, le revers de la première guerre mondiale digéré, l'interdiction de circuler dans les Grisons levée et la crise économique mondiale pas encore

survenue. En été 1926, pas moins de 197 clients parvinrent avec 56 voitures au Grand Hôtel Schweizerhof à Saint-Moritz. Une plaque de bronze de 1998 rappelle cette époque. Elle fut comman-ditée par le conseil municipal de Samedan et explique pourquoi le tronçon de trois kilomètres entre Punt Muragl et Samedan passe par le terrain de golf et la raison pour laquelle il fut le premier du canton des Grisons à être doté d'un revêtement en dur: Sir Henri Detterding supportait mal, quand il jouait, qu'une voiture recouvre de poussière le terrain de golf. Le fait que Detterding était Direc-teur général de Shell nous permet de résumer la fin de l'anecdote. En effet, c'est son entreprise qui paya le revêtement en asphalte. Le tronçon s'ap-pelle encore aujourd'hui Shellstrasse et fut rénové en 1997. Sur la plaque de bronze, on peut lire: «La rénovation fut une occasion, pour la population et pour Shell (Switzerland) de se réjouir et de se rappeler que l'air propre ne va pas de soi».

Des maisons, des constructions routières, l'aéroport de Samedan et d'autres infrastructures occupent aujourd'hui le fond de la vallée. Ce ta-bleau peu réjouissant est compensé par le coup d'œil aux montagnes tout autour. Le réchauffe-ment climatique est aussi d'actualité ici. Afin d'améliorer la protection contre les crues, Same-dan aménage un nouveau lit au Flaz. La rivière est séparée de l'Inn sur une longueur de 4 kilomètres et déviée de l'autre côté de la vallée. 75 000 tonnes de rochers remplacent 70 000 tonnes de terre. Coût global: approximativement 30 millions de francs...

Le grand Saint-Moritz est une ville. Les nou-veaux poètes du terroir chantent l'atmosphère unique des grands hôtels, les commerces de luxe et les nombreuses possibilités offertes par le cirque blanc. Ils lancent: «Rideau et que la pièce nommée vie commence.» Saint-Moritz est à leurs yeux le Shopping Mall des Alpes, sa salle des fêtes, le top of the world, le haut lieu du sport.

Une étude parue récemment a confirmé que les prix sur la place immobilière de Saint-Moritz at-teignent des records au niveau national. Sur 4 600 appartements, plus de la moitié sont utilisés comme résidences secondaires par leurs proprié-taires. Le fait que ces logements soient souvent in-occupés n'est d'aucune aide pour les indigènes qui souffrent de la grave pénurie de logements au loyer accessible. Saint-Moritz s'agrandit, mais le nombre de ses habitants est en constante diminu-tion. Ils s'en vont. Dans la pièce de théâtre nom-mée vie, ils quittent la scène.

Ils n'éprouvent aucune gêne à se mettre en avant. Ils ont 500 kilomètres de sentiers pédestres et plus de 1000 bancs panoramiques, un casino avec des Italiennes et Italiens joueurs, ils ont la plus ancienne piste de bob du monde, ils furent les premiers à disposer de l'éclairage électrique, ils jouent au golf au cœur de l'hiver, ils ont créé le premier office du tourisme en Suisse, ils étaient les premiers à avoir le téléphone aux Grisons, le pre-mier tram électrique des Alpes, la première course de chevaux sur neige. Ils ont tout. Des trains de montagne, des télésièges, 350 kilomètres de pistes à enneigement assuré, 220 canons à neige

et un chirurgien esthétique. Ils disent: «Si on tient la forme avec un look branché, on trouve facile-ment des contacts.»...

Le cirque du ski arrive en février. Saint-Moritz s'y prépare. En effet, la ville dans la montagne or-ganise l'événement le plus branché de la saison d'hiver, l'événement sportif le plus cher jamais mis sur pied en Suisse. Des images brillantes vont faire le tour du globe. Des athlètes vont s'embrasser. On s'attend à 100 000 spectateurs sur place et 300 millions de téléspectateurs. Les Championnats du monde de ski se déroulent à Saint-Moritz en fé-vrier. Lorsque le terrible coup de départ est donné au sommet de la non moins terrible descente, les coureurs atteignent une vitesse de plus de 130 km/h en 6 secondes. Rapides comme l'éclair, ils présentent aux spectateurs ce que les poètes lo-caux ont encore imaginé à propos des Champion-nats du monde: «Il n'y a pas que la vitesse, mais la vitesse c'est tout.»

légèrement abrégé

## English

Balz Theus (pages 9, 37–39)  
English translation: Michael Robinson

### Exploring the mountains

The photographer Guido Baselgia spent years un-der the spell of the mountains and crevasses of the Engadine. He knew there was something he had to do up there, but it took him time to work out what it was. He saw snow lying metres deep. He saw smooth rocks. He saw endless heaps of rubble and scree blocking his way. He saw the stone's cold glint and heard the drip of water. Ice splintered under his feet. He groped his way to-wards his goal. Finally he captured the mountains in his images with an immediacy that left them nothing to hide. This is how the early valley-dwellers might have seen them, when they were not majestic and still, but eerie, not tinglingly or terrifyingly beautiful, but simply terrifying. Hatje Cantz have published the results of this work as "hochland". The Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur presented them in an exhibition; some sections travelled briefly to Helsinki, as part of a Pro Helvetia event.

The photographs, which are being published here for the first time, were taken en route to the goal. They are a record of the life that man brings to the mountains. Encounters, behaviour, build-ings: sharply observed, subtly presented, thoughtful or ironic and amusing, and always dis-turbing. He moved through the mountains of his childhood on foot, on a bicycle, on skis or on snowshoes, with his photographic equipment on his back.



*"Oh, oh," cried Heidi cheerfully,  
"here you never have a heavy heart!"*

Johanna Spyri was right and yet she wasn't. The machines were clattering in the valley below and thick clouds of smoke were pouring out of the factory chimneys when she gave her Heidi a bed under the stars, with Alpine flowers, fresh air and an upright grandfather. My dear old granddad, what a fine home you have! Many a king would envy you it!

As everybody knows, Heidi's friends are the high, rocky mountains, towering imposingly and calmly when everything in the whole wide valley breathes peace and quiet. Theoretically, high geographical locations could still be advertised like this. The high Alpine tourist industry could still proclaim: "Nothing in the world is as good as our milk, grandfather." But they are afraid to do it. The peace and quiet of the valley is ill suited to luring enough visitors out of hell into heaven, or rather, out of the lowlands into the uplands, and we'd rather keep completely quiet about the milk.

It was different in those days. The motor car had scarcely been invented when the Grisons natives removed it from their roads. The canton banned cars completely in 1900. People who did not want to give up their new cars had to harness horses or oxen to them. It took 25 years and 10 bitterly fought referendums before the people of Grisons saw the error of their ways and gave cars the freedom they have enjoyed ever since.

"Wake up, people of Grisons!", the opposing sides called to each other. Cars make dust. Cars make a noise. Cars lower the tone of the free Alpine countryside. Cars tend to go too fast. Cars confuse the cattle, frighten people and ruin the roads. "Do you, people of Grisons, want to do socage service on your roads for those folk who then roar arrogantly and contemptuously past you in their cars?"

But when the people of Grisons had finished thinking the matter over properly they proved more susceptible to the insistence of the hotel pioneers than the coachmen's qualms, and made cars politely welcome. Cars bring visitors. Visitors bring money. Money makes life sweeter. Today tourism is one of the pillars of the Grisons economy. Every year about 13 million strangers sleep in the canton's approx. 170 000 guest beds, and about half the inhabitants live on this, directly or indirectly.

Heidi drank in the golden sunlight, the fresh air and the delicate scent of flowers. She wanted nothing more than for everything to stay the same for ever. Today we know that in 1881, when Johanna Spyri published her book, Heidi was not quite the only person who wanted to be part of this. Tourism was starting to build up at that time, in fits and starts at first, but then more steadily. In summer the upper classes from the smoky lowland population centres came to refresh their bodies and souls with spa cures of all kinds, to enjoy walks on prepared paths and to cast a shy glance up at the white snowfields from a safe distance and at the enormous skies above them: so wonderfully blue, the mountain skies!

The winter was rather more of a problem in those days. When the first skiers turned up in 1859 the locals shook their heads in amazement, which doesn't exactly suggest that this really was the cradle of winter tourism. But the people of St. Moritz still persist in making this claim: they cite a conversation that the hotel pioneer Johannes Badrutt held five years later with four British summer visitors by the fireside in the Hotel Kulm. Badrutt permitted himself the observation that winters in the Engadine were less hard than in London. This was the tiny incident that finally led to an enormous tourist industry, in a number of phases. At that time the English could still laugh without moving their lips. But Badrutt was clever. He made a bet with the Englishmen. They were at the door again at Christmas and stayed until Easter, because the climate was so wonderful and the people of St. Moritz so fantastically hospitable. And so they acquired the kudos of having attracted the first winter tourists to the Alps.

Even longer ago, the present town was a little farming village with perhaps 200 inhabitants. The farmers sent cattle and timber to Italy and the Tyrol, and bought grain, wine and salt from them in return. When the dark winter days came they sat on the bench by the stove with their children, looked through the window, thought fervently about the spring and burned holes in the snow with their yearning eyes. That was little enough, but finally it caused quite a number of people from the Engadine to seek their fortunes abroad. They accumulated large amounts of money in Venice, in Genoa, in Milan and elsewhere as confectioners and shop proprietors, and this money finally found its way back to the valley with its owners. And it was enough to start something. The confectioners' and other investors' money reappeared in hotels, luxury hotels and other tourist businesses that shot up from 1856 onwards in the Upper Engadine, finally achieving a density that Johannes Badrutt had probably never even dreamed of.

The euphoria knew no bounds. It electrified the community. It shook it up completely. One incident that illustrates this was made public by the "Engadiner Post" on 28 July 1898. The newspaper announcement came from St. Moritz. It was called "Customary Metamorphoses" and brought an individual fate to light in a few lines: "In the proud Hotel Suisse here, a carpenter worked well and reliably through the winter and spring. Today, since the hotel has opened, the same man stands in the smart restaurant in a tail coat like a majordomo, serving Pilsener."

Things went pretty much the same for the mountains. They had once been somebody, as we know, rumbling with thunder, hurling lightning, sending down avalanches and floods, inhospitable and populated with sinister spirits. But one day the gloomy associations were all removed. A new image was put in place and scarcely anyone was prepared to contradict it. People were now told by hotel brochures how to revel in the joys of nature, what a mountain is, and what the summer or the winter means.

The mountains had accepted the curious looks from the bottom of the valley, they had sighed and put up with the landscape painters who moved them into the sunlight, they had allowed the mountaineers, skiers, nature-lovers to indulge themselves all over them, they had tolerated the summit-stormers who bloodied their fingertips on their flanks and gratefully linked their names with them. And then they were besieged by the mass tourists, and here we are now, in an arena for which an army of advertisers in some offices somewhere are finding ever new messages, changing all the more rapidly to drum up ever greater numbers, as they hope. Our winter, wrote the Grisons author Leo Tuor sarcastically, is made at Chur, "and it's hellishly brilliant".

Swiss tourism recommended: stress-free cruising. The resort directors and their writing fraternity are never short of clever advice. They are the true poets of the homeland. They do not say black or white, they say: "Whatever you decide on – here you will be aware of the white eternity of the snows." They clatter away on their keys, remembering the bracing air or the aquamarine sky, the dragonflies over the still water and the sublime giants in their winter clothing. They do not forget that the visitor might just fancy the ultimate adrenaline kick as well, in other words the most recent trendy sport and the clothing that goes with it.

Today we are frequently advised to let it all hang out. It is incredible how, where and why we can let it all hang out: obviously in the proud company of majestic peaks, but also in the snow bar, in the feel-good week, with the marmots in the meadows or when the Engadine restaurateurs have freshly-killed seasonal meat on offer. You can't let it all hang out at a snow party because your heart is pounding. And it does that if you do a parachute jump in the mountains as well, at diploma parascending, when hang gliding, flying balloons or helicopters: these are all cases where it is best to keep everything in.

The critics say that if all these exciting adventure and fun sports are allowed to proliferate any further the mountains will be destroyed; mass tourism on today's model will be the death of the Alps. The Swiss cover twelve million people kilometres per year to do their sport. This would take them round the world almost 300 000 times, but they don't want to do that. They are happy with the local gym, but they are much more interested in taking every opportunity to be out in the fresh air. When they get going, the mountains become sports apparatus. In an interchangeable setting that is chosen for its practicality the point is no longer edification and dialogue, but securing all-round self-confirmation and self-satisfaction for the active sportsman.

The researchers say that global warming, which is in all probability caused by man, increases the risk of massive landslides, floods and avalanches in the Alps. It is also to be expected that the snowline will keep moving higher. This could become a crucial advantage or disadvantage in the competition between the winter



sports resorts. The resort directors take this seriously. They are all buying snow-cannons to be ready for the fight; tomorrow's snow will not fall from the sky.

When the Upper Engadine had been connected to the railway network, had recovered from set-backs at the end of the First World War, the Grisons car ban had been lifted and the world economic crisis was not due for a few more years, attention turned to extending the road system. In summer 1926, 197 visitors in 56 motor cars managed to drive up to the luxury Schweizerhof hotel in St. Moritz. A bronze plaque dating from 1998 reminds us of this period. It was commissioned by the local council in Samedan, and explains why the three kilometres of road past the golf course between Punt Muragl and Samedan were the first link in the Canton of Grisons to be metalled – it was because Sir Henry Detterding did not like cars enveloping the golf course in a cloud of dust as they drove by. Detterding was the managing director of Shell, and that cuts a long story short. His company paid for the asphaltting. The stretch is still called Shell Road, and was renewed in 1997. The bronze plaque says: "The refurbishment gave Shell (Switzerland) reason to be pleased and to remember that clean air cannot be taken for granted."

Cars, transport facilities, Samedan airfield and other infrastructure features are now spread-

ing across the valley floor. The view of the surrounding mountains makes up for this less than pleasing sight. Global warming is an issue here as well. To protect itself from floods, Samedan is diverting the Flaz. The river is being separated from the Inn over a distance of 4 kilometres and moved to the other side of the valley. 70 000 tons of earth are being replaced with 75 000 tons of rock. Overall cost: about 30 million francs...

The great St. Moritz is a town! The new local poets sing the praises of the luxury hotels with their unique atmosphere, the expensive shops and rich pickings in the White Arena. They cry: "Curtain up and clear the stage for the play called life." St. Moritz is the shopping mall of the Alps, to use its own words, it is their ballroom, the top of the world, the sporting stronghold.

A recently published study has confirmed that prices on the St. Moritz property market are reaching record levels for Switzerland. There are 4600 residential units, and over half of them are used by their owners as second homes. This suggests that they are often unoccupied, but that does not help the local people who suffer from a severe lack of affordable rented accommodation. St. Moritz is growing, but the number of real St. Moritz people is constantly going down. They are moving out. They are leaving the stage of the play called life.

They have no inhibitions about showing themselves in a good light. They have 500 kilo-

metres of paths and over 1000 benches with panoramic views, they have a casino full of Italians who love gambling, they have the oldest bob-sleigh run in the world, they were the first with electric light, they play golf in the depths of winter, they founded the first Swiss tourist association, they had the first telephone in Grisons, the first electric tram in the Alps, the first horse-racing on snow. They've got everything. Mountain railways, chair-lifts, 350 kilometres of slopes with guaranteed snow, 220 snow-cannons and a cosmetic surgeon: "Anyone who is fit and looks good will have no trouble in making friends."...

The ski circus is coming to town in February. St. Moritz is building. This Alpine town is organizing the trendiest winter event, the most expensive sporting event that Switzerland has ever seen. Glittering images will be flashed around the globe. Athletes will embrace. 100 000 spectators are expected on the spot and another 300 million on television. The Alpine world skiing championships take place in St. Moritz in February. When the crazy starting pistol is fired on the crazy starting slope, the downhill racers will reach a speed of over 130 kilometres an hour in 6 seconds. Quick as lightning, they are demonstrating something about the world championship that occurred to the new local poets as well: "Speed is not everything, it's the only thing."

slightly abridged

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