

# LIVING WELL

FOR THE ACTIVE OLDER ADULT

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Nostalgia **E4**  
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## The Swiss scene

From the Alps to Lake Geneva, Switzerland raises the travel standard

STORY AND PHOTOS BY LINDA FASTESON | FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE

Switzerland is good for what's ailing you — in every way possible.

Here, you can find some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world — the majestic snow-capped Alps, enchanting forests, sparkling lakes, rugged hiking trails and idyllic countryside — that invites visitors and residents to get outside, breath some of the crisp air, and become a part of the picture.

You'll also discover an opportunity to eat and drink the good life. Milk chocolate was invited here and summer cheeses take on subtle flavors from the wildflowers eaten by contented dairy cows that you'll see grazing lazily in lush green meadows. Epicurean delights range from the simplest of fare and local brews in a mountain hut to fine regional wines and haute cuisine prepared by star-ranked Michelin chefs in some of the world's leading hotels and restaurants.

SEE **EXPLORE**, PAGE E2 ►



A view of Appenzell from a balcony at the hotel Hofweissbad Appenzell und Gesundheit in Weissbad.

## Putting southeastern Massachusetts furniture on the map



**DIANE VIERA**  
 HISTORIC  
 NEW ENGLAND

Furniture collectors swoon when they discover a Federal-era high chest made in Newport. The value skyrockets when an antique chair is attributed to a well-known Boston or Connecticut cabinetmaker.

But what about the people who were living in our neck of the woods

in the 18th and early 19th centuries? Were they purchasing furnishings from other parts of New England or relying on their own skills? Why don't antiques dealers boast about pieces with a southeastern Massachusetts provenance?

One of the primary reasons so little attention has been paid to antique

furniture made in our area is because scholars had never taken the time to do in-depth research.

That all changed in 2002 when Brock Jobe, a professor of American Decorative Arts for Winterthur's Program in Material Culture, was invited to lecture on early furniture from Providence and New Bedford. Jobe, a

highly respected authority on American furniture, started to prepare for his lecture and quickly discovered what he calls "something of a blank slate" after finding only five references focusing on the 18th and 19th century furniture of southeastern Massa-

SEE **VIERA**, PAGE E8 ►

# EXPLORE: Discover the good life in Switzerland

FROM PAGE E1

As one of the wealthiest countries of the world, Switzerland sets high standards for quality of life. Health care, which is affordable and available to all citizens, includes visits to the many soothing spas around the country.

On this trip, we visited the rural town of Appenzell, in the eastern part of Switzerland, south of Lake Constance. Hill country at its best, the Appenzell Innerrhoden canton, or territorial district, is best known for its colorfully painted wooden buildings, the musical sounds of yodelers, dulcimers, giant-sized cowbells and alpenhorns, and the many dairy farms that dot the land.

From there, we headed southwest to the French speaking Alps region and Switzerland's largest body of water, the crescent-shaped Lake Geneva, known locally as Lac Léman. This is a region of sophisticated cities, castles, Roman and Celtic ruins, museums, spas, resorts and charming villages with sun-drenched vineyards.

Once arriving at the airport, we validated our Swiss Passes at the airport's train station and were off with unlimited use of the Swiss public transport system — trains, postal buses, boats and aerial trams. Not surprisingly, each system, and it seems the country in general, runs with the precision timing for which the Swiss are so well known.

## Appenzellerland

Appenzell got its name — from Abbacella, or abbot's cell — when it was owned by the abbey at St. Gallen between the 10th to 15th centuries. The imposition of tithes and restrictions led to a struggle for independence, and in 1513, Appenzell became part of the Swiss Confederation.

Appenzellerland is divided between the larger Protestant and more industrial Appenzell Auser rhoden to the north and west, and the Catholic and agricultural Appenzell Innerrhoden to the south. In 1989, the Swiss Supreme Court forced Appenzell Innerrhoden to grant women the right to vote locally, a process that takes place with in an open-air parliament held outdoors in the historic town square, Landsgemeindeplatz, by the raising of hands.

Our hotel, the recently renovated Hofweissbad Appenzell und Gesundheit, is a resort and spa for restoring and maintaining good health. Beautifully renovated in 2009, the hotel offers several fine dining options, and is a short walk from the train station in picture-perfect Weissbad, and a short train ride to Appenzell.

Hotels in Switzerland include a breakfast buf-



fet, but Hofweissbad's is a showcase of local cheeses, meats, eggs, beverages and mueslis. Dinner might include the tender local Kalb-Bier, inspired by Japan's Kobe beef, and four days a week, professional cheesemakers demonstrate traditional techniques. Most area accommodations also provide an Appenzell Card with stays of three or more nights, which is good for local transport and attractions such as museum and pool admissions, a cheese tasting, a toboggan run, an audio walk and a bicycle rental.

Once off the train, the tourism office on Appenzell's main street, Hauptgasse, offers guided tours, and some include a taste of local foods. They can also book a yodeling lessons. Though I'll never be a good yodeler, I discovered a knack for Talerschwingen, spinning a five franc coin in one of the three different-size milk bowls to add an accompanying hum to the vocal sound.

Both the town hall and Baroque parish church, Kirche St. Mauritius (Moritz), were built in the 16th century. Inside town hall is the Appenzell Museum, a showcase of area culture and traditions, including its colorful costume collection. The pedestrian-only part of the town is lined with shops featuring local arts and crafts like the embroidery, which is part of a cottage industry.

Löwen Pharmacy and other buildings are colorfully painted to indicate the products inside. Colorful metal signs hanging on the building are crafted in shapes that indicate shops, restaurants, services and studios of local craftsmen inside. A chocolate bar emblem at the Bazar Hersh reminded us that Milton Hershey's family came from Appenzell.

Huge cowbells on elaborately decorated straps hang in the window of Hampi Fässler's shop. In addition to the bells, his

products include traditional leather suspenders adorned with metalwork, handcrafted by this family for seven generations.

Hotel Adler's Haus Bakerei is a popular stop for freshly baked treats like birnebrot or birnweggen (pear bread), biberlis (gingerbread filled with marzipan), or Appenzeller Chäsflade (cheese bread). Hotel Adler, in a house from 1562, has a restaurant and special fondue area, as well as accommodations.

Mösler's is one of the best places to discover the unique flavors of the spicy Appenzeller cheese — classic, surchoix, or extra-made with a secret mixture of 42 herbs.

Appenzell is also known for its variety of sausages like alpenklubber, Südwooscht, Schüblig mit Speckwürfel, and the ever-popular Mostbröckli, raw meat preserved in salt and seasoning, smoked and dried. All these varieties can be found at family-run shop Melzey Weller's.

Beer-making in the region dates to 1728, and popular local brews include Vollmond (full moon), Weizen (wheat), or Hanfblüte (hempflower). Top off the day with some powerful Appenzeller Alpenbitter, with its 29% alcohol content, made with 42 secret herbs. Also, when you toast be sure to look others in the eye or be considered rude.

## Parading of the cows

In mid-May, cows are adorned with flowers and ceremoniously taken to high alpine pastures. In September, they are led back down.

Herdsmen wear their traditional costume of yellow breeches, decorated leather suspenders, red embroidered vest, silver-buckled black shoes, black flower-bedecked hat, and a gold earring fashioned after a wooden cream spoon, worn on the right ear.

Also in costume, a boy in leads and a girl tends a small herd of goats. Each of three prize cows wears a bell weighing 15 to 50 pounds and a brightly decorated collar. Pigs and a horse drawn wagon with utensils follow. Last of all is the Appenzell cattle dog.

If you'd like to see more ceremonial events, contact the tourist bureau for a list of other occasions when regional costumes are worn, and be advised that while traveling in this region, you may have to stop to let the cows cross the road.

## Hiking in Appenzellerland

Appenzellerland has nearly 750 miles of marked

mountain and valley trails. Wear your hiking gear and take the cableway up from Wasserauen to the Ebenalp. Rocky paths along steep rock cliffs lead to a prehistoric cave, a hermit's dwelling, and a cave chapel called Wildkirchli, which was inhabited at different times by giant cave bears and hermits. The mountain forms the back wall of the Aescher Inn, which seems suspended from the side of the mountain. The carved wood menu includes hearty meat and rosti (shredded potatoes with cheese) dishes.

Hikers can enjoy simple mountain chalets that offer food and lodging. It's a chance to meet farmers and sample local specialties. For a view without the trek, there's easy access from Schwägälp's cable car to Appenzell's signature mountain, Säntis, at 8200-feet, it's the area's highest peak.

## Lavaux region

In the 12th century, Benedictine and Cistercian monks began planting vines and building retaining walls on the steep sun-drenched hillsides of the Lavaux region, between Lausanne and Montreux, on the north shore of Lake Geneva.

Today, nearly 2,000 acres of land in the French-speaking southwest is Switzerland's major wine-producing region and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Some of today's wine growers are 17th generation descendants of the lay people to whom the work was delegated centuries ago. The region's steep slopes need a deep-rooted grape like the Chassalas that comprises 90 percent of its foremost vintage, Dézaley.

In addition to wine, the area also features breathtaking landscape, is a gourmet's delight and a perennial magnet for poets and painters.

Hiking and cycling trails with scenic picnic areas run right through the lush, green vineyards. The Lavaux Express, or yellow Train des Vignes, lets you sit back and enjoy the scenic ride.

Lake Geneva boats connect towns in Switzerland and France, and the classic Belle Epoque paddle-wheeler Savoie offers Michelin-starred cuisine with the view. We drank in the scenery while sampling regional wines with local specialties like lake perch and char, papet vaudois (leek and cabbage sausage), gateau äla raisinée (fruity cake) and chocolate.

We stopped in villages



PHOTOS BY LINDA FASTESON

## From the mountains to the city

**ABOVE:** A hiking trail leads to Aescher Inn, built into the side of the mountain, near the Ebenalp.

**LEFT:** Switzerland's largest cathedral, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Lausanne, is its finest example of early Gothic and the most visited monument in the city.

**PHOTO SLIDESHOW** See more of Linda Fasteson's pictures from Switzerland at [thesunchronicle.com/photo\\_gallery/](http://thesunchronicle.com/photo_gallery/)

like Onnens, where a lunch of hot cabbage, sausage and rosti at Au Bon Vin included the proprietor and waiter, Herr Kunst's rendition of "Ain't She Sweet" as he played his vintage recording. We sampled wines like Cuvée Amandine, which was delicious with chocolate, at Vignoble Cousin in Concise.

For the widest selection of area wines — over 300 — we stopped at Lavaux Vinorama, where local winemakers rent cubicles. The proprietor selects eight wines for tastings, or you can try the Enomatic machine that dispenses samples.

That night was spent at the Hotel Prealpina in picturesque Chexbres. We overlooked the vineyards, villages and lake from high atop the hill.

## Yverdon-les-Bains

The small town of Yverdon-les-Bains, the Lavaux region's thermal capital on the southwestern tip of Lake Neuchatel, features 14,000-year-old springs that release mineral-rich waters reputed to help the joints, stomach, muscles and respiratory tract. The springs attracted the Romans, who settled here. Forty-five Neolithic menhirs, upright stones weighing up to five tons, — vestiges of a Celtic presence dating to 5000 BC — have also been found in the area.

The 13th century Chateau d'Yverdon, a medieval castle built by the Peter II of Savoy dominates the Old Town. Inside is the History Museum and Swiss Fashion Museum. A research center is dedicated to Heinrich Pestalozzi, who established a school here for poor and underprivileged children in the early 19th century using an innovative individualized curriculum.

Also of interest in the area are Maison d'Ailleurs (House of Elsewhere), the first science fiction museum in Europe, and the Jules Verne Museum, connected by a bridge.

Our accommodations choice was The Grand Hotel des Bains, a magnificent blend of state-of-the-art architecture and history that links to the Thermal Center and offers fine dining. For lunch, La Grenette is a popular Old Town restaurant featuring local favorites like filets perches (perch), tomme dorée sur craquante (fried cheese), all served on salad, and a 20 Swiss franc plate of the day.

## Lausanne

At the crossroads of Eu-

rope, Lausanne has a rich medieval past dating to the Romans, who moved their 4th century Roman lakefront settlement, Lousonna, to the higher and more easily defended inland area, the present Old Town.

Capital of the Canton of Vaud, thanks to Napoleon, and site of the signing of major international treaties, Lausanne is a cultural, educational, conference, banking, corporate and sport headquarters perhaps best recognized by visitors as the Olympic Games headquarters and a holiday resort.

To get around, free transportation cards are issued to hotel guests in this hilly city, and Lausanne has Switzerland's only metro with stops designated by sounds, such as bells for the cathedral area. Lausanne has an international reputation for its hotel industry, inspired by its prestigious Lausanne Hotel Management School, first in the world.

Creative thinkers like Voltaire, Dickens, Byron, Shelley, Tennyson and T.S. Eliot, who wrote "The Waste Land" here, flocked to the area. This artistic and cultural center, with exceptional music, theater and ballet, is also a hub of world-renowned medical engineering and health clinics. Its shops are showcases of quality Swiss made products—watches and clocks, knives, carved wooden products, and music boxes, to name a few.

Switzerland's largest cathedral, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, is its finest example of early Gothic architecture and the most visited monument in Lausanne. It dominates the medieval Vielle Ville (Old Town) shopping and restaurant district. Since 1405, a night watchman calls out the hours between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m.

The Olympic Museum, the second most visited in museum in Switzerland, is in an impressive garden that overlooks the Ouchy area's tree-lined promenade, the lake and the Alps. Adjacent to the museum, and with a spectacular lake view, is the world-renowned five-star Beau Rivage Palace Hotel and Spa, which was built in 1857.

Lausanne has three fine and dedicated chocolate shops. Chocolatier Durig learned from his father and has added chocolate vinegar, used with olive oil as a salad vinaigrette, and spice chocolates.

Delivering spectacular scenery, world-class outdoor sport opportunities, and some of the best gastronomic delights in Europe, Switzerland sets a higher standard, not just for residents, but also for vacationers.

## SEEKONK'S LINDA FASTESON

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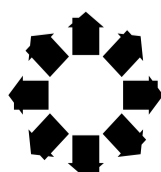
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