

center stage in switzerland *for comfort & business*

First in a Series to assist business traveler's needs + home away from home secure bets by Jon Messer



AS MANY OF US EXTENSIVELY TRAVEL FOR BUSINESS, WE TEND TO ALWAYS FOCUS ON THE PROXIMITY OF WHERE AS OPPOSED TO THE HUMAN NEEDS OF WHAT BEST? It's too easy to be distracted by the trip's purposeful essentials. How many of us take the time to differentiate hotels beyond expense vs. indulgence?

Sure, when money is no object we tend to consider pampering ourselves. Because everything good is usually expensive, right? Not always. That's also why "we strive to inform" as we assist your ability to easily find genuine home-away-from-home vitality when most needed during any long-stay. Same might be said for center-city vacations where you seek culture, rather than remote tranquility.

One of Switzerland's great virtues is ease of access. Meetings in Aarau or Zurich might pleasantly find you sleeping there but, there are no Swiss musts. Nowhere else on The Continent is access quicker or easier. How often have you ever commingled the words wonderful, pleasure and commute in the same sentence? This is just one of the reasons why many love to enjoy Swiss travel.

So, allow me to begin this series centrally in the heart of Switzerland. With a perfect crescent's arc, Lucerne {also Luzern} wraps itself around her idyllic grand lake. The key is to optimize her visual splendor by taking a vantage point that also guarantees your absolute comfort. But a few steps from water's edge - enter **HOTEL DES BALANCES** and you're home! From her 13th Century roots as an Inn, this Four-Star grand-lady offers a very private 56 lush guest-rooms with Hoteliers that "completely blow-away" most Five-Star properties.



Hotel Des Balances sits at the water's edge of the Reuss River with wide, expansive views of the city and the lake.

My 9-night stay began a-foot as it's a gentile 5-minute riverside walk from the central SBB station. Wherever I land in Switzerland, I intentionally, immediately ride her rails as the views and seating comforts are absolutely unequalled anywhere on the Continent. This time, from Zurich Airport, it's a mere one-hour clip that ends all too soon. How many of us have spent well more than an hour in cars or cabs from airports? Don't answer that.

Des Balances' exterior is classically painted in the beautiful style of the fabulous 16th Century Swiss portrait artist, Hans Holbein. Step through her doors and one immediately feels



From sunrise, sunsets, and the wee hours, Des Balances offers a bright panorama in every season.

the flavor of being in a private club. By no means ordinary or with any commercial motif, Des Balances is definitely a chic and exclusive gourmet home away from home. Situated on the Reuss River atop Lucerne's magnificent lake, her views are breath taking and as expansive as a whole horizon. Without a blink or turn, your eyes are filled by the enormity of this quaint city, a seemingly endless lake and framed by majestic Alps at each visual border.

Suites, Jr. Suites and all rooms are meticulously appointed – each with their own personality. Interior privacy is absolute, yet one is instantly drawn to sit on her balconies. There are no missing amenities and if you're like me, you'll relish long hot steamy showers or the splendor of a tub befitting royalty. A hot tea or chocolate at midnight is a mere button-push. One could easily read for hours but, if you're reclining, the beds will lull you to sleep before you're apt to turn many pages.

All of this is merely a compliment to the unequalled team Des Balances Hotelier, Peter Busser crafted with the pleasure he takes in making any stay, long or short more memorable than the business that brought you. Peter is driven by the passions of desire. After hotel school training, he did tours as a

GM in St. Moritz & Zermatt. For years, he was both enchanted and captivated by the charms, location and architecture the Balances held. As he says: "the views, vistas and panorama will instantly steal your heart and fill you with the freshest air the Earth has!" His good fortune was sharing his robust thoughts with the private owner - the rest is the history Peter has added to this luscious property. And such is the domain of properties exclusively managed.

Like the magnet most homes kitchens draw one to, here you merely step-in for any wish morning, noon or nights. Their restaurant headed by maestro Andy Fluri a '14 Gault-Milau-Point Award Winning Culinary Artist, along with his crew gladly offer complete fulfillment of every desire. The Balances kitchen hums to serve as you breakfast or dine. Whether you begin at their resplendent complete bar or from any table, the windowed views are almost as magnificent as when you sit and enjoy her Terrace. Beyond morning's first meal, all menus are seasonal and wide. But, any special wish may be had simply for the asking.

In all my years of travel, I have never, ever found myself in as conversational table or bar atmosphere. Locals flock here literally every day of the week and in my

9-nights stay I have never met more cheery voices as the sun rose. Perhaps it's the mix of atmosphere and service team? I never gave it a thought. What I do recall were the spectacular conversations with locals, French, Germans, Brits, Italians, Greeks, Russians, Chinese and an elated 3-man business team from Cambodia. Never intruding, simply it's all there whenever one wishes to partake. Likewise, I am equally certain I have never enjoyed a long business stay as much.

At Des Balances, every business need or access is graciously, discretely there for the asking. And while you're at it in Lucerne or anywhere via the SBB or car, you must make time for all that's local. Lucerne is ripe and orchestrates her culture from music to art, from festivals to incredible cuisine and landscapes that endlessly captivate the heart and eye. Over a dozen museums encompass man's better works for at least the last thousand years.

My favorite was the hours spent at the Rosengart Collection. Here classic modernism is chock-full of works by Picasso, Klee and nineteen other artists including Monet, Cezanne, Vuillard, Bonnard, Matisse, Braque, Leger, Miro and Chagall. Familiarity meets intrigue as I assure you the expanse of rarities will captivate both heart and soul.



Few other places reveal Picasso's gamut in; sketches, inks, photographs, watercolors, and 32 canvases largely from his later years. Most certainly, Siegfried Rosengart and his daughter Angela's long friendship with Picasso made this enormous collection possible. And, Angela became truly one of Picasso's most intricate subjects.

Beyond walking Lucerne's intricate weave of streets and steps, galleries abound and shopping is only predicated on whim or flavor. Her "KKL Luzern" concert hall and convention/exhibit center has unparalleled acoustics and schedule is world-class performances yearlong. Be sure to view their calendar as it's likely to suit your anytime visit for music and festival.

For those who live for the great outdoors, here you merely pick direction to

walk, hike, climb or run 365 days a year. Same if you wish to spend a few hours or take as much as half a day excursion cruises on her spectacular lake. Dine or merely feast your eyes from a panorama boat, a wide choice of paddle steamers or catamarans. Here you may also ride Europe's oldest mountain railroad up Mt. Rigi or the world's steepest cogwheel train to the very top of Mt. Pilatus. And then there's the world's first double-deck aerial "Cabrio" cable car connecting to the Stanserhorn. Yes friends, even on business trips might one steal some hours or perchance a day to play, tour and research? For me, there is little better than Switzerland from chocolates to her glorious landscapes always ready when you are.

My meetings, interviews and business

this trip took me to Basel, Bern, Geneva and Zurich. Each day and evening I'd commute on the SBB. With my decades of travel in multiple directions this is the very first time I'd ever coordinated a ten-day multi-city need from one single base property. Without conscious intention, I never took breakfast or dinner anywhere else. Odd you might think? Why? This is Des Balances where every desire, want or need is met by her vast selections. There simply was no reason while I prioritized my schedule and agenda.

Refined excellence are my two best words for Des Balances and I'd return in a heartbeat! ❖

balances.ch
luzern.com