



Fabulous Lucerne, a SWISS gem awaits you

BY JON MESSER

Whether it's a vacation, just a get-a-way or for business, there's no easier place to enjoy Switzerland than marvelous Lucerne. Once every year I have the privilege of reporting from this magnificent historical city in the heart of Switzerland. Allow me to tell you why I rely on des Balances, one of the finest family owned 4-star hotel properties on the continent.

Des Balances is sheer hospitality and my home away from home in Switzerland. From the moment you grace her halls you're greeted with attentive smiles and a staff who love what they do. There's terrific pride in ensuring your stay is remarkably memorable and always genuinely comfortable.

Nestled in the heart of Old Town, des Balance truly dates from the 13th Century. There's great variety in her 56 well appointed rooms, so, treat yourself to suit both need and desire. Select your preferred views; the essence of Old Town or the grandeur and vistas sitting riverside. Hint: I love both!

As many times as I'm in Europe each year what I love to do most is explore. And Lucerne is a feast for exploration. Lucerne

offers a thousand years of history, great culture, museums, galleries and glorious haunts galore. She is surrounded by classical alps and situates you on one of the most beautiful lakes you'll ever experience. In fact, the entire Lake Lucerne Region offers a vast array of year round in and outdoor cultural experiences as well as the best of nature herself.

Home to over a dozen diverse museums, you are wise to include ample time to see them. As many as you may, be sure to explore the Rosengart. Here I suggest a block of hours to properly experience: Picasso, Klee, Matisse, Braque, Miro, Cezanne, Matisse, Leger, Bonnard, Monet, Kandinsky, Modigliani, Renoir, Chagall, Utrillo, Signac, Vuillard, and many more.

The Rosengart is a treasure trove of 19th & 20th Century masters. It's easy to spend hours with the 32 Picassos + 100 of his watercolors, drawings and sculpture. The Rosengart is a world-class collection of magnificent beauty.

As in all of Switzerland, Lucerne's museums are both welcoming and child friendly. Maybe it's the kid in me but, I always make time to explore The Museum of Transport. You'll find examples of every conceivable machine and conveyance for road, rail, water, air & space here. An eye opener for every age.

Travel into Switzerland should also be fun and that's why I rely on SWISS. My trip this time included a terrific R/T onboard one of their new 777-300 fleets. This new state-





of-the-art aircraft offers exemplary cabin comfort in all 3 classes + maximum reliability. Unbeatable technology is at your disposal.

SWISS 777's Business Class is as good as it gets. Cantonal menus are both seasonal and a delight to the palate. Yes, this can happen airborne. From the moment you board you'll enjoy the ride as few aircraft can equal the stability of this marvelous BIG-bird. Even light sleepers actually awake rested as

the newest massage seats convert instantly to truly comfortable beds extending well over two meters.

In every season, you experience a true taste of Switzerland where award winning chefs always prepare a variety of local specialties. This is not airline food folks. It's a real menu from appetizers, to main course, variety of cheeses, fresh fruits and always fun deserts + Swiss chocolates. In turn, their champagnes are first rate,

as are a revolving selection of provincial wines from France, Italy, Switzerland & Germany.

Both music and film libraries are unequaled. In-flight staff and late night snacks are always there for you. Today, when you fly SWISS I know you'll agree, there are many carriers but, there's one SWISS. This superb international airline is, in three words, quite habit forming!

My flights usually bring me

into Zurich early morning. Zurich Airport is exceptionally well organized + highly efficient. Just a two minute walk from luggage is Swiss Rail. Here, I hop on the SBB and am in Lucerne in 1 hour. Allow me to remind you, the easiest way to cross and see Switzerland is by train. I always arrange a First-Class Rail Pass for my stay. From smooth pastures to rolling hills, and then the alps to wide vistas, here, by rail, your eyes widen while smiles flow freely.

Less than 7 minute walk from Bahnhof to des Balances. Check-in is a mere two minute affair. For me, next is always a shave + good hot shower followed by an alpine cold one. I usually head down to the bar as this family hotel insists your first drink is truly complimentary and then, a fine Swiss lunch for me.

Culinary delights are a part of des Balances DNA. Meals matter and their marvelous kitchen is first-rate from breakfasts, lunches and of course, dinners. Here, the menus change monthly at the gifted hands of 14 Gault-Millau point award winning culinary artists, chefs Andy Fluri and Niko Eichner. They truly enchant your eyes and palate with incredible lunch and dinner specialties. And yes, you'd have to dine there for weeks to exhaust their variety. Dinners range from a la carte preferences to 5 and 7 course magnificent offerings. Perhaps a cozy table overlooking the river or, on the terrace in warm seasons?

My strong advice for breakfasts is, whenever possible, indulge with ample time. Their buffet is marvelously extensive, diverse



and entirely worth the pleasure. As always, their kitchen prepares superb omelettes to your preference. Guilty as charged, I am a bacon & eggs aficionado and here, they are divine! You'll find no better first meal venue in Lucerne.

Every room guarantees the comforts any traveler might ever desire. Ample sitting and reading spaces, always a well prepared desk, beds that cater to a deep and restful sleep as you snuggle beneath their wonderful down comforters. A bath replete with the best zesty array of all L'Occitane fine products and warmed plush towels that hug you happy. These are but some of the reasons those who know, always return to the Balances.

Excellent value is another reason folks rely on this gem. While other properties and international chains price their rooms to optimal corporate profitability, at des Balances, one never overpays for terrific accommodations.

Reliably, both music and seasonal festivals abound year-round in Lucerne. For acoustics on-par with New York's Metropolitan Opera House or Carnegie Hall, enjoy concerts at the Culture and Congress Center (KKL).

Readers here may rely on why again and again, I go back to des Balances. Upon arrival, its that little tug that makes me smile and when departing, that magnetic yearning that says I shall return!

Remember, this is Switzerland. Year round, connect to the great outdoors. No better place on earth to stroll, hike and ski. It's yours to explore. A marvelous time awaits you when your home away from home is the wonderful Des Balances!

For more, reliably go to:

www.balances.ch

www.swiss.com

www.sbb.ch

www.luzern.com

www.museen-luzern.com

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