



# Ever so comfortable in wonderful Lucerne

by Jon Messer

SOME OF US TRAVEL A LOT FOR BUSINESS, MOST OF US LIKE TO TRAVEL FOR FUN, and then? Then there are times you simply wish to get away. Often what matters most are the comforts that make the trip memorable. And that's why when in Lucerne, there's no finer place than the splendid des Balances.

Far more than a hotel, des Balances is a welcoming home away from home. Everyone is greeted with smiles that convey what can only come from true warmth. Sincerity is the hallmark of every staff and team member. And that's what I love most about this gem of a glowing family property. Here, you are first and you are foremost, there is no second class.

I'm in Switzerland two, three and sometimes four or more times each year. Yes, I adore the opportunity to explore, see touch and feel what this lush, welcoming beautiful nation offers those when in the heart of Europe. But, what I rely on most is certainty. I keep reminding myself journalists are people too. Especially when those business days run 10, 12, 14, or 16 hours, what I need most is instant casual and the simple ability to relax. Readers here know why I keep going back, again and again to des Balances. On arrival, that little tug that makes me smile and when departing, that little magnetic yearning that says I will return!

These days my flights from Arizona through New York or Chicago are long enough that I only rely on mid air excellence. I never think twice about about the how because I make the going fun and I rely on SWISS. Sure there are many carriers but, few offer what flying SWISS delivers. If able, try their First Class. If you're like me, Business Class is abundantly wonderful. It's one of the most all service mid air experiences you'll ever find. Whether you work as I do, or simply kick back? You will enjoy the wide Cantonal variety of wonderfully prepared seasonal menus. And of course, a cocktail, some champagne or selections from their wide wine lists? You are sure to know you're flying right. In every season, you experience a true taste of Switzerland where award winning chefs always prepare the best of local specialties. This is not airline



food folks, it's a real menu from appetizers, to main course, variety of cheeses and always fun deserts + chocolates.

I'm like a kid when I fly especially on night flights. Although I usually begin trips giddy thinking I'll never sleep, on SWISS, when the time is right, I'm usually out like a light. Business offers a marvelously contoured personal + work space that guarantees award winning total comfort. Complete with massaging and highly adjustable two meter long lay flat beds, you'll find every upright or down and out superior support. The music and film offerings are unequaled. Staff is always there for you and the hours pass like second

nature. Try it and I know you'll agree, there's many carriers but, there's one SWISS. This particular international airline is, in two words, habit forming!

My flights generally bring me into Zurich early or mid morning. Mere steps from fetching the luggage is Swiss Rail. I hop on the SBB and am in Lucerne in 1 hour. Unquestionably, the finest way to traverse and see Switzerland is by train. This is why I always arrange a First-Class Rail Pass. From countryside to wide vistas, by rail, the eye can't wait to see what's around the next curve.

Literally a 6 or 7 minute walk from Bahnhof to des Balances. Check-in is a two minute affair.

Next for me is always a shave + really hot shower followed by a truly alpine cold one. Then, I head straight down to their bar. With each guest, the Balances insist your first drink is truly complementary. Lunch anyone?

This is one hotel where meals matter. They might suggest but, I insist you enjoy both lunches and dinners here. As 14 Gault-Millau point award winning culinary artists, their executive chefs Andy Fluri and Niko Eichner will entertain both your eyes and palate with incredible lunches and dinners. So much so, you'd have to dine there for weeks to exhaust their variety. Oh, and fair warning, their menu varieties change

monthly! Dinners range from a la carte preferences to 5 and 7 course offerings. Come hungry, leave and rest happy.

Likewise, my advice for breakfasts is, whenever possible, to build in ample time. Their buffet is marvelously extensive, diverse and very, very well worth the pleasure.

Every room guarantees the comforts any traveler might ever wish. Ample sitting and reading spaces, always a well prepared desk, beds that cater to a deep and restful sleep as you snuggle beneath 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

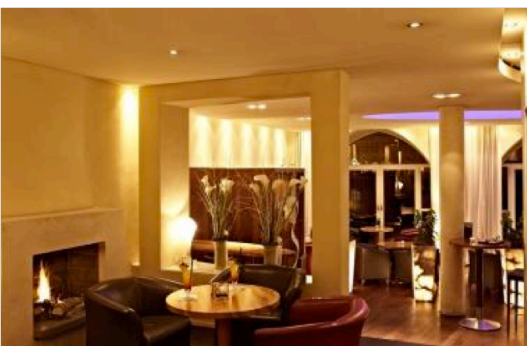
are but some of the reasons those who know, always return to the Balances.

Excellent value and fairness alone 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 great accommodation.

Nestled in the heart of Switzerland, Lucerne offers a thousand years of history, great culture, museums and galleries galore. She is surrounded by magnificent alps and situates you on one of the most beautiful lakes you'll ever experience!

Home to over a dozen won-





derful museums, you'd need days on end to see them all. Which ever you select, be sure to explore the Rosengart. Here alone I suggest at least half a day to properly experience: Picasso, Klee, Matisse, Braque, Miro, Cezanne, Matisse, Leger, Bonnard, Monet, Kandinsky, Modigliani, Renoir, Chagall, Utrillo, Signac, Vuillard, and many more as a complete treasure trove of 19th & 20th Century masters. I literally spend hours alone with the 32 Picasso's + 100 of his watercolors and drawings and sculpture. Truly a world-class collection and variety of so many beautiful works under one roof.

As in all of Switzerland, Lucerne's museums are kid-friendly and welcoming. Maybe it's the kid in me but, I always make time for The Museum of Transport. Every machine and conveyance for road, rail, water, air & space is represented here. And you see wide-eyes and smiles of every age from toddlers to great-grandpa's.

Likewise, both music and festivals abound year-round in Lucerne. For acoustics on-par with New York's Metropolitan Opera House or Carnegie Hall, take in a concert or two at the Culture and Congress Center (KKL).

And then, year round, there's the great outdoors to stroll, hike and ski. It's yours to cruise and explore. In every respect, a marvelous time awaits you especially when your home away from home is Des Balances! She is quintessentially, the essence of wonderful Lucerne.

