

le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

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Foreigners: bane or boon?

Next Sunday's immigration vote may reflect Swiss concerns that the country is changing too fast.

Publicly, many Swiss blame inadequate housing, job losses and traffic congestion on the flood of newcomers. Privately they admit that what they most blame foreigners for is the decline in standards of honesty, cleanliness and manners. In a survey for RTS TV, half of

those questioned said that immigration also contributed to increased crime and a decline in the quality of life.

It may seem strange that the 9 February initiative proposed by the right-wing People's Party (UDC) is not aimed at asylum seekers from less developed countries, but more at fellow Europeans. The Federal Statistics Office has noted that Switzerland's population has grown by an average of 74,000 each year since

2007, with Italians and Germans being the largest immigrant groups, followed by the French. And foreigners from such countries may indeed be partly to blame for the large hole in the Swiss honour system, when they use public transport without paying – as are quite a few Swiss. However, both foreigners and Swiss must share responsibility for the present housing shortage and the rise in rents and wages. **Continued on page 2**

Next week

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This Week in Switzerland

In 2013 402,117 **motor vehicles** were put into circulation, **6.7% less than in 2012**, which was a record year. The decline in new registrations is probably related to the introduction of new requirements for CO2 emissions for passenger cars from July 2012, which stipulate that manufacturers of new car fleets exceeding an average maximum of 130 grams of CO2 per kilometer will have to pay a fine. The number of hybrid vehicles has increased by 24% and electric cars by 52.6%. However only one in 124 cars is hybrid and only one in 1,610 is electric. Overall, the number of motor vehicles travelling on Swiss roads has nearly doubled over the last 30 years.

The Musée de l'Elysée in Lausanne, which promotes contemporary photography, is launching the Prix Elysée this month. Director Sam Stourdzé stated that "At the Musée de l'Elysée, we think that supporting photographers in the evolution of their career is as important as preserving their art for future generations." The **Prix Elysée** is open to promising **photographers** or artists using photography, regardless of nationality, who have already enjoyed their first exhibitions and publications. The winner will receive **CHF 80,000** to be divided between the completion of the project and a book, both of which will be presented at one of the Museum's most important events, the Nuit des Images. Applications are open until 25 April 2014.

The cantonal hospital of Vaud's CHF 70,000 investment in a **3D printer** last November has been widely applauded by medical staff. Used to help surgeons prepare and visualize complicated operations, the machine will also save funders' money as 3D anatomical reconstruction is cheaper than an MRI scan. This technical innovation marks a new era in surgical procedures, planned to improve the quality, efficiency and outcome of future operations. Image: © G. Weber – CEMCAV-CHUV



Launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and associates, **Facebook**, which celebrated its 10th anniversary on 4 February, now boasts over a billion users worldwide. Despite studies pointing towards the migration of younger users towards **alternative platforms** such as WhatsApp or Snapchat, BBC reporter Jane Wakefield suggests that "such surveys, usually accompanied by a picture of boss Mark Zuckerberg looking sad, are picked up widely by the press and equally vigorously pulled apart by Facebook".

Swiss Info reports that according to Michael Schaad of the Swiss Ornithological Institute, a northern shift of bird migration patterns has been developing over the last 30 years, owing to the unusually warm winters. The motive for birds moving south is not the temperature; they only move south due to lack of food. Usually 10,000 common goldeneyes fly down from the Arctic but this year there are only 1,000. Considering the changing migratory patterns, bird protection bodies will need to negotiate new protection statuses.

Swiss president Didier Burkhalter and **Japanese Emperor Akihito** celebrated 150 years of diplomatic relations between the countries in Tokyo on Monday. Dating back to 1864, the bilateral **treaty of friendship** and trade will be officially celebrated with the president being received by Japanese leaders.

Immigration vote

Continued front page 1

A report by the International Labour Organization indicates that between 2007 and 2012 foreigners accounted for over one quarter of the Swiss workforce. Businesses have repeatedly said that immigrants are often doing jobs the Swiss do not want to do. Institutions and companies frequently say they need foreigners, particularly skilled ones. Both hoteliers and farmers maintain that it would prove impossible to fill jobs without foreigners. In fact, the Swiss unemployment rate remains low, according to the Secretariat for Economic Affairs, "except among the immigrant population".

With regard to the housing shortage, an analysis by Vincent Kaufmann of EPFL noted that while foreigners seeking housing might aggravate the current shortage, "the real cause is our inability to build and our extremely complex regulations". As for the complaint that foreigners take advantage of Switzerland's welfare benefits, Marcel Suter, president of the Association of

Cantonal Migration Authorities, said that this is not possible. "Only those immigrants from the EU/EFTA countries who have contract employment have the right to obtain social assistance and unemployment insurance if they lose their job in Switzerland."

When it comes to AVS contributions, Suter said that immigrants from these countries "are on average younger than the indigenous population," and thus contribute to a more equitable relationship between those who are working and those who have retired, as "immigrants pay more contributions into the first pillar of social security".

Switzerland's tolerance for foreigners has been severely tested since it approved the EU's Free Movement of Persons Agreement in 2002. This was followed by an amendment in 2004 that added 10 new East-European members. Then in a 2009 referendum, the Swiss voted to extend the agreement to include Romania and Bulgaria. With this in mind, perhaps Sunday's initiative is not so surprising. *Pamela Taylor*

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Editor's comment

Once more to the ballot box!

The Swiss are voting – once again – in a referendum to limit the number of foreigners. Even if a majority of the 5.15 million voters oppose it, it's an issue that won't go away. Most citizens remain pragmatic about the economic necessity of the Swiss-EU accords, but the conservative Swiss People's Party (UDC) blame outsiders for the country's alleged woes: unemployment, the housing shortage, crime, overpopulation... Not unlike right-wing elements in the UK, the US, Scandinavia and other countries that have benefited from immigration, they are ignoring the realities at hand.

Switzerland, like every European nation, is an immigrant society. Just look at my 13-year-old son's history book leading up to the founding of the Confederation, and beyond. The Swiss couldn't be more mixed: Celtic, Roman, Aleman, Franc, Etruscan, Burgundian, French, Italian... So when people talk about keeping foreigners out, it's like calling for a halt in history.

As one of the world's most successful countries, Switzerland has long benefited from outsiders. Tourism, agriculture, pharma and other industries would collapse without them. Many cannot find Swiss able, or willing, to do the jobs. It's doubtful, too, whether anyone would really wish to return to the disrespectful "Gastarbeiter" days of the past: You can work here as long as we need you; get out when we don't.

The UDC does have a point about overpopulation. But the solution does not lie in limiting foreigners. Quite the opposite. Why not share a joint vision with our neighbours on how to develop our frontier regions? This includes dropping the concept of a border and developing more imaginative thinking for dealing with housing, transport, education, health care and labour in a manner that benefits all.

Edward Girardet

Expression over prohibition

The controversial French stand-up comic Dieudonné was given the green light to perform in Nyon last month. Despite opponents deploring an increasingly anti-Semitic rhetoric, the town saw fit to allow the half-French, half-Cameroonian comedian to perform, but warned that any xenophobic or racist remarks would be condemned. Claiming that freedom of expression takes precedence over prohibition, the lakeside town opted – unexpectedly for some – to go against the grain by granting the 47-year-old stand-up a total of 10 shows, six of which took place earlier this month. Banned from performing in France by Minister of the Interior Manuel Valls, Dieudonné is now the subject of a Home Office exclusion order in the UK on the grounds of public policy and security.



Social Houses in Montreux

MONTREUX The lakeside town of Montreux plans to sign a partnership contract with the Vevey-based Apollo Foundation to provide rapid assistance to people made homeless. Due to the town's reputation as a haven for up-market residences, growing numbers of people are finding it hard to track down affordable housing. Even moderate-income families are struggling to meet the financial imperatives of the town's increasingly expensive property market.

As adequate housing become more costly to buy or to rent, the partnership will help those looking for somewhere to live.

This decision has been catalyzed by figures pointing towards a significant rise in



The Apollo Foundation will manage Montreux's emergency lodging

housing emergencies: 86 cases of housing-related help were reported in 2012 compared to 28 in 2010.

Similarly, forced expulsions have risen from 16 in

2011 to 25 in 2013, according to the regional 24 heures newspaper. Given this situation, Montreux has also planned to renovate a seven-bedroom house in Clarens. The Apollo Foundation will manage the accommodation, which will provide emergency community lodging to those who have lost their abodes.

Christopher Woodburn

Serious mercury pollution in Valais

BASEL An association of physicians in Basel has announced that between 1930 and 1970, the Lonza chemical company in Visp (VS) dumped from seven to nine times more mercury into the greater Rhône canal in the canton of Valais than previously estimated. Concerns about mercury pollution around the canal were voiced in 2011 and then again in January this year. The Department of Transportation maintained that mercury deposits were found in the soil following highway construction near the canal. Residents of the village of Turtig were advised not to eat produce from their gardens. They were also told to keep children out of playgrounds until the ground had been sanitized.

The Association of Physicians for the Environment (MFE) stated that Lonza had initially claimed that only 28 tonnes of mercury had been dumped. Recently revealed internal company documents leaked by an informant

show that the real Lonza figures lies between 200 and 250 tonnes. Lonza has denied the charges, but has agreed to cooperate with a Valais State Council coordinating committee to ensure that steps are taken to protect the environment and address the health concerns of the population. Lonza has also agreed to finance soil decontamination on a limited basis without admitting liability.

Pamela Taylor



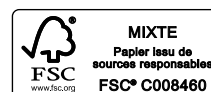
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National

Transport referendum on track

The electorate is being asked to prove a proposal for massive investment in the railway network.

The proposal to finance Swiss railway improvement is hailed by many as not an option, but a necessity. With railway transport mobility predicted to increase 84.6% for freight and 45.2% for passengers between 2000 and 2030, the project will implement key infrastructure enhancements to ensure better quality service.

3.7 million passengers use the train every day

If the proposal, which is up for referendum this Sunday, is approved, planned improvements will aim to decongest specific choke-points. This



37% of the population will definitely give the green light to finance railway improvement.

will be done together with various line refurbishments and enhanced train frequency throughout the country.

Despite the fact that more than 3.7 million passengers use the train every day and roads are becoming increasingly congested, opponents of the initiative claim that motorists will unjustly have to finance the proposed rail overhaul. Those living in peripheral zones will also have to contribute. This

means in effect, supporting projects endorsed by far-away cities, but without any apparent local benefit. It will also entail tax increases, including a VAT rise of 0.1% until 2030. According to a recent RTS survey, however, the results show that at least 37% of the population will definitely give the green light to the proposal, while 18% have said they are against it.

Christopher Woodburn

Catholic doctrinal gap

According to a consultation carried out by the Conference of Swiss Bishops (CES), at the request of Pope Francis, the majority of Catholics are critical of the Church's official doctrine on questions linked to divorce, contraception and homosexuality.

Of the almost 25,000 people, mostly Catholics, who responded to the survey, 90% do not understand the Church's refusal to allow divorced and remarried couples to take Communion.

Similarly, the ban on artificial methods of contraception was deemed far from the practice of an overwhelming majority. Some 60% of respondents would recognize homosexual couples, although opinion was very polarized between those greatly in favour and those fervently against. The results will be analysed to shape the line taken by Swiss bishops at the world synod on the family to be held in October in Rome.



The survey found that opinion on key issues is highly polarized within the church.

Combatting counterfeit medicine

Researchers, pharmaceutical companies, organizations and citizens representing the public met recently in Geneva to discuss the growing threat of counterfeit medicines. As reported by *Le Temps*, annually, counterfeit drugs result in 200,000 deaths globally and leave many people permanently disabled. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 10% of medicines worldwide are falsely labelled or counterfeit, and in Asia and Africa, that figure increases to around 30%. Last summer, 500 million units of counter-



feit medicine manufactured in China and India and destined for Africa were seized. The WHO defines counterfeit medicine as being "deliberately and fraudulently mislabeled" and "may include products with the correct ingredients or with the wrong ingredients, without active ingredients, with insufficient active ingredients or with fake packaging". It is estimated that in 2011 a total of 27 million such products were intercepted on European borders. Bernard Leroy, director of the International Institute of Research Against Counterfeit Medicines, believes that Switzerland has a pivotal role to play because it is a transit country for many pharmaceutical smugglers. Just last year, one million counterfeit samples of Xanax, which helps alleviate the symptoms of anxiety, were seized in Zurich en route to Egypt. However, European legislation prevents the inspection of products in transit and Leroy states that in Rotterdam – Europe's largest port – only 2% of containers in circulation are examined.

Jennifer Rose

Business & Economy

IMD ranked 12th globally

While rankings are often arbitrary, IMD is constantly ranked at the top worldwide.

Lausanne IMD business school climbed to 12th place from 19th in the *Financial Times* Global MBA Ranking 2014, while Harvard was top for the fifth time followed by Stanford and London Business School. On average over the last three years, IMD ranked 15th in the top 100. The only other Swiss MBA programme to make the list is taught at the University of St Gallen, which dropped from 82nd place last year to 88th.

The FT ranks the IMD MBA no. 1 globally in aims achieved and placement success.

The FT rankings are based on a number of factors including gender balance and international spread of students, but the most heavily



IMD's Executive education and MBA are consistently ranked No. 1 in the world.

weighted are linked to alumni salaries.

The FT ranks the IMD MBA no. 1 globally in aims achieved, placement success, international mobility, international business and international faculty. In Europe, Lausanne-based IMD rose two places to 4th from 6th last year. Seven of the top 10 MBA programmes are taught at business schools in the US, but INSEAD (ranked 5th and based in France and Singapore)

and Spain's IESE Business School (ranked 7th) also feature. Three years after graduation, the average alumnus is a 33-year-old senior manager or higher on a salary of \$127,000, thus doubling the pre-MBA figure. Nine out of 10 think they have achieved their main ambitions at this stage of their career.

Moyette Marrett

Vote on Gripen fighter deal

BERN The Swiss government's plan to buy 22 fighter jets from Sweden will be put to a popular vote on 18 May, after opponents successfully forced a referendum on the CHF 3.13 billion deal. Polls show that a majority of voters oppose plans to buy the Swedish Gripen fighters because the deal will require cost cuts elsewhere. Switzerland intends to spend about CHF 300 million per year on purchasing the combat planes over a 10-year period as it replaces aging Northrop Grumman F-5 Tigers.

UBS Earnings

UBS posted a fourth quarter net profit of CHF 917 million helped by growth at its investment bank unit and a tax gain. This improves on a large loss last year.

End in sight for Italian – Swiss tax evasion dispute

Bern Italy and Switzerland intend to make progress by May towards ending a long-running dispute over Italian citizens who have stashed money in Swiss bank accounts, Italian economy minister Fabrizio Saccomanni said. "We have told our delegations to step up efforts in order to reach a comprehensive deal in due time," Saccomanni said at a joint press conference with Swiss finance minister Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf in Berne last week.

Bowing to growing international pressure, the Swiss government relaxed its banking secrecy laws in March 2009

Italy and Switzerland should be able to agree on the "timing and ways of the data exchange" by May when Italian president Giorgio Napolitano visits Switzerland, he added.

Bowing to growing international pressure, the Swiss government relaxed its banking secrecy laws in

March 2009, agreeing to adopt Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OECD) standards on administrative assistance in tax matters. Switzerland has entered into withholding tax agreements with the UK and Austria, and since 2012 has been in talks with Italy about a similar arrangement. Switzerland is also seeking an accord with Greece. Successive Italian governments have attempted to clamp down on widespread tax evasion with limited success. Recently, Italian prime minister Enrico Letta's cabinet announced a voluntary disclosure programme allowing tax evaders to come clean. More than EUR 15 billion in revenue and assets were hidden outside Italy in 2013, mostly in tax havens.

But Italy may recoup less money than expected. A UK-Swiss agreement aimed at stopping taxpayers from hiding their money in Swiss banks has fallen short of raking in the GBP 3.12 billion that UK chancellor George Osborne had promised. Public finance figures published last month by the UK Office for National Statistics, however, showed that just GBP 818 million had been collected in 2013.



The Ministry for the Economy and Finance in Rome.

Insight

Swiss abroad: An e-canton?

More Swiss than ever are expected to cast e-votes from abroad in the upcoming referenda on 9 February

This is partly due to a new electronic voting system and partly due to the fact that the Swiss abroad now number one-fifth of all Swiss citizens. The official figure for Swiss registered as living abroad increased to 732,183 in 2013; this compares with the latest census for the canton of Vaud, which numbered 734,400 residents. According to statistics published by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), this represents an average 2.3% increase over the past five years. Most are Swiss living in neighbouring European countries because of the accord between Switzerland and the EU on the free movement of people.

The FDFA lists the non-European countries hosting the largest number of Swiss as the United States, Canada, Australia and Israel. "At present, there is virtually no country that does not have at least one Swiss," said an FDFA press release. According to the FDFA, there are now 155,523 Swiss eligible voters living abroad, which "is equivalent to the number of people voting in Ticino, Thurgau or the Valais." Included in the figure are the more than 10,000 young Swiss living overseas who will be eligible to vote in 2014.

And this year, those from cantons that allow electronic voting will be able to vote, said Ariane Rustichelli of the Organization of Swiss Abroad (OSA) in Bern, no matter which country they reside in. Rustichelli said this is a vic-

tory for the OSA's 2012 campaign to remove restrictions on voting from certain countries following improvements in computer security. The OSA remains in touch with Swiss abroad through SwissReview, a regular electronic newsletter, as well as SwissInfo, an online news service. Its activities also seek to involve Swiss nationals, who may be second or third generation, to better understand what their country of origin is about. The Swiss passport can be handed down as long as at least one parent is Swiss, or through marriage.

People may wonder why so many Swiss choose to leave one of the most beautiful and peaceful countries in the world. Anselm Zurfluh, director of Geneva's Museum of Swiss in the World, believes this should come as no surprise since the Swiss have been travelling and living outside their country for over 500 years. "Perhaps it is simply because Switzerland is too tiny for people with big dreams. The Golden Gate bridge, the Eiffel Tower and the obelisk in St Peter's Square were all built by Swiss engineers. You cannot build a Golden Gate bridge in Switzerland. Or take the Swiss filmmaker Marc Forster who made the [22nd] James Bond film in Hollywood. Their ideas and dreams were too big for Switzerland."

Zurfluh said he tells young Swiss students that they "should do as their ancestors did and look outside. My grandfather used to tell me if you want to succeed you must understand that the key is understanding others and for that you must go outside your commune, your canton or your country."

Pamela Taylor



There are 155,523 eligible voters living abroad.

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Property

Fallout shelters for all

Geneva The Cold War may long be over but most new buildings in Switzerland are still built with a nuclear fallout shelter.

These "civil protection installations", as the shelters are called, are complete with ventilation systems and anti-gas filters. There are over a quarter of a million of them in Switzerland, including those in unused military bunkers, enough for the entire Swiss population and then some.

The Civil Protection Act of 1963 requires apartment block owners to construct shelters in all new private dwellings capable of withstanding a 12-megaton explosion at a distance of 700 metres.

In June 2011, Bern conceded that henceforth only larger buildings had to have such shelters and the fee for single-family homeowners deciding not to build a shelter was reduced from CHF 1,500 to CHF 800. This is the price calculated for each person to have a place in a communal shelter. A 2009 initiative by Pierre Kohler, currently the mayor of Delémont (Jura), to remove the obligation to provide shelters in private dwellings or pay a hefty tax was soundly defeated for the second time.

Also in 2011, Socialist politicians attempted to abolish the law. Two days after the lower house of parliament approved it, an earthquake and tsunami crippled Japan's nuclear complex at Fukushima. The government decided instead to close Switzerland's nuclear power plants by 2034. According to Daniel Warner of Geneva's Graduate Institute, there is still a need for such shelters. "It is not just a question of a bomb shelter but also the protection of civilians in times of national disasters like nuclear accidents, biological or chemical war or



Nuclear shelters make for great storage...

even earthquakes." This perhaps goes a way to explaining why Switzerland's 8,000 or so sirens are tested on the first Wednesday of February at 13h30.

This attitude may strike foreigners in Switzerland as bizarre, but for many Swiss this is both logical and normal.

A newcomer from the US was astounded to discover in the cellar of his newly constructed building, a wall of bunk beds, to be lowered in an emergency. There was also a locked area for water and emergency rations.

Single-family homes typically have fortified cellars. When asked about the need for armoured doors to their basements, the Swiss tend to laugh and deflect the question by pointing out that they are great for storing wine and ski equipment. This alternative use is allowed, on condition that the shelter can be ready for an emergency within 24 hours, including a week's worth of food and water. Today some military bunkers have been transformed into cheap accommodation for tourists or to house asylum seekers.

Alexandre Lambert, an expert on armed forces in democracies, noted that the Swiss bunker and fallout shelter system is designed to protect more than its own citizens. "If a disaster happens, a nuclear plant accident or some other national emergency, everyone living in the country will, in theory, be protected. And this is unique in the world I think."

Pamela Taylor

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Apart'Hotels

FERNEY-VOLTAIRE Short term accommodation, French-side

Newcomers or short-term consultants coming to Geneva are often faced with the problem of finding a rental for several weeks to two or three months. This is either to tide one over, with or without one's family, until one has found an appropriate house or flat; or it is a place to stay while doing a consultancy. If there is nothing available on the Swiss side, try the French. It's cheaper and more accommodation tends to be available, and the secret is getting out. The Geneva Tourist office at the airport is reluctant to inform visitors about such options, but they're there.

So-called "Apart'Hotels" are now popping up throughout the Pays de Gex and on the Haute Savoie side, within striking distance of the cantons of



Geneva or Vaud. These are usually studios or flats (1-4 persons) with fully equipped basic kitchen facilities that can be rented by the day, week or month. Fortunately, public transportation has improved dramatically over the past years, particularly along the Ferney to Gex, Meyrin to St Genis and Annemasse to Geneva axes, enabling one to take the bus or tram to Geneva. These apartments all range from €40-110 a night, but offer cheaper deals for longer stays. Divonne is not as well served with public transport to Geneva as Ferney or Gex.

Edward Girardet

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Education

Online abuse in Switzerland

According to a Zurich University study, as many as 28% of girls and 10% of boys admitted to having suffered sexual abuses while online. These range from paedophile networks seeking to solicit locally to the sending of illicit pictures by a 13-year-old boy. Pro Juventute, an organization supporting children and adolescents across Switzerland, stresses the need for legislation to keep up with evolving online threats, such as the need to penalize "grooming".

Much of the online abuse is the result of unmonitored behaviour and accessibility. Tiziana Bellucci, head of Switzerland's Action Innocence association, which organizes workshops on internet risks, emphasizes the need to keep in touch with the realities of online safety. "Though we originally sought to protect young users from paedo-criminals, we have had to adapt to the changing nature of online threats." These include cyber-bullying, blackmail, diffusion of personal information, online predators and sexting. Working in coordination with other



organizations and the police, she also relies on children to "relay vital information which helps get to grips with the dangers out there".

Christopher Woodburn

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Lifestyle

Eating well: The Valentine's option

The old adage that the way to a lover's heart is through his or her stomach is never more true than on Valentine's Day. Food writer Amelia Alexander explores a simple, special dinner that partners can prepare.

Cupid's special day has its roots in the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, a fertility celebration that used to be commemorated on 15 February. It was only in the 14th century that Valentine's Day became associated with love, thanks mostly to Middle English writer Geoffrey Chaucer. Three hundred years later, Valentine's Day became intertwined with food: girls would pin bay leaves to their pillows and eat hard-boiled eggs on St Valentine's eve to dream of the boys they would marry.

Today nothing says romance better than an intimate, sensual dinner for two. But a romantic dinner doesn't have to be fancy, or expensive. Simple food with the right atmosphere is just

as likely to get your partner's heart pounding. There are some foods that simply ooze passion and don't require much preparation, yet can still have a resounding impact on your love life. Some of these aphrodisiacs are well known, such as asparagus and caviar. But Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, was of the sea. Many types of seafood are perfect for a scintillating first course or main dish, especially if accompanied by a sauce with sharp and pungent horseradish, (proven to have exceptional aphrodisiac qualities). So when planning your meal, consider shrimp, scallops or salmon. All take just minutes to prepare, meaning less time spent cooking and more time for "communing", as 18th century novelist Henry Fielding wrote.

Once the starter and main dish are chosen, dessert is easy. It has to be chocolate. Chocolate has been associated with love ever since the Aztecs first toasted the gods of fertility with a sacred drink made of cacao. In the

1800s doctors advised women to eat chocolate to repair a broken heart. The first chocolate candies were made in the 1860s by Cadbury, which had the idea of marketing them in a heart-shaped box for Valentine's Day. Today, your chocolate may be in the form of a luscious cake from the bakery or a fresh strawberry dipped in chocolate. Nothing says romance better than rich, dark, creamy chocolate!

To accompany your dinner for two, a fruity or dry champagne is an irrefutable Valentine attraction. Drop a few

raspberries or strawberries into the flute for the aperitif, and follow with a well-chosen white or red wine that accentuates the simple flavours of your menu. There's no such thing as too much champagne. Finally, remember: atmosphere is everything. Turn off the TV (or mobile phone), dim the lights, bring out the candles... and don't forget the roses. The following menu is for someone who doesn't cook much or is pressed for time, but still wants to make a special effort in order to say: "I love you!"

Amelia Alexander

Cool in sites

lenews.ch/coolinsites

internetlivestats.com

world.time.com

Ever idly wondered something and then ploddingly looked it up only to be riveted to your screen? Become an immediate internet bore after reading this site's super-fast updating stats. <http://www.internetlivestats.com/>

Time-lapsed satellite images of glaciers, rain forests and even Las Vegas show the amazing progression of humanity to dominance over the natural environment. <http://world.time.com/timelapse/>

Le News photo competition

Le News is offering a Payot book token worth **CHF 20** and the chance to be published to the photographer who submits the best photo and caption on the subject of:

"WEATHER"

Email your entry to

competition@lenews.ch
by 11 february 2014.

Congratulations to Jeff Azoudis,
winner of the Le News weekly
photographic competition
"Weird Perspectives".



Travel

Northern Italian relaxation

Fed up with weekends sliding down snowy slopes on long carbon-fibre boards? Don't want to take a flight for a short getaway? Then take the train on a whistle-stop tour of Northern Italy.

Great scenic routes start from any railway station on Lake Geneva and wind through the Swiss Alps, passing along the picturesque lakeside of Lake Maggiore to the first stop in Milan. Start the next day in the historic town of Vercelli, and enjoy lunch before continuing on to the bustling and often overlooked city of Turin. If time permits on your way home, don't miss stopping over in beautiful Stresa.

Taking the train is arguably more time-consuming than flying, but it offers far more "quality time". The winter landscapes provide an often-stunning backdrop for relaxing. You can also stop off at various points along the way, allowing the possibility of a more

flexible itinerary.

Milan is frequently cited as one of Europe's fashion capitals – boasting the likes of Fendi and Salvatore Ferragamo on Via Montenapoleone and Corso Matteotti. For more affordable high-street brands, head to Via Torino. One of the most impressive architectural attractions, however, is a shopping mall: the four-storey Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II constructed in the late 19th century. For a lively musical evening after a day's sightseeing, head to the Blue Note club, bar and restaurant for jazz and blues (book tickets in advance).

Vercelli, roughly halfway between Milan and Turin, has a town centre featuring the Romanesque-Gothic Basilica di Sant' Andrea and the high medieval bell tower of the Duomo. After strolling around the bustling centre, venture out to the Vercelli rice paddies for an easy-going bike ride through the relatively untarnished countryside. Be sure to try a Vercelli risotto during

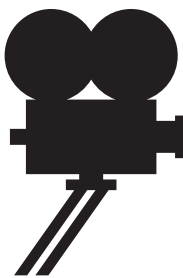


The Basilica di Superga is just one of Turin's architectural treasures

your visit – it's one of the area's specialties.

The final destination of this gentle and enjoyable tour is Turin, a spectacular business and cultural hub. It features majestic Baroque-period architecture developed during the rule of the

House of Savoy. Wandering around the Old Town, you will find a plethora of galleries, restaurants and shops, or you can just enjoy people-watching from a street café. For something especially romantic, go riding around the nature park 20km outside the city. *Jennifer Rose*



FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

12 YEARS A SLAVE

★★★★

This is probably the finest film of the year, though there have been many great ones in 2013. I would give it the Oscar for best film, and Gravity for best director. And best actor to DiCaprio, finally. But I transgress. The British director, Steve McQueen, himself a black man, has wrought a powerful, tragic saga from the autobiography of Solomon Northup, a free black man living a decent life in New York State in pre-Civil War years, who was kidnapped and sold as a slave for 12 years in the south. Chiwetel Ejiofor plays Northup with great dignity, bringing to life his incredibly harrowing years under all sorts of masters, both decent and sadistic. He is rightfully on every list of Best Actor nominations. Concerning redeeming value, this is the best example of a moving,



important work that is testament to what shamefully was, and must never be again.

(Release: 22/1 Photos – ASCOT-ELITE)

YVES SAINT LAURENT

★★★★

Elegance, talent, beauty. That is what YSL was all about, and how the film looks and how it seems to represent the man. It takes us to his childhood home in Algiers, his easy life, his close family. Then, his coming to Paris as the shy, young designer for the house of Dior. His meeting with Pierre Bergé is turning point of his life, when he fully opens up to his homosexuality and lets Bergé take care of finances, so that he is free to be the artist that he needs to be, in the house of cou-

ture that they create together. There are his various muses, his exquisite shows, his wild nights, their spectacular home in Marrakech. And then his fluctuating moods, their infidelities, his dependence on drugs and alcohol. Do great talent and creativity always have to be so destructive? And does this film give too much credit to Bergé and not enough to Saint Laurent? But it is revealing and lovely, nevertheless. And Pierre Niney is uncannily Saint Laurent, capturing his complete look, his hesitations and mannerisms. (Release: 15/1 Photos – PATHE)



Chez vous

House renovation: cross-border cost comparisons

Whether renovating a house or putting finishing touches to those dirt-prone skirting boards, there are distinctive advantages to being cross-border savvy.

Some items, such as paint and electric drills, can be purchased more cheaply in Switzerland, while timber is better picked up in France. As a rule, Swiss workmanship and material quality trump French, but are often pricier.

Prices from outlets such as Hornbach and Coop Brico-Loisirs in Switzerland or Leroy-Merlin, Bricorama, Bricomarché and Lapeyre in France often vary significantly. For bespoke kitchens or double-glazing, check out quality suppliers in the UK, Germany, Austria and Poland. They can be far cheaper even with transport



and import duties.

Contractor collusion, however, exists on both sides of the border. So is

gross overcharging. One "reputable" Geneva electrical firm tried to bill CHF 900 for a one-hour job laying phone

wires. The client refused to pay and the company finally agreed to CHF 300. A Morges building contractor came up with only one exorbitantly high bid to install windows, but when the client protested he then obtained three more. The difference in price was over CHF 3,000! Sometimes, just assume it's not all above board and insist on comparative estimates for services and materials.

It's also worth checking out the many – and cheaper – skilled Portuguese, Italians, Poles and, increasingly, British contractors in the region. But make sure they're reputable. Half-finished houses, dangerous masonry and flawed carpentry have become nightmares for some.

Christopher Woodburn

Cracking up

Of Couches, Clocks and Children

"Goodness me," I said the other day (or words to that effect). "We have to redecorate!"

It's not that our current decor doesn't reflect my husband and me. It's that it reflects us all too well: like the couch, our springy bits are gone and we're getting saggy in the middle; and like our Swiss cuckoo clock, I too have been cruelly overwound by a small child and fundamentally changed by the experience.

But this realization sparked something of an identity crisis. Who are we actually, design-wise? How can a couple be sure, after years of not thinking about it, that their palettes don't clash? What if she decides she's Mid-Century Scandi Modernist and he doesn't even

know what that means?

"Well," advised my friend Suchira, who dabbles in this sort of thing, "How would you describe the current style of your home?"

"Predominantly IKEA with strong accents of Preschooler. Mostly in crayon, on the dining room chairs."

She gave me a look.. "Try and visualise your ideal home. What would you like to see in front of you every day when you walk into your lounge?"

"George Clooney doing the ironing."

Well. After a sharp rebuke and a few more probing questions, she said my decorating personality was French Country. I did a quick Google search

and I must say, French Country is gorgeous: all distressed wood, eggshell blue and jars of hydrangeas everywhere. One website described it as "rustic and inviting", which sounds perfect for me because that's how I've always thought of my husband.

But after a few giddy hours on Pinterest, I realized I would have to let that dream go. French Country doesn't fit with the things I already have and love, such as my African fabric collection and my children. It seems that French Country children play with vintage teddies and wooden rocking horses. There's nothing pink and plastic in their rooms. No Barbies. And certainly no big battery-operated



Tyrannosaurus Rexes that roar into life for no reason, eyes glowing red and claws scraping on floorboards. Nothing like that, in a French Country style home.

So it looks as if we'll stick with what we've got: an acquiescent couch, an approximate cuckoo clock and, on every surface, reminders of our children. It may not be in any of the design books... but it's ours.

Robyn Goss is a South African writer, recently moved to Switzerland. You can read her blogs at www.robyn-goss.com

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LES POSITIONS VACANT

Home help wanted

Girl Friday required, large house, West Lausanne. Part of team. £500/week. Beate Keisa +44 752 844 1672

Nurse required

West Lausanne. SRN / SEN preferred, but will consider others. £800/week. Beate Keisa +44 752 844 1672

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Full time, will train you to eradicate cancer using ultrasonography, and later set you up in your own clinic. West Lausanne. 0044 752 844 1672

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LE MEET

Anyone fancy drinks out / dinner out

Dinner and drinks at our place in West Lausanne? Beate Keisa +44 752 844 1672

LE MISCELLANEOUS

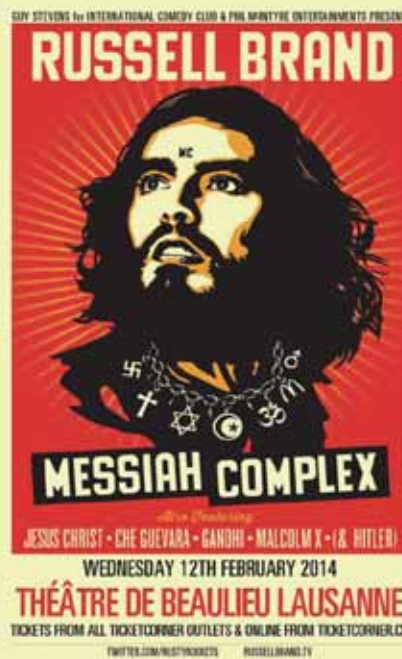
Scots Kirk Business Network - Presentation and networking event

Thursday 20th February at 19.30
«Organisational cultures» - Alfred Collander
The presentation will be followed by a networking Apéro. The event is free although donations are requested to cover the cost of refreshments. Guests are warmly encouraged to attend. St Andrew's House, The Scots Kirk, Avenue de Rumine 26, Lausanne. Please register by emailing: skbn@scotskirklausanne.ch.

Geneva Curry Club

Expats and locals come together regularly to enjoy a curry night in the Geneva region. Great for making friends and since 2006 there have been two weddings! For more info: www.curryclubgeneva.org

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LeNews.ch/brand
to find out how.



LOCAL ADS

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Avenue de Choiseul, Versoix

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www.simplytheatre.com
or call: 022 860 05 18

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Regional Events



These events have been recommended by Know-it-all passport!

More events on: www.knowitall.ch

Montreux, VDAN IMAGINARY MUSEUM OF PLAYMOBIL®

7 February to 25 May
10h00-17h00 daily

The French photographer and filmmaker Richard Unglik spent a lot of time positioning little Playmobil® figures and recreating the great works of art: Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, Guernica, etc. Once he has carefully photographed each element, he uses graphics software to complete the reconstitution. Price: included in the entrance price of the museum: Fr. 12.50/adult, Fr. 6.-/age 6-16, family rates available.

Château de Chillon
Anken Room and the Hall of Coats-of-Arms Av. de Chillon 21
1820 Veytaux, www.chillon.ch



Nyon, VD COQUILLAGES & CRUSTACES: FLOWER POWER

8 February 22h00-04h00

Hippies are making a comeback. Psychedelic rock from the early 70s, bell bottoms, goat skin vests, and flowers in your hair = Peace & Love. If you need to rekindle your childhood, your teenage years, or just want to join the fun, then get your groove on at the Usine à Gaz. Price: Fr. 5.-/entrance.

Usine à Gaz
1, rue César Soulié
1260 Nyon
www.usineagaz.ch



Lausanne PERPETUAL [R]EVOLUTION TEDxLausanne

10 February 13h00-19h00

The world we live in is constantly evolving, causing us to continually reinvent ourselves and the ways we interact with what's around us to keep fresh, engaged and dynamic. What are the ingredients needed for transformative reinvention? In our culture of constant innovation, what are the elements that must remain stable? What revolutions are happening now or seriously need to happen? Price: Fr. 100.-/person, Fr. 50.-/student, Fr. 50.-/unemployed.

University of Lausanne
UNIL
Bâtiment Amphimax 1015 Lausanne
www.tedxlausanne.org



Geneva BHARATI

11 February 20h30

For one night only Geneva will bathe in the colors of India. If you like Bollywood, then make sure to book your places soon. A dynamic journey through the colors, scents, and flavors of India with 70 performers, 800 costumes, giant video projections, authentic scenery, dance, music, martial arts, acrobatics, tears and laughter. 'Bharati' a music and dance spectacle.

Arena
3, rte des Batailleux
1218 Le Grand-Saconnex, GE
www.bharatitheshow.com



Coppet, VD LADIES' NIGHT

12-14 February, 20h00

If you liked the film, The Full Monty, then you will love Ladies' Night! A group of men, all shapes and sizes, various ages and types, decide that the only way they can make some money is to do a striptease. Share their pain as they practice and become almost as good as the Chippendales! Proving that nothing is impossible if you set your mind on it. You will be laughing all evening. Try and get tickets for Valentine's evening with a group of single ladies! Price: Fr. 65.-/person.

Théâtre de Terre-Sainte
Rte du Jura
1296 Coppet
www.varietes.ch



le News PICK OF THE WEEK

Geneva 18 Piece JOHN HOLLENBECK LARGE ENSEMBLE

22 February
Doors open 20h30; concert starts 21h30

This will be the John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble's debut performance in Geneva. The exceptional ensemble, comprising a select group of talented and accomplished musicians, is led by John Hollenbeck. The renowned drummer and composer has mastered the tradition of big-band composition while crossing aesthetic boundaries and speaking directly to the time we live in. Entry: CHF 20; CHF 15 reduced rate.

AMR/Sud des Alpes Concert Hall
Rue des Alpes 10, 1201
www.amr-geneve.ch



Lausanne LES JEUX SONT FAITS! HASARD & PROBABILITES

17 January to 27 April

Is it possible to predict the future and to tame chance? This exhibition at the Espace des Inventions in Lausanne translates as "The Die is Cast! Probability and Risk". Aimed at children over the age of ten, the interactive exhibition offers, through games of chance, an introduction to the world of probabilities and statistics. Educational fun for the whole family. The event is supported by the Federal Statistics Office.

Espace des Inventions
Vallée de la Jeunesse 1
1007 Lausanne
www.espace-des-inventions.ch



Lausanne, VD VERLIEBTE FEINDE

18 February, 20h00

The Office of Equality between women and men in the canton of Vaud, in collaboration with Swiss Film, invites the public to the preview of the film that celebrates women's suffrage in the canton of Vaud. The storyline is derived from an eponymous book, which tells the story of a couple who exchanging letters between 1943 and 1950, discussing politics, feminism, religion, literature, love and relationships. The screening will be followed by a discussion Limited spaces, book in advance. Tickets CHF 15; CHF 12 reduced rate

Cinema Capitol, Lausanne
Avenue du Théâtre 6,
1005 Lausanne, www.lecapitole.ch



Geneva PIERRE LAPOINTE

7 February, 20h00

Don't miss the Québécois singer and keyboard player Pierre Lapointe at the Espace Vélodrome. The singer is well known for his obscure, esoteric lyrics and his often melancholic vibe, and has won many prizes including six Félix Awards in 2005 and 2006. Tickets CHF 22; CHF 16 reduced rate.

Espace Vélodrome
Chemin de la Mère-Voie 60,
1228 Plan-les-Ouates
www.plan-les-ouates.ch



Vallorbe CHOEUR PERSEVERANCE DE VALLORBE

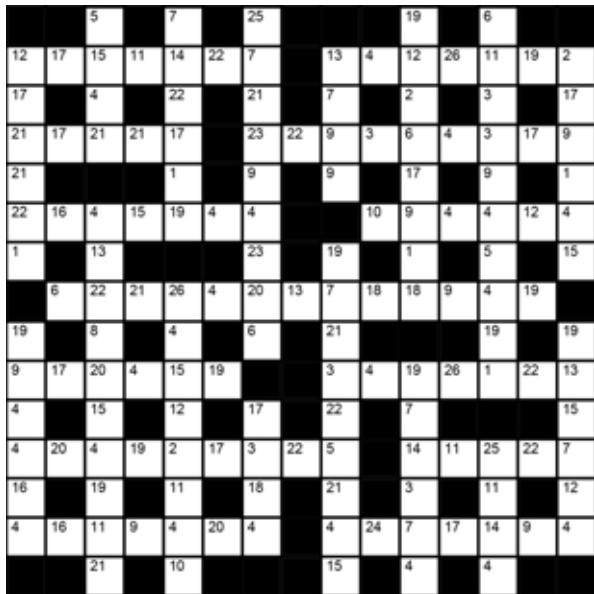
17h00 9 February, 20h00 14 February, 17h00 16 February

Directed under Thierry Daenzer, the Choeur Perseverance de Vallorbe featuring Alice Goodman and Agnès Carron-Villard will perform compositions by the likes of Johann Sebastian Bach, Giacomo Antonio Perti, William Croft and Marc-Antoine Charpentier.

Temple d'Orbe
Temple de la Sarraz
Temple de Vallorbe



Puzzles



QUICK CROSSWORD

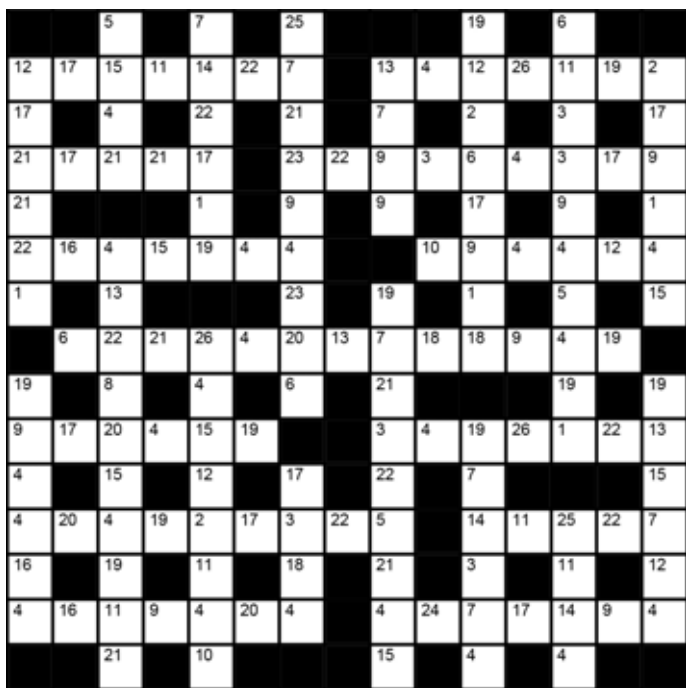
ACROSS

- 7 Assign (6)
- 8 Having concealed difficulty (6)
- 9 Distort (4)
- 10 Where it is really at (8)
- 11. Physique and form (7)
- 13 Above board-often totally (5)
- 15 Explosive creator of helium (1-4)
- 17 Stupid incompetent fool (7)
- 20 Demander of benefit or title (8)
- 21 Test (4)
- 23 Meant or adapted for a use (6)
- 24 Disgustingly dirty (6)

DOWN

- 1 Frenzied, out of control (4)
- 2 Beat through cleverness (6)
- 3 Accept gladly (7)
- 4 Apparently limitless in quantity (5)
- 5 Smother (6)
- 6 Reporting desks (5-3)
- 12 Lacking definition (8)
- 14 Deep-chested hound (7)
- 16 One of two

Last week's solution



CODEWORDS

Each letter has been replaced by the same number throughout the puzzle. Simply decide which letter is represented by which number and complete the puzzle. To start off we're given you the first three letters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
											C	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				Z								K



SUDOKU

Easy

Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

What's On

The eclectic Festival Antigél

The super-cool Festival Antigél (until 16 February), organized by The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia and designed to chase away the winter blues, brings both private and public spaces in Geneva to life with around 60 concerts, dance performances and other events. A cathedral, a swimming pool, a train station, a distillery and a bus depot in suburban districts of the city are among some of the more unusual venues where you'll be able to enjoy great music, parties, exhibitions, sports and dance.



Adam Green, and Kaki King.

This year's guests include Philip Glass and Suzanne Vega, whose concerts are already sold out. But there are still plenty of top acts to enjoy during the last 11 days of the mid-winter festival. Atlanta native Cody Chesnutt, the US king of new soul and rhythm and blues, performs at Geneva airport on 11 February. If you're a fan of folk music, don't miss British singer Keaton Henson on 7 February. Other class performers worth watching include desert-blues band Tamikrest, Junip,

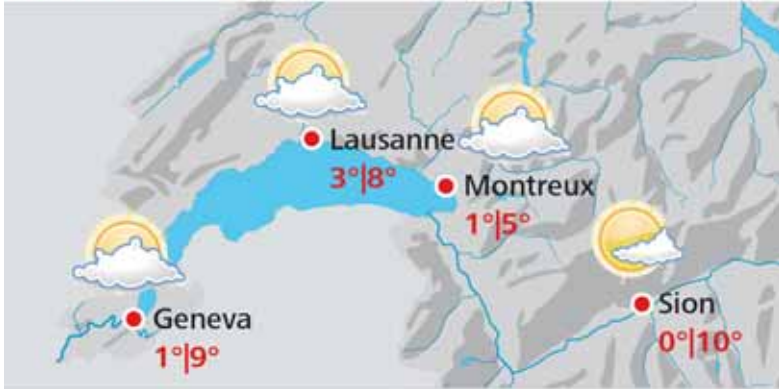
The festival's diverse dance programme showcases dancers such as Anne Nguyen, Sarah Ludi, Speedbattles, Eisa Jocson and Sharon Fridman. You can also see new, up-and-coming artists at L'Igloo à la Gravière. For the full day-by-day Antigél programme, tickets and a list of venues, see www.antigel.ch. Le News has a number of free tickets for Junip on 13 February. Email: prizes@lenews.ch.

Moyette Marrett

Win!
Sudoku: Send us the three numbers in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch
Code word: Send us the three letters in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch

Weather

SUISSE ROMANDE



City	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
GENEVA	1 9°	2 7°	2 8°	3 7°
LAUSANNE	0 6°	1 5°	1 5°	1 4°

SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	132 cm	Crans Montana	160 cm	Les Rousses	140 cm
Villars	125 cm	Château d'Oex	70 cm	Chamonix	195 cm
Leysin	110 cm	Les Crosets	110 cm	Morzine	210 cm



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