

# REGIONAL NEWS

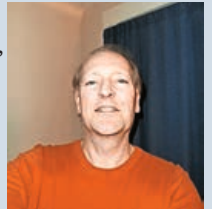
## CANADA

### Editorial

Dear Readers: The current edition marks the fifth appearance of the *Regional News Canada* insert in the *Swiss Review* in 2025, up from four in previous years. Despite early concerns demand might be insufficient to fill the extra space, people responded warmly to the expanded offering. Given that

all contributions to the *Regional News* are made on a voluntary, unpaid basis, this represents a significant development, underscoring that the publication meets a genuine need. Furthermore, most of our advertisers - many of whom have been with us for years - chose to run extra ads to benefit from the additional exposure.

A warm thank-you to all our contributors, advertisers, and readers! Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! [avs@telus.net](mailto:avs@telus.net)



ANDREW VON STUERMER  
REGIONAL EDITOR

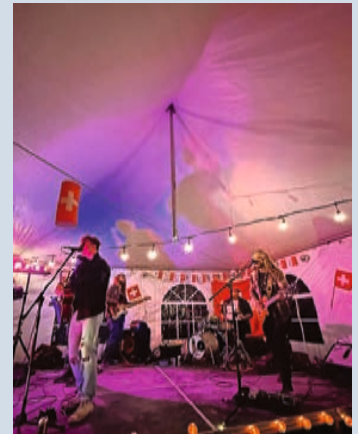
### Guide Days Folkfest at Edelweiss Village + Resort in Golden, BC - A Swiss Legacy Comes Alive in the Canadian Rockies

On October 18 and 19, 2025, Edelweiss Village + Resort in Golden, British Columbia, welcomed more than 600 visitors for the inaugural Guide Days Folkfest, a joyful celebration of the Swiss mountain guides who helped shape Canada's alpine culture.

For two days, the historic Swiss chalets came alive with alphorn music, yodelling, folk dancing, and guided tours that brought to life the story of the pioneering guides who first settled in Golden more than a century ago.

Families filled the grounds, children played in the Family Fun Zone, and guests enjoyed traditional Swiss food prepared by Valbella and local partners. Music echoed across the property from morning to evening, with performances by artists from Golden, Calgary, and beyond.

For many Swiss living in Canada, Guide Days was a rare chance to reconnect with a remarkable chapter of shared history. The Village, built in 1911 for the original Swiss guides hired by the Canadian Pacific Railway, remains one of the most unique Swiss heritage sites outside of Switzerland. Today, a major restoration effort led by Montayne is bringing this historic place back to life as Edelweiss Village + Resort, with renovated chalets now open for overnight stays!



Guide Days marked a meaningful moment in this renewal. It allowed guests to walk through the restored chalets, meet local volunteers and descendants of guide families, and experience the spirit of community that has always defined this place.

Folkfest's success was made possible thanks to the dedication of volunteers, local partners, and generous sponsors who helped create an event filled with music, culture, and Swiss hospitality. Plans are already underway for Guide Days 2026, to continue the celebration with new activities and performances.

For Swiss across Canada, Edelweiss Village stands as a living bridge between the Alps and the Rockies. With the chalets now restored and the resort opening its doors, it's an invitation to rediscover this extraordinary chapter of Swiss history on Canadian soil.

Visitors are warmly encouraged to explore the revitalised Village, stay in the historic guide homes, and be part of writing the next chapter of this unique legacy. More information and bookings are available at [www.edelweissvillage.ca](http://www.edelweissvillage.ca).

We can't wait to welcome you here!

JOHANN RODUIT FOR THE TEAM AT  
EDELWEISS VILLAGE + RESORT



## Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir Association

On Sunday, November 2, at 1:45 p.m., the Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir (ESMC) arrived for the warm-up for its out-of-town fall concert at the United Church in Ponoka, Alberta. Then, at 3:00 p.m., our very own alphorn players, Michelle Naef and Nial Gorman, opened the concert with sounds of the mountains.

MC Jason Golinowski did a great job announcing each song we were about to sing, including interesting facts. Elizabeth Anderson, ESMC's artistic director, led us smoothly through the entire concert. Irena Tarnawsky entertained with the lovely piano interlude *Going Home*.

After the concert, the choir - joined by esteemed guests including former Honorary Swiss Consul Dr. Andreas Bayer and his wife from Calgary - gathered at the Hitchin' Post Bar & Grill for the afterglow. It was a nice way to end a great event organised by our first tenor singer, Fred Salvisberg. A big thank-you to Fred!

### ■ Our performances during the Advent and Christmas season:

- Sunday, December 7, at 3:00 p.m. - The ESMC presented its ever-popular annual Advent & Christmas Concert at St. Vital Catholic Church, 4905 - 50 St in Beaumont, Alberta;
- Tuesday, December 9, at 6:30 p.m. - We performed at The Good Samaritan Dr. Gerald Zetter Care Centre;
- Sunday, December 14, at 2:30 p.m. - We sang at The Renaissance at Meadowlark;
- Tuesday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m. - The ESMC performed at Rosedale Seniors' Living.



### ■ Here's the outlook for 2026:

- Tuesday, February 24, at 6:30 p.m. - Dress rehearsal at CapitalCare Lynnwood, 8740 165 St NW, Edmonton;
- Thursday, March 5 - Joint evening concert with the Grand Prairie Boys' Choir at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Edmonton;
- Tuesday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m. - Spring Concert for The Good Samaritan George Hennig Place, 4808 - 57 Ave. in Stony Plain;
- June 2 to 16 - CH'26 Concert Tour # 7 to Switzerland.

### ■ Looking ahead to 2027:

- July 1 to 4: NASSA Sangerfest in Ottawa.

For more information about purchasing event tickets and / or on how to join the choir, please visit our website [www.esmca.ca](http://www.esmca.ca). Like us on Facebook under "Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir".



PETER THUT

## Yodel Club Heimattreu (Calgary)

# Save the Date:

February 7, 2026

## JodlerAbig - Yodel Evening

*In Friendship we Celebrate*

ticket sales starting end Nov. [www.jkheimattreu.com](http://www.jkheimattreu.com)

## Edmonton Swiss Society

On November 8, the Edmonton Swiss Society (ESS) held another successful cheese fondue event. We welcomed 65 guests for a pleasant evening of socialising and delicious fondue. The gathering sold out again, and we know there were a few disappointed folks we were unable to host. It was a busy evening - so much so that we don't even have any photos to include. Many thank-yous to our dedicated executive team for the preparation and planning, and to our many volunteers for helping set up, cook, serve, and clean up - it truly is a Society event when we have so much engagement!

As we approach winter, we're wrapping up another successful year and look forward to sharing details about the AGM and other events in the next edition of this update.

Remember: members get early notice of our upcoming events. If you're interested in joining, or renewing your membership, please contact us at [edmontonswissociety@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonswissociety@gmail.com)!

YOUR ESS EXECUTIVE TEAM



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

## Rencontres et échanges – retour sur les derniers mois:

Au cours des derniers mois, le Consulat général de Suisse à Montréal a célébré ses 150 ans de présence consulaire à Montréal à travers de nombreux échanges avec la communauté suisse et ses partenaires au Canada.

Le 18 septembre s'est tenue la traditionnelle Soirée Suisse, un moment fort du calendrier consulaire réunissant chaque année des représentantes et représentants du monde politique, économique, culturel et diplomatique. Dans une atmosphère conviviale, les invités ont pu renforcer les liens existants et en tisser de nouveaux entre la Suisse et le Canada.

Début octobre, l'équipe du Consulat a participé, en collaboration avec Les Amis de la montagne, à une activité environnementale sur le mont Royal. Ensemble, les collaboratrices et collaborateurs ont planté arbres et arbustes, contribuant ainsi à la régénération du milieu naturel et à la promotion de la durabilité au cœur de Montréal.

Peu après, la conférence annuelle des représentations suisses au Canada s'est déroulée à Montréal. Les représentantes et représentants de l'ambassade, des consulats généraux et des consulats honoraires se sont réunis pour échanger sur les priorités communes. La rencontre s'est ouverte par l'adoption symbolique d'un arbre au Jardin botanique de Montréal, symbole de croissance et de coopération durable.

À la fin octobre, le Consulat général a appuyé le Swiss Business Hub Canada lors des Regional Meetings Americas de Switzerland Global Enterprise. Les échanges ont porté sur la collaboration économique et les opportunités d'innovation. Un moment marquant fut la visite du Mila – Institut québécois d'intelligence artificielle, où les discussions ont porté sur le rôle de l'IA dans le soutien aux PME suisses à l'international.

Pour conclure, un déplacement en Nouvelle-Écosse a permis à la Consule générale de faire sa première visite officielle dans la province et d'inaugurer, au Musée canadien de l'immigration du Quai 21 à Halifax, une plaque commémorative célébrant les liens durables entre la Suisse et le Canada. Les rencontres à Pubnico et Millbrook ont offert un aperçu inspirant du patrimoine culturel et linguistique de la région.



## Consulat général de Suisse à Montréal Consulate General of Switzerland in Montreal

## Connections and Exchanges – A Look Back at Recent Months

In recent months, the Consulate General of Switzerland in Montreal has pursued numerous opportunities to engage with the Swiss community and local partners across Canada.

On September 18, the traditional Soirée Suisse took place – a highlight that each year brings together representatives from politics, business, culture, and diplomacy. In a warm and welcoming atmosphere, guests strengthened existing ties and forged new connections between Switzerland and Canada.



In early October, the Consulate team joined Les Amis de la montagne for an environmental initiative on Mount Royal. Together, the two teams planted trees and shrubs – a tangible contribution to biodiversity and sustainability in the heart of Montreal.

Shortly thereafter, the annual meeting of the Swiss consular network in Canada was held in Montreal. Representatives from the Embassy, Consulates, and Honorary Consulates met to exchange ideas and discuss shared priorities. The gathering opened with the symbolic adoption of a tree at the Montreal Botanical Garden, representing growth and sustainable cooperation.

In late October, the Consulate General joined the Swiss Business Hub Canada in hosting the Switzerland Global Enterprise Regional Meetings for the Americas. Participants from across the Americas discussed economic collaboration and opportunities for innovation. A highlight was the visit to the Quebec Artificial Intelligence Institute (Mila), where discussions focused on how AI can support Swiss SMEs in their international expansion.

Finally, a visit to Nova Scotia concluded these active months. In Halifax, a commemorative plaque was unveiled at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, celebrating the enduring bond between Switzerland and Canada. Meetings in the communities of Pubnico and Millbrook offered inspiring insights into the region's cultural and linguistic richness.



## FÉDÉRATION DES SOCIÉTÉS SUISSES DE L'EST DU CANADA FEDERATION OF SWISS SOCIETIES IN EASTERN CANADA

### Appel à candidature: Rejoignez le Comité de la Fédération !

**Chers et chères membres et ami.e.s de la communauté suisse du Québec,**

Pour assurer la réussite de la prochaine édition, qui marquera le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de notre fête au Mont Sutton en 2026, nous recherchons des personnes dynamiques, motivées et passionnées pour rejoindre notre comité. C'est une occasion unique de s'impliquer dans la communauté, de partager ses compétences et de contribuer à préserver notre patrimoine.

Il est temps pour certains d'entre nous, depuis longtemps au comité de la Fédé, de transmettre le flambeau afin de continuer cette belle aventure.

#### Les profils recherchés:

- Personnes avec des connaissances en comptabilité ou en gestion administrative, ou informatique (Excel, Word, QB, graphisme, création et administration d'un site web)
- Personnes passionnées par la communication, la rédaction ou la relation avec la communauté
- Bénévoles capables d'organiser, de coordonner ou de soutenir la tombola, la logistique, ou la gestion des bénévoles
- Enthousiastes pour participer à la planification et à la réalisation de notre grande fête

#### Ce que nous offrons:

- Une équipe chaleureuse et engagée
- La possibilité d'apprendre, de transmettre et de laisser une trace durable
- La chance de participer à une tradition qui unit notre communauté

#### Votre engagement:

Les mandats sont de deux ans « renouvelables ». Les rencontres se font surtout en Zoom, plus ou moins mensuelles jusqu'en juillet. Une ou deux réunions se font en personne, principalement l'assemblée générale annuelle fin janvier, début février. Vous serez accompagné(e) dans la prise en main des responsabilités, et vous pourrez compter sur l'expérience et la passion de celles et ceux qui ont déjà œuvré pour notre événement principal...la Fête Nationale Suisse.

Si vous souhaitez faire partie de cette aventure ou simplement en savoir plus, n'attendez pas pour nous contacter à [fedesuisse@gmail.com](mailto:fedesuisse@gmail.com).

Ensemble, faisons en sorte que notre Fête Nationale Suisse continue de briller et de rassembler nos amis, nos familles et nos racines. Nous vous souhaitons, ainsi qu'à vos proches, de très joyeuses et chaleureuses Fêtes de fin d'année, empreintes de douceur, de bonheur et de moments précieux. Merci de votre intérêt et à très bientôt !

Visitez notre site web bilingue [www.fedesuisse.com](http://www.fedesuisse.com).

JEANNETTE PERRIARD, TRÉSORIÈRE 2005 - 2025  
POUR LA FÉDÉRATION DES SOCIÉTÉS SUISSES DE L'EST DU CANADA

### Call for Applications: Join the Federation Committee!

**Dear Members and Friends of the Swiss Community in Quebec:**

To ensure the success of next year's event, which will mark the 50th anniversary of our celebrations at Mont Sutton in 2026, we are looking for dynamic, motivated, and passionate individuals to join our committee. This is a unique opportunity to get involved in the community, share your skills, and help preserve our heritage.

It's time for some of us, who have been on the Federation Committee for a long time, to pass on the torch in order to continue this wonderful adventure.

#### Our ideal candidates:

- People with knowledge of accounting or administrative management, or with experience using computer software (Excel, Word, QB, graphic design, website creation and administration);
- Individuals passionate about communication, writing, or community relations;
- Volunteers able to organise, coordinate, or support the raffle, logistics, or volunteer management;
- Individuals enthusiastic about contributing to the planning and execution of our major celebration.

#### What we offer:

- A warm and committed team;
- The opportunity to learn, contribute, and leave a lasting mark;
- The opportunity to participate in a tradition that unites our community.

#### Your commitment:

Terms are for two years and are renewable. Meetings are mainly held on Zoom, more or less monthly until July. One or two meetings are held in person, primarily the annual general meeting at the end of January or in early February.

You will be supported in taking on your responsibilities, and you can count on the experience and passion of those who have already worked for our main event - the Swiss National Day.

If you would like to be part of this adventure or simply find out more, don't hesitate to contact us at [fedesuisse@gmail.com](mailto:fedesuisse@gmail.com).

Together, let's ensure that our Swiss National Day continues to shine and bring together our friends, families, and heritage.

We wish you and your loved ones a very happy and warm holiday season, filled with joy and precious moments. Thank you for your interest, and we hope to see you soon!

Visit our bilingual website [www.fedesuisse.com](http://www.fedesuisse.com).

JEANNETTE PERRIARD, TREASURER 2005 - 2025  
FOR THE FEDERATION OF SWISS SOCIETIES IN EASTERN CANADA

## Swiss Club Thames Valley

As I'm writing these notes, colder weather is upon us - soon enough, winter will be here.

In September, it was the Yodel Club's turn to host the Seniors' Afternoon. On November 1, we ended our club year, as usual, with a cheese fondue, followed by the AGM.

The Swiss Farmer's Band entertained us at the Musikfest on November 16. On November 30, we held our *Zäme Singe Zäme Si* ("sing together, be together") singalong event with the Swiss Choir. On December 7, Samichlaus visited the Swiss Club.

In December, the Swiss Club will organise an afternoon of games (date to be announced).

In 2026, we'll have afternoon of games events lined up from January until March (dates to be announced).

I wish everyone a pleasant Advent, a merry Christmas, and all the best for the New Year!

MARIANNE TRACHSEL

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## HOCKEY IN SWITZERLAND

If you are a hockey player and eligible for a  
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*All ages welcome.*



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## Matterhorn Swiss Club (Montreal)

We had just one recent scheduled event, a get-together lunch at the end of November. The gathering took place at an Italian restaurant in Pointe-Claire. It was nice to see everyone again and to find some time to socialise!

In the winter or spring, we will hold our annual general meeting which, at the very least, will be combined with a good lunch at a nice restaurant, or perhaps something a little more special such as an outing.

Members will be advised of our next event once plans are finalised. Guests are welcome!

WALTER SPIRIG, PRESIDENT  
514 - 694 - 3718

## Swiss Club Saskatoon

Our AGM was held on October 26 at the Sky Chef Restaurant in Warman, SK. The elections went quickly: no nominations were received, and the entire executive let their names stand for re-election. The following members were declared acclaimed:

■ Elisabeth Eilinger, President; Marc Schwendemann, Vice President; Georg Nievergelt, Treasurer; Hayley Schwendemann, Secretary; and Barbara Wingeier, Social Convenor.

A motion was passed that any member 100 years old or older no longer needs to pay membership fees. A raffle was held, as usual, with members and the club donating items.

Our Santa party was held on Sunday, December 7, at the Neuanlage Community Hall. This hall has served us well over the past years for our events. The event was a potluck and included delicious meat and cheese platters and sumptuous desserts. We held a raffle, with all prizes going to the children.

A raclette lunch in the spring of 2026 will be our next event. At this time, no date has yet been set.

To find out more about us, contact us at [swissclubsaskatoon@hotmail.com](mailto:swissclubsaskatoon@hotmail.com), or by phone at 1 - 306 - 260 - 8030.

ELISABETH EILINGER, PRESIDENT  
SWISS CLUB SASKATOON

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## Swiss Society of Vancouver / Vancouver Swiss Choir

On July 26, the Swiss Society of Vancouver and the Swiss Canadian Mountain Range Association co-hosted the very festive Swiss National Day celebration at the Mountain Range Chalet. Many enjoyed the traditional bratwurst, bun, and potato salad. Music was provided by the Silver Stars band, the Vancouver Dorfmusik, and the Vancouver Swiss Choir (VSC). To view photos, visit [www.swiss-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/September-October-2025-Swiss-Herald-Newsletter.pdf](http://www.swiss-society.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/September-October-2025-Swiss-Herald-Newsletter.pdf).

Our Filmnachmittage ("movie afternoons") are back! These popular social outings on the 3rd Sunday of the month bring films from Switzerland to our members. The events are organised by our dedicated membership chair Susanne Wilson and her devoted helpers.



Co-hosted by the Vancouver Dorfmusik ensemble, the annual Swiss Christmas Concert was held on November 22. The VSC performed several new pieces as well as traditional songs the audience could sing along to. As always, they also performed yodels.

We're also excited to have hosted the annual Swiss Seniors' Christmas Luncheon on December 7. This year, it was again held at the same venue at the Holiday Inn in North Vancouver. Many of our most senior Swiss members look forward to this event, as they no longer walk or hike like they used to.

We've also brought back the Waldweihnacht ("Christmas in the forest"). For 20+ years, the SSV Outdoor Club used to run this popular outdoor - indoor event at Mt. Seymour. It has been resurrected and we now meet at the Mountain Range Chalet for a family-oriented evening with crafts, songs, a light meal, and a visit from Santa. More details can be found in the *Swiss Herald*.

THERESA WELTZIN

## Do you like to sing?



### VANCOUVER SWISS CHOIR

**All nationalities welcome! We sing multilingual traditional Swiss Folk music. Beginners are encouraged to join us, a mixed choir of all ages and voices. We practice Fridays from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at All Saints Church, 7405 Royal Oak, Burnaby. We do Spring, Fall and Christmas concerts annually and other special events.**

**CONDUCTOR: DUBRAVKO PAJALIC**

Contact Theresa @ 604.574.9069 or e-mail Rolf @ [rbrulhart@hotmail.com](mailto:rbrulhart@hotmail.com)  
<https://www.swiss-society.org/>

## Welcome to the Vancouver Swiss Choir!

***Venez chanter avec nous ! Kommen Sie einfach vorbei !  
 Vieni con noi ! All nationalities welcome !***

We're an easy-going, enthusiastic, mixed voice choir of all ages and many nationalities. We enjoy singing multilingual Swiss folk and classical songs in choral settings. All those who love to sing are encouraged to join. Under the guidance of our conductor Dubravko Pajalic, we enjoy exploring a wide repertoire of Swiss folk music with a healthy dose of yodelling. New singers are welcome for any parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.

Throughout the year, we perform two scheduled concerts and sing by invitation at other events. We host a spring concert in May and a Christmas concert in late November. We make time for enjoyable social time after rehearsals. Rehearsals are Friday mornings from 10 - 12 in Burnaby, followed by coffee and snacks. Don't hesitate to contact the choir members below, or email [swisschoir@swiss-society.org](mailto:swisschoir@swiss-society.org)!

- Theresa Weltzin (Chair): 604 - 574 - 9069
- Rolf Brühlhart (Member): 604 - 224 - 6718

## The Montagna Singers (Ottawa)



## About the S ngerfest OTTAWA 2027:

Every three years, Swiss choirs from across North America gather for the **S ngerfest** ("singer festival"), a joyful multi-day festival celebrating Swiss music, culture, and community - visit [www.saengerfestottawa.ca](http://www.saengerfestottawa.ca). Choirs perform individually, join a mass choir, participate in a competition, and come together for a lively gala of Swiss hospitality. It's the signature event of the North American Swiss Singing Alliance (NASSA), and in 2027, Ottawa's Montagna Singers have the honour of hosting this gathering! From July 1 - 4, 2027, the Montagna Singers will welcome singers, families, and guests for a vibrant holiday-weekend celebration.

We're also delighted to announce that **Kapelle Oberalp** (<https://www.kapelle-oberalp.ch>), travelling from Switzerland, will be joining us to provide authentic Swiss entertainment throughout the festival.

- Should your club be interested in hosting Kapelle Oberalp for an additional **Unterhaltungsabend** ("an evening of entertainment"), they are open to arriving a few days early or staying a few days after the S ngerfest. Arrangements must be made early, so please reach out to **Joe Hurschler (Ottawa, ON): Email: [joe@hurschler.com](mailto:joe@hurschler.com); Phone: 613 - 227 - 1116.**

Mit einem warmen Gr essli aus Ottawa!

KARIN FREEMAN

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## Riding the "Palm Express" - A Travel Account by Robert F. Rinkoff

My wife and I booked a scenic trip on a Swiss PostBus route called the *Palm Express*. It's a four-hour journey that starts in St. Moritz, descends to the Bergell region via the Maloja Pass, continues into Italy, re-enters Switzerland at Gandria, and ends at Lugano's main train station. That's the official route description. What that doesn't tell you is what can happen along the way!



On the day of our trip, we arrived early at the St. Moritz bus station, hoping to secure good seats. Soon, people began milling around the area where the bus would park. It arrived 15 minutes prior to departure. The driver got out for a break and shut the door. By then, most passengers had already formed an orderly line. The driver returned some 10 minutes later, unlocked the door, and left again.

Now, passengers who hadn't lined up swarmed all around us, creating a disorderly – distinctly "un-Swiss" – crowd clamouring to board the bus and grab good seats. We noticed four older women at the side of the bus – elbows raised high – swiftly fighting their way to the door. Nobody dared resist these seniors who thus managed to be the first on board, claiming the four front seats. Even though we had been the first to arrive, we ended up sitting about two-thirds toward the back.

With everyone now seated, the driver returned, picked up a clipboard, and began calling passengers. "*Rinkoff, two people?*" "*Here,*" I replied. He pointed to the first two seats on the passenger side – currently occupied by two of the four women who had boarded first. As we headed toward the front, a brief but heated argument in Swiss-German ensued between the driver and the women, who eventually – and very unhappily – moved to the back while we took our prime front-row seats in disbelief. All other passengers were called in turn and redirected to their designated seats. As it turned out, seats were assigned by reservation order. We had been the first to book and were now rewarded with the first and best seats – this restored our faith in Swiss orderliness!

Leaving St. Moritz, the bus followed the relatively flat main road past the picturesque lakes of Silvaplana and Sils, then descended the Maloja Pass. After the pass, we entered the extremely narrow Bergell Valley, where rough, imposing granite mountains loomed above the stony valley floor. The mountains felt foreboding, especially on the valley's south side, where the range is dominated by Monte Disgrazia – not the most inviting name for a mountain!



In many places, the road was only a single lane wide and ran so close to houses on either side that an outward-opening front door would be knocked off its hinges by a passing bus.

On a previous holiday, I had spent a week hiking in the Bergell and visited Alberto Giacometti's birthplace and grave site in Borgonovo. His sculptural style featured rough, heavily textured surfaces – I couldn't help thinking that the craggy landscape surrounding Stampa, where he often worked, must have exerted a major influence on him.

Once in Italy, the winding two-lane road was quite narrow, and the wide bus took up almost all of its lane. For long stretches, an ivy-covered stone wall bordered the right-hand side. There was no shoulder or footpath – just the wall. From our front-row seats, we watched the passenger-side mirror that extended from its arm. For long periods, the bus hugged the far right of our lane, and the mirror gently brushed against the ivy without ever touching the wall. The driver's precision amazed us; the bus flowed with traffic as if it were on an open road.

Toward the end of the trip, something extraordinary happened. We were driving along Lake Lugano, the water to our left. Traffic was heavy and occasionally stop-and-go, and our lane was thick with cars. While we were stopped on a bend, a large cement truck approached slowly in the opposite lane. As it rolled up, it became clear there wouldn't be enough space for it to pass. Traffic was now stopped in both directions and our bus was trapped. Men got out of their cars to advise the truck driver. Eventually, the truck nosed into a driveway, creating an opening of about a meter between its rear and the side of our bus. We inched forward cautiously.

At precisely that moment, a motorcycle shot through the gap from behind us. Everyone on the road shouted in surprise. Then, just as the gap narrowed, another bike raced through. People went wild – yelling, applauding, laughing, and cursing at the madness of it all! Not long after, traffic cleared and we rolled on through the final part of our trip.

The scenery on this route was beautiful, but for us, the bus ride itself was the highlight of a trip we'll never forget!

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