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SWITZERLAND



Top Swiss diplomat into China groove



Shanghai is an extremely dynamic and vibrant city with an eventful past, a place where Eastern and Western cultures were entangled.

Alexander Hoffet
Consul general of
Switzerland in Shanghai

Zhang Qian

Taking two Chinese language lessons each week has become routine for Alexander Hoffet since he started work last year as consul general of Switzerland in Shanghai.

"Chinese is so different from other languages; the homework is always a headache," says Hoffet. "Luckily, it is not so urgent for me to really speak Chinese at work since I am surrounded by many Chinese speaking excellent English."

However, although he does not see any realistic hope of mastering Chinese, Hoffet still considers the lessons essential. He firmly believes studying the language of every country where he works will help him to better understand the people's mentality and how the country's system works.

Hoffet has worked around the world since starting his international career in 1987 as a delegate of the International Red Cross in Iraq and Southern Africa, then as a diplomat in Prague, Seoul, Brussels and Vienna. He has found Shanghai to be very different from his last assignment in Vienna, a city that is proud of its history and culture and focuses on keeping up tradition.

"Shanghai is an extremely dynamic and vibrant city with an eventful past, a place where Eastern and Western cultures were entangled," says Hoffet. "This is also what makes Shanghai such a lively cosmopolitan city with a unique, forward-looking spirit and can-do mentality."

The vibrant atmosphere and future-oriented, confident focus of people in Shanghai and the entire Yangtze River Delta region remind Hoffet of the optimistic mood in South Korea during his posting in the late 1990s. Accustomed to adjusting his work priorities and practices to the requirements of each new posting, Hoffet found no difficulty in quickly shifting his attention from regional security issues in Europe to the bilateral relationship between Switzerland and China, Shanghai and the Yangtze River Delta region in particular.

Hoffet's constituency as consul general includes around 400 Swiss companies based in Shanghai and the surrounding provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui, an ever-increasing number of exchange and cooperation projects between Swiss and Chinese schools and academic institutions, and numerous cultural exchange events.

He says his biggest challenge in the job is not only keeping track of all activities,

but also living up to high expectations with limited resources. And the task is especially heavy this year which marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and Switzerland. A series of cultural exchange activities has helped to celebrate the anniversary. Switzerland recognized the People's Republic of China in the early 1950s, becoming one of the first Western countries to establish diplomatic relations with the newly founded country.

"This was the beginning of a special relationship based on trust that continues to benefit bilateral relations today," says Hoffet.


The Swiss people have constantly been among the forerunners in establishing "firsts" in the relationship with China, according to Hoffet. The first sister city relationship was established between Kunming and Zurich, and the first joint venture between a Chinese company and a Western company was initiated by the Swiss company Schindler, both in the 1980s. It was Switzerland that first recognized China as a modern market economy in the WTO. In 2014, Switzerland was the first major Western country and major economy to sign a free trade agreement with China. Switzerland is also among the founding member states of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank created on China's initiative.

"Our relationship started early on and they have developed a lot of substance, both in terms of the quantity of the economic exchange and of the quality of interpersonal contacts," says Hoffet, "and Shanghai has always played a vital role in the Swiss presence in China."

The first Swiss representation in China opened in Shanghai in 1921 and almost 100 years later Shanghai is still one of the most important focuses of Swiss presence in China, both with regard to the number of companies and of Swiss citizens living in the area. The trend is still on the rise and Hoffet believes more joint programs based on Shanghai's and Switzerland's common interests will lead to even closer ties.

The "Sino-Swiss Low Carbon Cities" project was recently launched to mitigate the phenomena of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Chinese urban areas. Ten Chinese cities, including Shanghai, are involved. And Switzerland is also willing to share its green transformation experience with Shanghai, as well as further deepen partnerships with China in education, research and innovation.

Photo by Wang Rongjiang



The basic facts on Switzerland

Switzerland is divided into 26 cantons. Six of these administrative units (Obwalden and Nidwalden, Appenzell Innerrhoden and Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft) are also regarded as half-cantons.


FACTS

Full name: Swiss Confederation


Capital: Bern

Seat of Government: Bern

National flag:



Coat of arms:



National Day: August 1


Area: 41,277sqm (CIA World Factbook estimate)

Population: 8,121,830 (CIA World Factbook estimate, July 2015)

Type of state: Confederation, with similarities to

a federal republic


President: Simonetta Sommaruga



Major religions: Roman Catholic (38.2%), Protestant (26.9%)

Official languages: German (64.9%), French (22.6%), Italian (8.3%), Romansch (0.5%)

Monetary Unit: Swiss Franc (1 Swiss franc = 100 centimes)



MAJOR CITIES


Bern
The cosmopolitan capital is home to 140,000 residents, the seat of government, the parliament and to several important international institutions.

Zürich
Zürich, also labeled as the City of Gnomes, is the biggest city in Switzerland and the capital of Zürich Canton.


Geneva
Geneva is the second biggest city of Switzerland. The city is a paramount spot that hosts many international institutions and it is an important hub for banking, tourism and technology.

DO YOU KNOW?


Skiing heaven
Switzerland has high reputation for its skiing tradition, as it is a preferable destination for this winter sport, regardless of season.



Cheese
Swiss cheese enjoys high worldwide reputation. Two of the most famous cheese brands are the Emmentaler and Gruyère.



Watch
Switzerland gives home to the biggest watch industry of the world and watches represent the third largest export products of the country.



Graphics by Shen Xinyi/Shanghai Daily

Swiss factor stands out in the hospitality industry

Sonia Tatar

Home to the world's top-ranked hotel schools, Switzerland has educated global leaders in hospitality management for more than a century. Here, I outline some of the factors that set the Swiss study experience apart.

Considered by many as the birthplace of hospitality, Switzerland boasts a long-standing history of tourism. It was here that hotel management schools first began to emerge, and over time developed a unique, holistic approach to educating skilled hotel management staff. Students not only learned about keeping the books of a hotel property, but also mastered the practical operations, from service and kitchen to rooms division, which led them to understand the necessary steps to build a successful hospitality business.

Today, Swiss institutions rank as the top three hospitality management schools in the world (TNS Global Survey, 2013). Among them is Les Roches International School of Hotel Management in the Swiss Alps in vicinity to the ski and golf resort, Crans-Montana. Here, students from nearly 100 countries enroll in undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate



Sonia Tatar, CEO of Les Roches Worldwide

programs in the fields of hospitality, tourism and event management.

It is not only the reputed hospitality schools that bring students from across the globe to study in Switzerland. The prime destination attracts travelers of all nationalities and ages with abundant natural beauty and breathtaking mountains, lakes and rivers — all easily accessible via one of the world's most elaborate public transportation networks. The typical rich cheeses and chocolates are

a delight, but Swiss wines and many other regional specialties should not be missed.

What's more, Switzerland is located in the heart of Europe and in close proximity to some of the world's most exciting cities, such as Paris, Milan and Munich, each with its own unique history, art, architecture and cultural scene.

Most competitive country

Switzerland is fortunate to rely on a system of economic, political and civil stability. The economy is comprised of large multinational corporations, leading institutions in finance, luxury and pharmaceuticals, and specialized small and medium-sized enterprises, which account for some most impressive key performance indicators. According to the World Economic Forum's latest Global Competitiveness Report, Switzerland is the world's most competitive country, has the lowest percentage of public debt and unemployment, and the highest disposable income per capita in the world (EU Statistical Office-Eurostat). These factors, together with aspects of social security, make Switzerland the best country to be born in, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Switzerland is also very competitive

in the field of innovation and is among the countries with the highest spending on research and development relative to GDP. It is in these ideal conditions that many business ideas come to life and start-up companies take off. At Les Roches, we aim to instill this entrepreneurial spirit in our students and encourage them to pursue their own business projects, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Apart from the economic framework, the political stability and public safety contribute to make Switzerland a preferred destination for international students.

The Swiss model of education follows a unique structure, offering students a choice of two pathways to reach an academic distinction. They can follow the classic path and enroll in secondary school and eventually university after completing their mandatory schooling or they can start an apprenticeship. In the latter case, students attend a professional school part time while learning their trade and can later embark on an academic career through a university of applied sciences. Les Roches combines both pathways to offer a fully accredited Bachelor in Business Administration degree program in International Hotel Management.

SWISSness as key to customer loyalty



“Our guests can feel SWISSness everywhere in our cabins. One hugely important element here is our typically Swiss hospitality, which is in Switzerland’s DNA. Our cabin crews ... are also our main brand ambassadors, and the key to our SWISSness.”

Peter Pullem

Head of Sales and Marketing International,
Swiss International Air Lines

Yang Jian

Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) will become the world’s first airline to operate the cutting-edge Bombardier business jet on its short- and medium-haul networks from mid-2016, said Peter Pullem, head of International Sales and Marketing at the carrier.

The Bombardier C Series aircraft will consume less fuel than comparable aircraft and provide greater inflight comfort, Pullem said.

For the China market, the carrier will deploy the new Boeing 777 flagship along with new routes in the country. Inflight Wi-Fi and touchscreens are featured on the new 340-seater aircraft.

Meanwhile, codeshare between SWISS and China’s national flagship carrier, Air China, will also provide greater travel flexibility and more coordinated services, according to the executive.

Shanghai Daily recently spoke with Pullem about the development of the airline.

Q: What is SWISS’s global development strategy? Can you tell us a little about your development strategies for the Chinese market? Will there be any new routes to Chinese cities or new code-shares with Chinese carriers in the near future?

A: An important element in our overall development strategy will be our fleet renewal from next year onwards. In January, we will receive the first of nine new Boeing 777-300ER long-haul twinjets that will feature a state-of-the-art cabin product in all three seating classes. We will also be deploying our new Triple Sevens on the Hong Kong-Zurich route, so we will be able to offer a new travel experience to our Chinese passengers there, along with more seating capacity.

In mid-2016 we will also begin to take delivery of our new Bombardier C Series aircraft for our short- and medium-haul networks. SWISS will be the first airline in the world to operate this advanced and efficient new twinjet, which consumes substantially less fuel, is 50 percent quieter than comparable aircraft and will provide even greater inflight comfort for our guests.

Apart from deploying our new Boeing 777 fleet flagship to the Chinese market, we are not currently looking into opening up any new routes in the region. We feel we are well positioned in the market, not least through the wide choice of connections that are offered by the broader Lufthansa Group, of which we are a member. Together with our group partner airlines we provide everything from morning to evening connections to Europe via our four hubs — Zurich, Frankfurt, Munich and Vienna. And these services are all easily combinable, too. Since April we have also been offering a code-share service on Air China’s flights between Geneva and Beijing, while Air China offers a code-share on our daily Zurich-Beijing service as well as on our Zurich-Geneva flights. These code-share arrangements provide greater travel flexibility and more coordinated services for both partners’ customers.

Q: What is the role of SWISS within the Lufthansa Group?

A: It has always been vitally important to us that SWISS, as “the Airline of Switzerland,” remains an autonomous entity within the Lufthansa Group. We have our own well-positioned brand,

which benefits strongly from the size and strength of the Lufthansa Group and the various synergies that our group membership provides.

To enhance the group’s overall efficiency, speed up decision-making and reduce complexities, we will soon be seeing some realignments within Lufthansa Group. And these will involve SWISS, too. These realignments will help us gear our products and our processes even more consistently to our customers’ needs. Among other things, we are already preparing a new IT infrastructure that will be standardized group-wide.

All these actions are essential to help ensure that the Lufthansa Group remains the “first choice in aviation” for customers. And, as the Airline of Switzerland, SWISS will continue to play an important role within it.

Q: Passengers were amazed by designs for the new SWISS Boeing 777-300ERs that Priestman-Goode released recently. Could you tell us about the design’s highlights, and when the design will be applied to the SWISS cabin? When will the SWISS Triple Seven start serving the Chinese market?

A: With our new Boeing 777-300ERs, we will be setting new benchmarks in terms of our customers’ inflight comfort and overall air travel experience. The totally-redesigned cabin interior will offer the highest levels of comfort and aesthetics in all three seating classes.

New comfort levels, inflight Wi-Fi and touchscreens for all are key features of our new 340-seater aircraft. The interior design allows our First Class guests to create semi-private suites with a 32-inch screen, the biggest entertainment screens in the airline industry. And the new electro-mechanical window shades can be operated simultaneously for all three windows in the traveller’s seat zone.

Our Business Class guests will also have more privacy and space in a configuration which was improved mainly based on customer feedback. And, as at present, the Business Class seat can be swiftly transformed into a lie-flat bed that is over 2 meters long, while the firmness or softness of the seat cushion can be individually regulated.

Our Economy Class passengers can also look forward to optimum inflight comfort through greater legroom, new seat-cushion technology and inflight entertainment that will be offered on a large 11-inch personal touchscreen with USB and audio connections. And as a further innovation, our Economy Class guests will be able to obtain a wide range of drinks and snacks from a new self-service kiosk outside our regular cabin service.

We are delighted that we will also be able to introduce the Boeing 777-300ER on several services a week between Zurich and Hong Kong from April 2016 onwards.

Q: What do you think are the advantages of SWISS compared with other high-end airlines?

A: Our SWISSness, for sure. Switzerland is one of the strongest “nation brands” in the world, and this makes it easier for us to differentiate ourselves from other airlines. We make great efforts to stand out from the competition and put as much SWISSness as possible into our products and services. This

ranges from small gestures such as the chocolates we distribute to every passenger to our award-winning “SWISS Taste of Switzerland” culinary program in First and Business Class.

Q: How is SWISS performing in the Chinese market?

A: SWISS is very well established in China. We currently offer daily non-stop flights to Zurich from Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. And in the past nine months we have seen passenger numbers on these routes rise by around 13 percent, and have had revenue growth, too. The seat load factors on our China routes are up as well.

Further enhancing the quality of our products and services will continue to be our focus in the coming months. Early next April we’ll be deploying our new flagship Boeing 777 with its brand-new cabin product on our Hong Kong-Zurich route. And this will increase our capacity from and to Hong Kong by around 18 percent.

Q: The steak meals served in First Class also look impressive. I think Chinese passengers are eager to know when they can have a taste of them.

A: Thank you! We launched our new “SWISS Connoisseur Experience” in September, to provide even more culinary variety for our First Class guests. Our aim here is to enrich our inflight fare with exclusive and carefully selected food specialties that are geared to the season and focus on a particular gourmet delight — like the “SWISS Steakhouse” in September, white Alba truffles in November, seafood in February and a selection of caviar in May. We will be offering the new program on our flights from Switzerland to all intercontinental destinations for a two-week period four times a year. So if you take a flight from Switzerland during one of these months, there’s a good chance you’ll be able to sample it.

Q: Can you explain your “SWISSness”? How do passengers feel this in your cabin?

A: Our guests can feel SWISSness everywhere in our cabins. One hugely important element here is our typically Swiss hospitality, which is in Switzerland’s DNA. Our cabin crews are well trained in all the details of good service and hospitality. And they are also our main brand ambassadors, and the key to our SWISSness.

We want our Swiss customers to feel at home, and we want to give our international customers the chance to sample typical Swiss products even before they arrive in our home country. This includes our famous Swiss chocolate tablets for all passengers, our inflight food, drinks and entertainment and even our amenity kits, which contain top-quality products from reputed Swiss manufacturers like La Prairie in First Class.

We also work very closely with young Swiss designers. The current Business Class seat on our long-haul fleet, for example, is the work of Swiss designer Patrick Lindon.

And the SWISS First Class blankets and pillows are from Swiss designer Caroline Flueller. In fact, she’s responsible for the design of the seat covers, blankets and pillows in all three classes on our intercontinental fleet.



Headquarters site of Roche Pharma in Shanghai Zhangjiang Hi-tech Park.

Roche Pharma strives to create an ideal workplace

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche's connection with China dates back to the early 1920s. As one of the affiliates of Roche Group, Shanghai Roche Pharmaceuticals Ltd was founded in 1994, which is now the market leader in key areas of oncology, virology, and transplant. Roche Pharma is one of the first large multinational pharmaceutical companies in China in establishing a complete value chain in pharmaceuticals comprising R&D, manufacturing and marketing. While working to develop itself into Roche's third global strategic center, Roche Pharma is also making sustained efforts to fulfil its long-term commitment to China.

Through its current portfolio of 16 products, Roche Pharma covers eight treatment areas in China. Roche Pharma works closely with a broad range of stakeholders including the government, healthcare institutions, and NGOs to explore innovative models of cooperation, aiming to bring tangible and sustainable benefits to more patients in China.

A responsible corporate citizen

In the past two decades, Roche Pharma has always been committed to boosting the health of Chinese people and to fulfilling its corporate social responsibility while seeking business growth. Roche has been actively supporting charities with a long-term goal of "giving back to the community." In major social and natural disasters such as the SARS, earthquakes in Wenchuan, and Ya'an, Sichuan Province, and in Ludian, Yunnan Province, as well as explosions in Binhai, Tianjin, Roche Pharma joined hands with a variety of partners to offer humanitarian relief and support. In addition, Roche Pharma has also been actively engaged in helping alleviate poverty, donating money and drugs, supporting education and facilitating



Hong Chow (center), general manager of Shanghai Roche Pharmaceuticals Ltd, walks with employees and supported children at Century Park in June in Shanghai.

environmental protection.

Roche Children's Walk is a heritage program since the Swiss company first launched the campaign in 2003 to support vulnerable children in under-developed regions. Each year on June 16, Roche employees at more than 120 company sites around the world will show their solidarity with children in need by raising funds through sponsored walks. The funds they raise will be used to support and raise awareness for AIDS orphans. In China, Shanghai Roche Pharmaceuticals Ltd has been working with the Chinese Foundation for Prevention of STD and AIDS to help AIDS orphans in Tongren City since 2010. The funds will be used for supportive projects for orphans in Tongren City in Guizhou Province through the Chinese Foundation for Prevention of STD and AIDS. The orphans under the program will receive daily expenses, medical subsidies and other incidental expenditure. "Roche Children's Walk is one of the most important corporate social responsibility activities in Roche, which is deep inside in Roche's culture," said Hong Chow, general manager of Shanghai

Roche Pharmaceuticals Ltd. "We hope to raise awareness among a wider audience about AIDS orphans through continued public deeds."

The best employer

As a world leader in research-focused healthcare, Roche Pharma adheres to the concept of being "people-focused," helping all employees to feel valued and respected and able to grow to their fullest potential. There is a wholehearted endeavor to make Roche an ideal workplace.

"People are the core of the sustainable development of a company, and we want to attract and retain talents on our way to benefit more Chinese patients," said Hong Chow. "What we want to create in Roche is a comfortable and inspiring working environment, with rich career development opportunities, great benefit packages and a balance between work and life."

Employee development is one of Roche's key approaches to talent attraction and retention. As the most treasured asset of Roche Pharma, staff members are provided with a wide array of career development opportunities, learning methods and programs.

As a world-leading healthcare company, Roche not only devotes to its purpose "doing now what patients need next", it is also highly attentive to employees' health and quality of living. A series of work-life balance events, such as "Wellbeing," Family Day, Sports Day, are held annually to help relieve stress and enable staff members to work with lasting enthusiasm.

Furthermore, Roche offers comprehensive benefits and onsite services for its employees, including the healthy lifestyle campaign, professional counseling, annual medical checks, an employee stock purchase plan, canteen, coffee bar, gym, clubs and shuttle buses. Creating a safe, comfortable and inspiring work environment benefits the employees and helps Roche reach its goal of helping more Chinese patients. Roche China is widely recognized by third-party institutions as the "Best Employer."



A specially designed Sports Festival is held this year. Roche staff members enjoy the fun as well as experience the benefit of team work through the exiting activities.



Patek Philippe aims at 'lasting forever' in China

Yang Di

Distinguished as Swiss master watchmaker, Patek Philippe has been building awareness of what it can offer to a growing number of watch lovers in China.

On its 10th anniversary in China, President Thierry Stern reaffirms his intention to enhance their service-oriented market strategy along with the brand's commitment to China.

"Our strategy and philosophy in the mainland market is the same as we have worldwide and most importantly in new markets. When entering the market in 2005 our aim was to have stable and steady expansion over the years, step by step," Stern said.

"To meet sustained demand for Patek Philippe timepieces from watch collectors and enthusiasts in China, we pursued our strategy of long-term investment, building knowledge and interest and, key to us, we invested in professional customer services in terms of both equipment set-up and watchmaker recruitment and training," he added.

This is why Patek Philippe chose to create a Patek Philippe Home away from Home in Shanghai in 2012 followed by Beijing in 2014, where visitors were able to experience the brand heritage. In 2013 it chose to strengthen the long-term commitment to customer services with the opening of the first Patek Philippe Watchmakers Institute.

"So our strategy for China is a service-oriented strategy and we hope with it we can continue growing curiosity and passion among Chinese amateurs as done successfully over the past decade," Stern said.

"Our watches are produced with the intention of lasting forever, a commitment to preserving reliability generation after generation. So it is our duty to provide the highest standard of customer services in China for the growing number of Chinese customers who invest in our brands through purchase in and outside China."

Stern said most of the clients who buy Patek Philippe watches are well informed and invest in the brand after a lot of thinking. It's typically not an impulsive last minute buy.

"The same applies if they buy it as a gift, it should be for someone who will appreciate and understand the brand. Over the years Chinese customers have expressed a growing curiosity and passion for our watches and as a result there are more and more enthusiasts and collectors in the market. Of course this is very promising and we see it as



The exhibition hall of Maison Patek Philippe Shanghai



Thierry Stern, president of Patek Philippe

a result of our service-oriented commitment to this important market," Stern said.

Talking about the brand's success, Stern said innovation is a key value of philosophy and is essential in keeping the brand as the leader of the Haute Horlogerie segment. "Innovation is essential in terms of technical developments, aesthetic, quality and long term reliability. Innovation for Patek Philippe is not a marketing tool. It cannot be a gimmick. Innovation has

to bring an added value, and this is important to our long-term relationship with our clients," Stern said.

"Demand remains stronger than what we can produce; each time we present a watch with innovation," he added.

By keeping the high quality standards of the watches, the company's growth is limited by production capacity. Consequently, markets grow steadily but slowly. "So globally we keep a balanced distribution and growth. Europe remains our most important market with a 45 percent share, the US represents about 17 percent and Asia including China represents about 30 percent," Stern said.

Highest quality

Stern said the biggest challenge that the brand faces in the coming years is to meet demand in the best way possible while keeping the highest quality level, which means finding talented, knowledgeable and passionate people.

"Growing the company while keeping our family values alive at all levels of the business is a great challenge and is what sets Patek Philippe apart. And one of our biggest concerns and challenges remains in after-sale services. This is the key to keep our established clients and build future ones, and we invest permanently to build service resources on a worldwide level," Stern said.

Stern's favorite complications at

Patek Philippe is minute repeaters because "the sound is easy to judge; it's easy to say if you like it or not; it gives access to understanding the pure and crystal sound we are able to create to everybody; this is why I say I love this complication as I can share my passion with someone who does not understand the technical aspects of the complication."

"I also love the fact that only the hands of a watchmaker can set tiny hammers and gangs while no machine will ever be able to replace this human work, making each minute repeater truly unique," he said.

The permanent collection comprises over 200 models in a very wide choice answering different needs and tastes of the clients worldwide. Each year Patek Philippe introduces new models, including new movements and new complications.

"It is key to us to innovate in terms of movements and design, keeping the interest of our established clients and building new clients. We do not create specific designs adapted for specific market tastes. We create according to Patek Philippe's aesthetic DNA and we can say that our clients worldwide share the same taste and interest for our watches; there might be some differences in case sizes or movement type in some markets but on the overall there are very few differences," Stern said.

Limited editions are rare at Patek Philippe and are only created to celebrate important historical events such as its 175th anniversary or this year for the 10th anniversary in China.

Stern stressed again their business strategy as a family-owned watch company is aimed at long term, as its strategy in China for the near future remains the same as for the past 10 years. It will concentrate on growing knowledge and services aimed at their established clients and hopefully for the next 10 years building new potential clients.

"Being family owned and financially independent, we have the freedom to maintain our tradition of innovation and stay true to the founders' vision. It's all about evolution, no revolution," Stern concluded.



Patek Philippe China 10th Anniversary Commemorative Watch



The second floor of Maison Patek Philippe Beijing

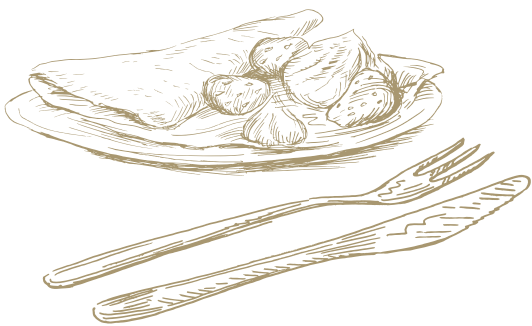
Swiss experts dish on country's food and wine

Ruby Gao

As a country famed for its rolls, cakes and fondues, Swiss cuisine is often generalized as either decadently sweet or overpoweringly heavy. Insiders here in Shanghai though say this doesn't tell the whole story. With its alpine pastures and pristine

mountain lakes, traditional Swiss cooking features high-quality cheeses and freshwater fish. Switzerland's location in the heart of Europe has also had a profound impact on the country's cuisine, which draws heavily from neighbors France, Germany and Italy. The country's colder climate has also had led to the creation of many hearty, flavorful dishes well

suited to its rugged terrain. To get the real scoop about the country and its cooking, we spoke to three Swiss food and beverage experts here in Shanghai. Two of these Swiss natives were kind enough to share their favorite traditional recipes, giving readers a chance to sample the authentic flavors of this alpine country at home.



Simon Ruf

Executive chef at Hyatt on the Bund

Age: 37



Q: Where are you from?

A: Spiez, a small but beautiful town on the shore of Lake Thun.

Q: How many years have you been in Shanghai?

A: Five years.

Q: Is there anywhere in Shanghai that reminds you of your hometown?

A: Shanghai's nice and quiet parks with natural scenery, such as Fuxing Park, always remind me of my beautiful hometown.

Q: What is one dish that represents Switzerland? Are there any misleading stereotypes about the Swiss people?

A: Swiss people are conservative and do things in a safe way. They do not take too many risks. So I think steamed

rice with gold leaf represents us. For everybody, rice is a safe choice. And a touch of gold leaf on top also makes the plain rice a luxury. Switzerland has a stable, prosperous and high-tech economy and enjoys great wealth, being ranked as the wealthiest country in the world. People may think the Swiss are rich or extravagant or wasteful. But this is not true. Swiss people also live and work in earnest.

Q: What makes Swiss cuisine distinctive? What are the latest trends?

A: Swiss cuisine is influenced by many other cuisines — such as French, German and Italian — but is based on local produce. There are a lot of rivers and lakes in Switzerland, so it produces the best freshwater fish. Also, many vegetables are unpolluted and organic. Meats are from free-range

farms. Cheese also plays a key role in daily cooking since we have one of the best dairy industries in the world.

Nowadays, more and more Swiss restaurants embrace a farm-to-table philosophy. Besides sourcing seasonal ingredients, they buy ingredients from local farms instead of importing them. This philosophy embraces a sustainable approach to agriculture and dining, encouraging people to eat locally, freshly and healthy.

Q: What do you think of Swiss dining in Shanghai?

A: Frankly speaking, the Swiss flavor is not perfectly authentic here, although many restaurants try their best. Some restaurants adjust their recipes, putting less salt into dishes. However, the biggest challenge is sourcing ingredients.

Chef's recipe

Waadtländer Flammkuchen

Ingredients:

Pizza dough, enough to roll out a circle roughly 3 millimeters thick; Crème fraiche 180g; salt 1/4 tea spoon; potato 300g (diced thinly); Saucisson sausage 300g (can be replaced with other meats, such as bacon or pork sausage); spring onion 2 sprig (diced, separate the white and green parts); black pepper (taste to season)

Steps:

1. Season the sour cream with salt, spread evenly on top of rolled out pizza dough.
2. Add potatoes and sausage (or other



- meat).
3. Add diced white spring onion.
4. Season with a touch of salt and black peppermill.
5. Bake at 220 degree Celcius for about 15 minutes.
6. Garnish with diced green spring onion. If you wish, you can add additional black pepper.



Beat Loeffel

Executive pastry chef at Pudong Shangri-La, East Shanghai

Age: 55



Q: How long have you been in Shanghai?

A: One month.

Q: Where are you from?

A: Basel, in the northern part of Switzerland.

Q: Where, or what, in Shanghai reminds you of your home?

A: So far nowhere. The two places are so different. Switzerland makes me feel calm ... Outdoor activities dominate daily casual life; for example, boating in summer, skiing in winter, as well as running and cycling. However, one thing in common between the two is public transportation — always on time and efficient.

Q: If you had to pick one food or drink to express authentic Swiss life, what would you choose?

A: Definitely cheese fondue with white wine, and chocolates. White cheese fondue looks like the snow-covered mountains in Switzerland. Rich chocolate warms you up.



Delicacy Tour at Swissôtel Kunshan

Stay at Swissôtel Kunshan and we will take you on a culinary journey. Spoil yourself with our sumptuous buffet dinner at Café Swiss including fresh seafood, Chinese and international dishes. Authentic Yangcheng Lake hairy crab is available at the Chinese Paradise restaurant. While in Kunshan do not miss the opportunity to visit China's No. 1 water town Zhouzhuang and experience the preserved ancient residential houses and the elegant water channel views — it has been called the "Venice of the East".

Rates
RMB899/per room/per night for Classic Room

Offer Includes

- One night accommodation in Classic Room (single/twin)
- 2 daily buffet breakfasts + 1 child breakfast (Height ≤120cm)
- 2 buffet dinner at Cafe Swiss + 1 child dinner (Child's height ≤120 cm)
- Yioulai shopping outlet benefits coupon (value of 50RMB)

Terms and Conditions

- Full guarantee required
- Additional RMB200 charge required for bookings on Fridays or Saturdays between 16 Oct to 13 Dec

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Q: Switzerland is known for its high quality chocolate. What makes Swiss chocolate so distinctive?

A: It was the Swiss that changed the way we enjoy chocolate — from drinking it hot to eating it cold. The Swiss add milk and sugar to cocoa paste and butter, mixing and stirring them for three days to create a melt-in-your-mouth texture.

Swiss chocolate also distinguishes

Chef's recipe

Cocoa powder 20g

Steps:

To make sponge:

- 1. Mix cocoa powder with water, and set aside.
- 2. Melt butter, and set side to cool.
- 3. Beat whole eggs and sugar until whitened.
- 3. Sieve cake flour and mix into egg mixture by hand.
- 4. Add cocoa water and mix by hand.
- 5. Add cooled liquid butter and mix by hand.
- 6. Pour into cake mold and bake at 180 degree Celsius.

To make chocolate cream:

- 1. Boil water, sugar and corn syrup until mixture thickens into a syrup.
- 2. Soak gelatine leaves in cold water for five minutes and add them to the hot syrup.
- 3. Pour hot syrup over chopped dark chocolate and mix by hand until it becomes cream.
- 4. Whip fresh cream and work into chocolate mix by hand.

itself with its unique flavor, thanks to milk from cows living in the Alps.

Q: Besides chocolate, what are the highlights of Swiss pastry and confection?

A: Chocolate is always the highlight. Many classic Swiss cakes and biscuits use chocolate as the main ingredient. Besides, Swiss pastries rely on precisely following the recipe.

To finish cake:

- 1. Make a syrup with sugar, water and Grand Marnier.
- 2. Slice the cold chocolate sponge into three layers.
- 3. Brush the top of each layer with Grand Marnier syrup.
- 4. Place the first layer inside a cake ring.
- 5. Top with 1/3 of the cream.
- 6. Cover with the second layer and top it with another 1/3 of the cream.
- 7. Top with the last layer and cover it with last 1/3 of cream.
- 8. Keep in refrigerator until cream has set.
- 9. Dust with cocoa powder and remove cake ring.



Philippe Huser

Owner of Napa Wine Bar and Kitchen



Q: Where are you from?

A: The French-speaking area of Vaud. Lausoon is its capital city. Its sub-region Lavaux is one of the most famous wine regions in Switzerland, and it is also a UNESCO heritage site.

Q: How many years have you been in Shanghai?

A: 11 years.

Q: Is there anything about Shanghai that reminds you of Switzerland?

A: Autumn in Shanghai ... resembles Switzerland in summer.

Q: What is a food or dish that represents Switzerland?

A: I would choose raclette and perch. Raclette is a semi-firm cow's milk cheese, heated until melting and then served on top of potatoes. Perch is a small fish, like salmon but leaner and fresher. Usually we pan sear it in butter.

Q: Are there any misleading stereotypes about Switzerland worth mentioning?

A: Swiss people are often considered rich due to the high living costs in Switzerland. However, many people, especially some of the elderly who spend most of their money on insurance, are poor. Their life is hard.

Q: What makes Swiss wine distinctive?

A: Firstly it honestly reflects the soil. Secondly, Switzerland embraces three types of sunshine: direct sunlight, sunlight reflected off lakes and onto the vineyards, and sunlight absorbed by the old stone walls which release heat in the evening. Thirdly, we have around 67 different types of grapes. Among these, Cheasselas (a local white grape) plays a key role. The white wine is known for its clean and pure taste.

Q: Why is Swiss wine less popular than other European wines, such as those from France, Italy and Spain?

A: Production is very limited due to limited space, so there is not enough to export. Most Swiss wines are consumed locally.



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