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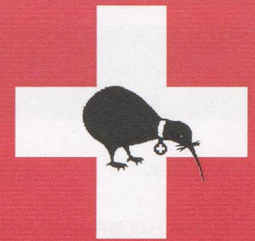
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HELVETIA



MAGAZINE OF THE SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

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YEAR 82

Highlights

- 60th Anniversary Hamilton Club
- Helvetia Team
- Life Story Swiss Chalet
- Times change
- Swiss Pioneer – Haensli

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Prättigauer Alp Spektakel

Graubünden celebrates a wealth of alpine customs. Legends are alive and farmers are particularly proud of their traditions and heritage. When summer ends and cows, sheep and goats return back to the villages from their alpine pasture, farmers throw a thanksgiving festival to honour the hard work of herds-men and women throughout the summer season. Some villages do it rather quietly and without a fuss. Others, like Seewis with its "Prättigauer Alp Spektakel", take it to another level. The village of Seewis is perched on a sunny slope high above the Prättigau valley which boasts more than 80 Alps where cows spend their summer feasting on fresh grass and alpine herbs. 27 of these Alps produce approximately 150 tonnes of flavourful alpine cheese made of raw milk and 15 tonnes of butter.



Source: vista.com

During the festival, elaborately decorated cows and goats with handkerchiefs around their necks, and sheep with a wreath around their bellies, parade through the village, their proud owners at the front. It is a colourful alpine festival with a vibrant market, fun activities and entertainment. Over 100 decorated cows parade against the eye-catching backdrop of the Rätikon mountain range. The weather in the Alps is quite unpredictable and not every alpine descent takes place in sunny weather - but that does not affect the good mood. When the cows come home, spectators await them patiently. The large bells can be heard from afar, way before the cows arrive in the village. The "Prättigauer Alp Spektakel" is no ordinary folk event. It is the only alpine descent in Switzerland that combines new ideas with age-old traditions of the Alpine culture. They added Alpine Olympic Games to their program. Herds-women and

men compete in entertaining disciplines such as milking cows, fence building, bouncing on milking stools, Alpine storytelling, goat herding and more. Everybody can join in and compete in the somewhat eccentric and not too serious disciplines such as throwing rubber boots.

Cheeses, homemade bread, pastries, dried fruits, preserves, air dried meats and home-made liquors can be sampled and purchased at the Market stalls. Want to sample Alpine cheese? It's made of raw milk. The regulations are very strict, but, Alpine cheese can't be exported. We also all love our Schnapps and there's one for every conceivable occasion, enriched with different herbs, fruits, flower petals, nuts, honey and even young fir needles. One can purchase all these specialties year round through the "Scarnuz Grischun" organization - a network of about 40 farmers who produce home-made specialties.

www.swissvistas.com