

TRAVELLING WITH TARGET

PART IV OF V

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TOURING EUROPE

... In Geneva, Switzerland

Day One: The Arrival

TARGET's train arrived in Geneva at about noon on Thursday, December 21, 2017.

Alighting from the packed train, this medium's team looked in vain for the driver of a hire car, a driver who was supposed to have been there to meet the train in order to transport us to Hôtel Les Armures in the Old Town of Geneva.

It was not to be: No driver could be located – because, clearly, he/she/it had not arrived.

The train had arrived on time, but not the driver.

After a hurried (and worried) search of the voluminous train station, which included a large shopping arcade, **TARGET** discovered an Information Kiosk, operated by employees of the City of Geneva.

At this Kiosk, this medium purchased 200 (Swiss) francs – it is highly recommended, **TARGET** learned, not to try to use euros for purchases in Switzerland – and a very helpful and pleasant gentleman, sitting in the information counter, explained the location of Hôtel Les Armures on a map of the city and explained how long it would take a taxi to transport us to the hotel as well as the expected cost that would be demanded.

With that, **TARGET** boarded a taxi, outside the train station, and, about 10 minutes later, we arrived at the charming, boutique Hôtel Les Armures.

The somewhat rotund gentleman at the hotel's small reception counter appeared to be shocked that the hotel's motor car – **TARGET** learned, later, that, in fact, the hotel did not operate any motorised transportation system, but farmed that part of the business out to an independent company – had not transported this medium's trio from the train station to the hotel.

The fat man stated that he had attempted to telephone us – in Milan!

‘That’s the only telephone number I had!’ this gentleman explained with a disheartened sigh.
‘What could I do?’

(Swiss logic?)

When it was explained that there had been nobody to meet the train, causing **TARGET** to resort to the actions that it had taken, the fat man said that that was contrary to that which the driver of the hire car had attested to him in a telephone call, received by the hotel just prior to our arrival.

Not wishing to continue this dialogue, which could, easily, have exploded into a he-said-she-said, **TARGET** collected the key to Suite Number 207 and arrived at the second floor of this unique hotel.

The rooms were lovely and elegantly decorated without any suggestion of ostentation!

Being famished, having not eaten since the previous evening, and since this hotel’s lone restaurant had no available seating for three hungry travellers, **TARGET**’s trio made its way down a small flight of steps from the hotel’s entrance, at the base of which, Restaurant Le Perron was discovered at Number Five, Rue Du Perron.

At the cost of 250 Swiss francs (about \$HK2,500), **TARGET**’s trio consumed a three-course meal, comprising Soup du Jour, Filets de Perches, Entrecote Morilles, Laisse de Poulet, three different deserts and, of course, three glasses of wine.

Human batteries, having been recharged, façon de parler, **TARGET** set out to discover Geneve (the Swiss spelling of Geneva), along the city’s only main road.

The Christmas market was, in this medium’s opinion, an abject failure – as was the shopping area of this beautiful city, surrounded, as it is, by Lac Léman (Lake Geneva), the Alps and the Jura Mountains and, of course, in the far distance, the famous Mont Blanc.

The Christmas Market comprised six white, square tents, arranged in two lines, where attendants were trying to entice onlookers to buy trinkets and small clothing items (hats and gloves, etc) that were as appealing as dried out, slices of week-old bread.

There were, also, two outer areas of this Christmas Market where some enterprising (would-be) entrepreneurs were trying to sell well-worn, nondescript paperback books – without much success, it appeared.

As for the shops on this main street, the only one of any interest to **TARGET** was a shop, displaying giant capons in the window, the capons that had the appearance of medium-sized turkeys, weighing about 10 pounds, each.

Inside this shop, all manner of meats was on sale, from fresh rabbits, to veal, to beefsteaks, to plucked ducks, geese, and fattened squabs.

By this time, being about six o’clock, it was time to make strides to return to Hôtel Les Armures for a shower, a change of clothes and to await **TARGET**’s first sampling of the genuine, national dish of Switzerland: Fondue (the Swiss spelling, being *‘fondu.’*)

At 8:30 pm, punctually, **TARGET** arrived at Restaurant Les Armures, the lone restaurant, operated around the corner of Hôtel Les Armures.

The restaurant was packed to the rafters: Standing room, only.

Due to the fat man at the reception counter, earlier in the day, having reserved **TARGET**'s table, there was no question as to our reservation and so, after a 10-minute wait, we were seated at a comfortable table at the rear of the restaurant.

As for the meal, in a fondue restaurant in the heart of Geneva, one must eat the cuisine of the country, to wit, a boiling pot of a mixture of cheeses, laced with wine and garlic, along with small, young potatoes and thick cubes of dried bread.

One dips either pieces of bread or a small potato into the concoction of boiling cheeses and, within seconds, the soft cheese has enveloped the bread or the potato, allowing one to eat the morsels without burning one's palate.

Delicious!

But, very, very, very fattening!

The cost of the meal that included French Onion Soup (yes, folks, a French recipe!) and Cream of Mushroom Soup, along with a side dish of mixed salad and three glasses of a Swiss wine was 170.60 Swiss francs (about \$HK1,760).

The meal lasted about two hours.

A memorable evening, to be sure.

(To Be Continued)

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