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SWITZERLAND BUSINESS REPORT

HEALTH CARE

EXPERT CARE A MAGNET FOR MEDICAL TOURISTS

Affluent Chinese are helping Switzerland cement its reputation as a leading centre for anti-ageing treatments, writes **Peter Sabine**

Switzerland is known as the land of chocolate, cheese and perfect scenes of peaks that appear to come straight out of a postcard. But a rising phenomenon of interest in health has seen the country's medical tourism industry grow exponentially.

Medical programmes and well-being offerings that once were the preserve of Hollywood actors, pop stars and celebrities are now coming to an open market of tourists.

At the heart of this concept are countries such as India, South Korea and Thailand. But Europe has an advantage with its history as a leader in cutting edge medical technology and providers of expert health care.

The phenomenon means tourists from Russia, the Middle East and China are arriving in increasing frequency. While there is a wide range of services available, a number are focused on preventive medicine and anti-ageing, hot areas in health care.

One such destination is Nescens Clinique de Genolier, a specialised clinic dedicated exclusively to preventive medicine and anti-ageing programmes, and becoming known among a band of elite seeking to be world leaders in these areas.

"The medical care here in Switzerland is one of the best in the world with its high quality, cutting edge infrastructure and a wide range of advanced treatments and procedures," says Dr Jacques Proust, medical director at Nescens Preventive Medicine Center – Genolier, and founder of the Nescens brand.

Located above Lake Geneva and close to Geneva

international airport, Nescens Clinique de Genolier has a range of programmes dedicated to the detection, prevention and alleviation of pathologies that accelerate the ageing process. The brand has more than 5,000 square metres of world-class centres for preventive and regenerative medicine, genetic screening, nutrition and other specialities.

The clinic has 150 doctors and specialists, and is connected to a countrywide network of 1,250 doctors and specialists all over Switzerland. The Nescens brand encompasses 18 clinics in Switzerland, not to mention spas located in Geneva and Interlaken.

But Nescens Clinique de Genolier began with much humbler origins: the concept of blending relaxation, tourism and well being is the brainchild of Proust – pioneer in the biology of ageing and anti-ageing medicine.

Proust shares his more than 25 years of expertise with patients, and has developed highly specialised programmes that are focused on patients' specific needs. Targeted areas can range from lung function, to tumour and oncology check-ups to men's health issues such as erectile dysfunction and urinary disorders.

In preventive medicine, a central goal is to fight arterial hypertension, diabetes, cancer, degenerative diseases and ageing-associated diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

Another major area is aesthetic medicine, examining the alleviation of scars, wrinkles, moles and liver spots, reduction of excess fat, elimination of cellulite, and other features



Nescens Clinique de Genolier near Geneva is a specialised clinic dedicated exclusively to preventive medicine and anti-ageing programmes. It offers first-class hotel services in an exclusive setting.

considered by some to be unattractive.

Versatility is the name of the game; attached to the Nescens Clinique de Genolier is a centre dedicated to physiotherapy and sport coaching, while stem cell research is a focus and dental care is among the list of specialities.

Although some may see Nescens Clinique de Genolier as a centre of medical tourism, what sets it apart are residences that provide five-star hotel services, spas, world-leading gastronomic cuisine and everything one might expect from a regular holiday.

"Medical spas and wellness resorts, which offer a healthy living experience, involving mineral baths, massage and all kinds of relaxation and beauty therapies attract clients from all walks of life," says Proust.

The goal is largely holistic, and aimed at detecting diseases

at an early stage, identifying some of the health risk factors, looking at lifestyle habits, managing age-related changes and diseases, and implementing a personalised preventive health plan. Through this lens, anti-ageing and beauty are the goals, and, of course, robust health.

This 360-degree approach to health is a concept growing in interest internationally. KPMG research from 2018 estimated the global medical tourism industry to reach US\$32.5 billion by this year.

As with many other tourism-driven industries, Chinese people travelling for health reasons are boosting growth of the sector.

The Switzerland Travel Centre recorded an increase in bookings to Switzerland by more than 15 per cent within the first half of 2018. Chinese individual tourism in Switzerland is booming and according to

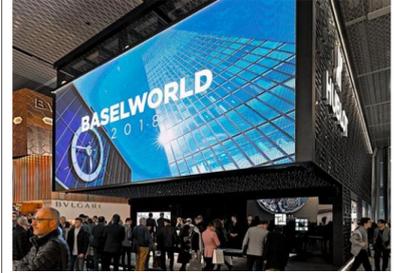
current forecasts, the trend is here to stay.

"Nescens Clinique de Genolier has always been a destination for many affluent Chinese," says Proust, adding that he has seen a notable increase in the number of patients in recent years.

The Nescens founder says some of the most sought after procedures include stem cell-based anti-ageing programmes. "Nescens Clinique de Genolier is the leading provider of stem cell treatments in Switzerland and highly regarded worldwide in the field of anti-ageing and age management."

The clinic is an official partner of Therapeutic, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, responsible for processing and storing stem cells. "Our physicians are highly experienced in the extraction and reinjection of stem cells," says Proust.

BASELWORLD



The Hublot stand at Baselworld. This year's watch show begins on March 21. Photo: EPA

Fair organisers look to spice up luxury experience

Amanda Sheppard

Swissmade watches carry a trademark as well as a reputation – the nation is synonymous with quality and craftsmanship when it comes to timepieces. But the rest of the world is not falling behind. Independent watchmakers and designers are producing timeless designs, testing the boundaries and wowing consumers. Baselworld, the internationally renowned watch and jewellery show, is the spotlight.

Each year, the titans of the watch world converge on the Swiss city. Its 2018 instalment attracted more than 106,000 visitors from over 100 countries, travelling to view timepieces from more than 1,000 exhibitors. This year's show takes place from March 21-26.

With its roots dating back over a century, the fair has retained its initial purpose – to serve as a platform for previews of new timepieces and show-stopping watches. This year has been no different, with many waiting with bated breath for the first look at long-awaited pieces, including Chopard's Happy Sport, a re-imagining of the original design featuring an oval face and original Galet bracelet, and the limited-edition Chronoswiss Flying Grand Regulator Skeleton, with its exposed mechanisms paying homage to the Swiss art of horology.

But in an ever-changing, globalised landscape, the fair's new management are not content with the status quo. This year, they have launched a new initiative – its marketing and communications platform – to help increase the exposure of its partnering brands throughout

the year, rather than limit it to a fixed-term event.

Despite the decision of Swatch group and its brands not to take part this year, Baselworld 2019 still features a strong showing from luxury, world-class brands such as Rolex, TAG Heuer and Patek Philippe.

Big name brands aside, the fair also features a strong showing from independent watchmakers in the Les Ateliers hall, including Urwerk, which returns to the fair after an absence of four years.

Its co-founder, Felix Baumgartner, recognises the importance of the fair, hailing it "the place to be for independent watchmakers".

In a world where consumer culture is rampant and fast-fashion and online shopping are growing, luxury watches are able to retain their appeal.

For Marcus Lehmann, founder of the independent German brand of the same name, a luxury timepiece "is still a highly emotional and tactile product. The touch and feel cannot be experienced [...] online".

Not only is Baselworld 2019 conceptually different to its predecessors; its physical presence marks a departure from recent editions. The number of exhibiting watch brands has fallen from 650 to about 500, with the space now occupied by complementary industries and offerings.

Jewellery and fashion brands are represented throughout the fair. The Show Plaza will host the opening party. The renewed focus on food and beverage transforms what may once have been seen as a purely perfunctory affair into a luxury experience. Baselworld counts more than 30 bars and restaurants among its partners.

SWISS ARCHITECTURE

Storied hotels reflect legacy of magnificent buildings

Anna Cummins

With turreted castles, imposing fortresses and elegant chateaux perched on mountaintops overlooking medieval towns, much of modern-day Switzerland could pass for an age-old fairy tale. The country is famed for the impressive architecture that spans its length and breadth – from the entire old town of the Swiss capital Bern, a Unesco World Heritage Site, to the country's oldest city Chur, where medieval buildings line cobbled streets and a Roman settlement from 15BC still welcomes visitors.

Switzerland's foreign policy, famously rooted in neutrality, has left the country physically unscathed by the ravages of war in recent centuries and this has played a big part in its astonishing architectural preservation. Visitors don't have to search hard to enjoy world-class examples of everything from Romanesque, Gothic and baroque design, through to the angular modernism pioneered by Le Corbusier.

Throughout history, landlocked Switzerland has been heavily influenced by the architecture and design of its European neighbours. The grand Greco-Roman stylings of the neoclassical movement that flourished across the continent

in the early 18th and 19th centuries inspired wealthy Swiss merchants to build lavish colonnaded mansions to showcase their success. Several such magnificent mansions can be visited today, like Manoir de Ban, built near Corsier-sur-Vevay on the shores of Lake Geneva in 1840, which was Charlie Chaplin's home for 25 years.

The resonance of the neoclassical movement in Switzerland can be seen in many of its important buildings, such as the Museum of Fine Arts in Bern; the Federal Supreme Court; the Palace of Nations, now home to the United Nations Office; and several "grand dame" hotels, including the Baur au Lac in Zurich, and the Beau-Rivage Palace in Lausanne, on the shores of Lake Geneva.

A stay at one, or both, of these hotels is undoubtedly among the most enjoyable ways to admire such grand architecture up close, in the way it was intended. Opened in 1844 by Johannes Baur, the legendary Baur au Lac emanates the confidence of an establishment that has been favoured by the elite for 175 years. Situated in a private park in the heart of Zurich, with views over the Alps and Lake Zurich, it started as a large villa but underwent constant expansion until 1898, when it reached its present size.

Previous guests include

Richard Wagner, who premiered the first act of *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie) in the hotel, the Russian Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna, Haile Selassie and Alfred Nobel with his secretary Bertha von Suttner, who convinced Nobel of the need for a peace prize while at the hotel.

The Baur au Lac is now one of the oldest luxury hotels in the world still in the hands of its founding family, the Baur-Krachts. In the early 1990s, the family decided to renovate the hotel – an 18-year project that cost 160 million Swiss francs (HK\$1.3 billion).

In 2008, another 45 million Swiss francs was invested to reconfigure and enlarge a further 22 suites and rooms, the two-Michelin-starred Pavillon restaurant and the chic Rive Gauche summer terrace. Lauded interior designer Frédéric d'Hautfayt worked on the 119 rooms and suites individually, in a range of styles from art deco to English Regency, Empire and Louis XVI, in a nod to Switzerland's history of European cultural influence.

The project was finally completed in time for the hotel's 165th anniversary in 2009, further cementing the Baur au Lac's reputation as Zurich's most distinguished lodging. Even if a stay isn't on the cards, visitors passing through Zurich should take the chance to soak up the



The Beau Rivage Palace overlooking Lake Geneva in Lausanne was opened in 1861.

atmosphere in Le Hall (the lobby lounge), which was revamped in 2014 by French architect and designer Pierre-Yves Rochon. Rochon recaptured the lobby's grand scale and popularity as a meeting point by restoring the glass-dome roof, adding elegant seating areas, sourcing historical paintings, and adding an art deco fireplace.

Among the Baur au Lac's contemporaries is the Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel, which opened in Lausanne in 1861, majestically sited on the banks of Lake Geneva and surrounded by four hectares of private gardens. One of the first luxury hotels in Lausanne, and still the best-known, this family-owned establishment has been home-from-home for royalty, world leaders and celebrities for almost 160 years. The Beau-Rivage Palace remains infamously tight-lipped about its clientele, although figures such as Coco

Chanel, Nelson Mandela, Mary Pickford and Noel Coward are known to have stayed here.

The hotel is now comprised of two connected buildings – the older, neoclassical Rivage Wing and the Palace Wing, built in 1908 in the more ornate belle-époque style. These two wings still boast many of their original features, including impressive columns, magnificent chandeliers and marble floors.

Between 2012 and 2014, fresh from his work refurbishing Baur au Lac, Pierre-Yves Rochon oversaw a renovation of 39 rooms and suites in the Palace Wing, and the opening of 60 additional new rooms.

His clever use of mirrors to reflect the light from Lake Geneva, coupled with a pastel colour scheme inspired by the lake, imparts calmness and serenity, while emphasising the vistas around which the hotel was constructed. (Many of the

stunning bathrooms also offer unobstructed lake views.)

The most impressive room in the hotel is undoubtedly the Sandoz Ballroom, which dates from 1908 and is a showstopping feat of design. Cascading chandeliers frame a stained glass cupola, and the room is decorated with detailed frescoes, stucco and mouldings.

This palatial ballroom, large enough to accommodate 600 people, was host to the Treaty of Lausanne peace negotiations after the first world war, and – an event of equal magnitude in a different measure – the wedding of English rock star Phil Collins in 1999.

In the early 1990s, the hotel and ballroom underwent a renovation project that included restoration of the murals, cupola, paintings and ceiling in the Sandoz Ballroom.

Such is the importance of the building to Swiss heritage, that



Le Hall of the Baur au Lac hotel in Zurich.

teams of specialised craftspeople and architectural historians were summoned to ensure that the work was done to the highest conservation standards and to preserve its grandeur for generations of guests to come.

Short of hosting an event in the ballroom, visitors can valiantly uphold the hotel's rich tradition of genteel decadence with a glass of fine wine or a French-style afternoon tea taken on La Terrasse, a panoramic terrace overlooking the lake.

The beautiful, historical buildings that are found throughout Switzerland collectively tell a detailed and important story about its past. But its grand dames, preserved and lovingly refurbished over the years, arguably go a step further – these are living embodiments of the evolution of legendary Swiss hospitality. And that is all the more reason to lay back and relax while you take it all in.

■ SWITZERLAND BUSINESS REPORT ■

FISCHER CONNECTORS REIMAGINES CONNECTIVITY, TURNING IDEAS INTO SOLUTIONS THAT SHAPE THE FUTURE

Reports by **Cassandra Carothers, Mathilde Morée and Nour Gouider**

Industry 4.0, the internet of things, artificial intelligence, lightning-speed data transfer and wearable electronics are clearly the future of technology—and all rely on connectivity.

"A multimillion-dollar machine can only be as good as its weakest connector," says Jonathan Brossard, CEO of industry pioneer Fischer Connectors. "Customers all over the world—particularly in Asia—are demanding not only higher quality and reliability, but tailor-made solutions that shape our future."

The company has been reimagining connectivity since 1954, when founder Walter Werner Fischer invented the world's first hermetic connector that paved the way for sealed connectors.

Today, Fischer Connectors has evolved into a global leader in high-performance, rugged and innovative connectivity solutions that withstand extreme environments.

Among its latest breakthroughs is the Fischer Freedom Series. Thanks to three patent-pending innovations in mating, locking and materials, this plug-and-use product line enables design engineers to develop portable and body-worn applications—from cameras and radios to global positioning systems, tablets, environmental sensors, night-vision goggles and exoskeletons. This innovation optimises integration, usability and cable management for vital industries requiring impeccable precision, such as defence, medical, transport and energy.

A finalist of EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2018 (Switzerland), Brossard aims to bring these solutions to broader markets

in Asia through local offices and distributors. In the past two years, Fischer Connectors opened up new markets in Japan, South America and the Middle East, achieving a highly globalised turnover reaching 95 per cent of total revenues.

These complement its presence through eight subsidiaries and more than 40 distributors and agents in five continents. Manufacturing, research and development are done at its headquarters in Saint-Prex, Switzerland, while cable assemblies are made in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and Asia-Pacific.

"We envision constantly adding value to our clients and the industry through complete, customised solutions," Brossard says. "Our next pursuit will be even more advanced applications including miniaturisation, machine



Jonathan Brossard, CEO

learning and power generation—hopefully with partners who share our spirit of innovation and care for customers."

REINVENTING ACTIVE LAYERS TO PUSH SPORTS PERFORMANCE TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS

Encouraging athletes and sports enthusiasts to be the very best versions of themselves is what fuels Norway-born and Switzerland-engineered ODLO. As engineers of active layers, ODLO dedicates itself to innovating fabrics and raising their functionalities to allow wearers to excel in their chosen activity or sport, in any weather condition.

ODLO specialises in close-to-skin base layers made with moisture-wicking fabrics. Beyond keeping wearers dry and warm, ODLO constantly reinvents athletic base layers and leads through collaboration, innovation and design—as manifested by its latest breakthroughs.

One ODLO product making waves in the sporting world is the Aeroskin Race Suit. An ISPO Gold Award winner in the snow sports segment last year, the Aeroskin Race Suit is a dual-layer aerodynamic race suit with cut-out panels to boost speed. Another exciting product is the Active Spine, a posture-correction

base layer that offers support and freedom of movement for enhanced performance.

Going into uncharted territories, ODLO collaborated with Twinery, the innovation arm of MAS Holdings, and intelligent thermal technology specialist Clim8 to develop I-Thermic. The active heating technology middle layer, which allows wearers to fully control their

personal microclimates, won the Innovation Award for wearable technologies at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

Partnering with another industry innovator, ODLO worked with Zaha Hadid Design to create Futureskin, a seamless base layer that adapts to human anatomy and physiology. Based on organic body-mapping, it uses varied knit construction to provide the best insulation and ventilation to different areas of the body.

ODLO products are widely available through retail channels across Europe and North America. Through distribution partners such as TripleFit from Singapore, ODLO is also represented in Asian markets. To strengthen its Asian presence, ODLO is open to working with companies that can help it create a multichannel sales network in the region.

"Looking to the future, we want to be a premium sports brand relevant worldwide," says CEO Knut Are Högberg.



Knut Are Högberg, CEO

CENTURY-OLD SWISSTULLE NETS SUSTAINED GROWTH WITH GREATER FOCUS ON TECHNICAL TEXTILES

From a warp knit manufacturer founded in 1912 to initially serve the fashion industry, swisstulle has grown to specialise in warp knitted fabrics, bobbinet tulle and technical textiles that have found applications in a variety of niche industries. Valued for their incomparable dimensional stability, impressive strength-to-weight ratio and excellent flexibility, swisstulle's specialised fabric solutions are used in high-quality wig making, medical and theatrical prostheses, home furnishings and as shading material for the automotive and rail industries.

"We're more than 100 years old, but we've learned how to stay current and adapt to market trends," says CEO Achim Brugger. "The key is working closely with our clients to create solutions that are one step ahead of the competition. That is how we innovate. We're also collaborating with a Zurich-based textile school to advance our development efforts and welcome

opportunities to work with similar institutions abroad."

Leveraging the century-old expertise of its Somerset bobbinet tulle operation in Great Britain, swisstulle has ventured into new growth markets with specialised offerings for the military and construction sectors, including electromagnetic

shielding textiles and high-heat basalt knitted fabrics. For the fashion industry, swisstulle recently unveiled the world's thinnest tulle that can be embroidered.

Vertically integrated, swisstulle is involved in every step of the production process, from yarn preparation to knitting and dyeing through specialised finishing, ensuring that high-quality standards are met every time.

Seeing growth opportunities in Asia, swisstulle opened a factory in Qingdao in 2004. Apart from serving the fashion industry, the Qingdao site caters to the region's automotive sector, and is now looking at adding dyeing capabilities to diversify its product range.

"Our goal is to grow by 6 to 7 per cent year on year, and we see Asia playing a role here," Brugger says. "We'll continue developing hi-tech fabric solutions to tap into emerging demands and further grow in the automotive sector through additional partnerships."



Achim Brugger, CEO

HTW CHUR PROVIDES INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED SWISS EDUCATION



Professor Jürg Kessler, president

The HTW Chur is a university of applied sciences with about 1,700 students, providing the training needed for graduates to become skilled professionals and managers. Switzerland is part of the European education system, making its bachelor's and master's degrees internationally recognised.

Apart from getting Switzerland's high educational standards at comparatively low tuition fees, students experience studying and living in a Swiss tourism destination. Chur, the oldest city in Switzerland, is surrounded by the spectacular Swiss Alps, and boasts its own ski resort. The surrounding Alpine landscape consists of 1,000 peaks, 150 valleys and 615 lakes. Wild nature and

small mountain villages as well as sophisticated holiday destinations such as St. Moritz and Davos Klosters are located in the midst of the Swiss Alpine world with regular train and bus connections to Zurich, Milan, Munich and Paris.

HTW Chur is keen to promote an international approach, and considers its duty to do so. Since 2013, the HTW Chur has been cooperating with Shanghai University of Engineering Science, offering a joint bachelor's degree programme in tourism.

Among HTW Chur's most notable programmes is the master of science in business administration with major in tourism, which is taught entirely in English. The programme enables students

to gain an international outlook on tourism development and management. International case studies, an international student body, excursions to international destinations and the experience of expert lecturers make for an interesting and interactive learning environment.

The master's degree programme prepares graduates for the tourism labour market, either as responsible employees at middle management level in larger tourism businesses or as consultants. As graduates, they will also have the necessary strategic knowledge in tourism to assess the potential of tourism, such as in destination management or regional development, and to be able to harness its impacts.

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RIWAX-CHEMIE FOCUSES ON BRINGING TOP CARE TO ASIA'S PRIZED VEHICLE POSSESSIONS

The demand for vehicle care products has been growing in Asia, propelled by an increasingly urbanised population and rising disposable incomes, which are boosting the sales of passenger cars and commercial vehicles. This is a bright spot for RIWAX-Chemie, the leading Swiss manufacturer of vehicle care specialties that set a foothold in China some 10 years ago, and now aims to develop its presence in the Asian market.

"We see big opportunities in Asia," says Lorenz Harzenmoser, owner of RIWAX-Chemie. "That's why we're reaching out to possible distribution partners to ease the conduct of business in the region, particularly in China. We seek major sales agents who have established industry connections and share our fundamental values of delivering outstanding quality and excellent after-sales services."

Committed to constant innovation since its founding in 1967, RIWAX-Chemie has built a comprehensive range of



Lorenz Harzenmoser, owner

cleaning and care products for cars, motorcycles, bicycles, boats, trains and aircraft, for professional and private use. At its modern laboratories in its Zollikofen headquarters near Bern, RIWAX-Chemie continuously optimises its existing portfolio of liquid cleaners and

professional-grade polishing products, while formulating new, innovative offerings in cooperation with raw material suppliers and chemists.

"These efforts are geared towards ensuring that we meet changing market demands and come up with more eco-friendly products," Harzenmoser says.

A testament to the company's commitment to delivering products of finest quality is its recognition as one of Switzerland's Best Brands of 2018 for automotive products. RIWAX-Chemie also serves as the exclusive partner to major automakers, including Mercedes-Benz, Fiat and the Volkswagen Group mainly because of its knowledgeable customer support services that set it apart from its competitors.

"In strengthening our presence in Asia, we are ready to work closely with our distribution partners and provide training to make sure that they deliver the same level of service that we do here in Switzerland," Harzenmoser says.

STRATPHARMA FOSTERS FASTER WOUND HEALING AND SCAR PREVENTION WITH NOVEL MEDICAL PRODUCTS

Cancer and surgery patients can now heal faster and with minimal scars, thanks to innovative medical device and pharmaceutical developer Stratpharma. The company's portfolio of film-forming wound dressing products promote proper wound care by delivering targeted solutions for radiation dermatitis, scar, wound and stretchmark treatments.

"Our products are different," says Darren Kerr, CEO of Stratpharma. "They are gas-permeable and bacteriostatic so they are anti-infective, but inert, safe and completely bio-compatible. We have real data that show post-surgery treatment works better with our products."

Founded in 2005, the Swiss developer of speciality dermatology products acts as a magnet for breakthrough ideas as it incorporates external know-how into its own research and development processes. Through collaborative innovation and synergistic cooperation with local companies, universities and

research institutes, it delivers novel products to the market more quickly and simultaneously.

Stratpharma eyes to further serve the wound care needs in the oncology and gynaecology fields with the launch of StrataCTX this year, including eight other products in the next two years. Developed to address the various skin rashes experienced by chemotherapy patients, StrataCTX treats and prevents skin reactions resulting in faster healing and treatment completion.

"Our product development will take a leap forward soon as we use our film-forming wound dressing and therapy gels to deliver active pharmaceutical ingredients to targeted indications," Kerr says. "The gel is now a drug delivery system."

With a robust and cost-efficient global supply chain, Stratpharma seeks more partnerships in China, Japan and India with distributors that have solid networks



Darren Kerr, CEO

and that are knowledgeable in medical practice regulations. It also taps on the region's investment community to champion more novel products and technologies that aid patients worldwide.

"We care about proper research and proven products to support full-contact wound dressing," Kerr says. "We want to deliver best-value products that help patients heal faster and nicer."

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■ SWITZERLAND BUSINESS REPORT ■

Sponsored section in cooperation with Discovery Reports

SUPPORTING ASIA'S AGRICULTURE WITH PREMIUM FERTILISER SOLUTIONS

The last decade has seen Zug-based EuroChem become one of the largest global fertiliser companies – a growth driven by acquisitions and organic initiatives, supported by a strong resource base and an expanding global presence.

The additional market knowledge and cross-cultural talent that it gained from these acquisitions have proved invaluable assets. EuroChem has grown with its customers' needs in mind, developing higher-value, premium fertiliser products and offering tailored solutions for specific soils and applications to promote agricultural productivity and optimal yield.

While the group was founded in 2001, its current portfolio comprises world-renowned brands known for their quality and productivity. In Asia, the Horse and Lion brand (Shi Ma Pai) is such an example, an established brand developed and used for decades by BASF, K+S, and later, EuroChem. In the fertiliser world, the Horse and Lion brand is an icon for retail branding of high-quality nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK) fertilisers.

Originally used as a corporate logo for BASF, it depicts the Stuttgart horse and a standing Bavarian lion holding a shield with an anchor – the coat of arms of Ludwigshafen, the birthplace of industrial-scale ammonia production. The Horse and Lion seal was later transferred to Nitrophoska fertiliser products, and has grown to stand for integrity and quality, serving as a seal of trust across markets. Starting this year, EuroChem assumes ownership of this iconic brand within the fertiliser world.

"As a synonym for quality, reliability and commitment to partners and markets, the Horse and Lion brand enjoys a high awareness level with local farmers. We are honoured to carry this legacy forward," says Ding Zhenjun, managing director, EuroChem Agro China.

Mathias Schroeder, managing director, EuroChem Agro Asia, says:



Mathias Schroeder, managing director, EuroChem Agro Asia

Reliability and trust are key success factors in our Asian business. Our expertise and brands are the backbone of our partnerships.

Mathias Schroeder, managing director, EuroChem Agro Asia

"Reliability and trust are key success factors in our Asian business. Our expertise and brands are the backbone of our partnerships. Our partners trust us to provide quality products, services and agronomic research. It fills us with pride to see that farmers and retailers across the region know the Horse and Lion brand and recognise its distinct quality and characteristics. In Malaysia, the Horse and Lion brand, product line and partner are the same as 60 years ago, despite the many changes in the fertiliser market, corporate structures and environment."

The group's offering, which is skewed towards premium fertilisers, is complemented by a wide range of industrial products, including mining products such as iron ore. EuroChem's regional presence has been further expanded with the start of its potash mining operations last year.

EuroChem takes pride in setting its ambitious goal of becoming a benchmark for successful business cooperation across the region. In addition to having numerous local partners across Asia, EuroChem has forged long-standing relationships with major regional actors such as Sinochem, Behn Meyer AgriCare and Agromate.

"Agronomical support – and a

focus on customer service with deliveries into multiple ports – have been key factors in our success in Asia. As seasonal weather patterns in Asia and Southeast Asia become increasingly unpredictable, EuroChem's suite of products and solutions offer farmers further peace of mind by providing additional flexibility," Schroeder says.

EuroChem's portfolio also includes Nitrophoska NPKs, which perform exceptionally well in Asia, where soils tend to be very acidic. Its sulphate of potash-based Nitrophoska offers reliable performance for chloride-sensitive crops, while its ENTEC line, which limits leaching and denitrification, is suited to the region's tropical climate.

The last few decades have seen agricultural development in Asia catch up to and even leapfrog ahead of some of the world's most advanced markets, but never has the pressure been so high to produce more crops more efficiently from less land – and with a reduced environmental footprint.

EuroChem is adamant that growing sufficient food on limited resources can only be done through the intelligent use of fertilisers, and intends to be the partner of choice in Asia for advanced fertiliser solutions.

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AVALOR INVESTMENT HELPS FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS CARE FOR THEIR WEALTH THROUGH EDUCATION, CASE STUDIES

Avalor Investment is one of the leading independent wealth managers in Switzerland. It offers a comprehensive range of services to families and individuals in the areas of investment management, consolidation, reporting and counselling. Since its founding in 2005, clients have entrusted Avalor with the care of 2 billion Swiss francs (HK\$15.55 billion) in assets.

"We achieved this growth based on our solid reputation as a trusted independent partner and adviser to our private clients," says Amaury Jordan, founding partner of the firm. "This reputation was built on the back of hard work and is underpinned by the fact that our firm is a partnership, entirely employee-owned," says Avalor partner Patrick von Koss.

With no corporate shareholders and only its clients to answer to, Avalor developed its business without conflicts of interest and with only best-in-class products – a model that stresses

simplicity and transparency. Moreover, it's a model that offers a rare feature in today's constantly changing and transaction-oriented private banking world: continuity for the client.

"Every client is looked after by a partner of the firm; this is a responsibility which we do not delegate," von Koss says.

Sufficiently small to ensure a highly personalised level of service yet large enough to provide access to top-notch resources, Avalor sits at the centre of an international network of 30 banking custodians and numerous accountings, tax and fiduciary firms.

"The term 'multifamily office' has become overused and increasingly meaningless," Jordan says. "But the truth is we offer more than simply the management of portfolios."

Rather than offering traditional "concierge services", Avalor has focused on the future by branching out into education. It launched a project

with a local high school in Zurich, where Avalor partners teach the principles of investing to 17- and 18-year-olds. At the end of the school year, students have the opportunity to present an investment idea to Avalor's portfolio management group, and the best student presentation gets a summer internship.

"What better way to tap into what young people may be thinking about private banking," says Reto Fehr, partner at Avalor. "After all, these are the industry's future clients."

Avalor's quiet involvement in Asia has developed steadily over many years, with some elements predating the firm. For instance, von Koss spent six years leading Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation's (HSBC) private client boutique company Trinkaus & Burkhart before the firm was fully integrated into HSBC. Jordan has been a regular visitor to the region for 25 years and was instrumental in encouraging partners at Avalor to set up a local presence. The opportunity came in 2011, when Avalor partners joined two other large Swiss independent wealth managers to launch the firm TriLake Partners in Singapore.

One of Avalor's strengths lies in its ability to provide detailed analyses of portfolios spread over different managers and custodians. Done to raise client awareness, these exercises are often run as case studies that are tied back to financial markets in clear, easily understandable language.

"Clients find this approach quite refreshing," Jordan says. "It's one they're not used to."

Avalor believes today's consumer deserves and wants better service. The firm's ideal client is one who wants to understand because understanding leads to trust, and trust leads to long-lasting relationships.

"At the end of the day, it's really very simple: we are purveyors of a very high-end product which places a premium on education," Jordan says. "Our firm's motto is 'Avalor: where the intelligent investor feels at home'."

Having quietly built a solid base, Avalor and TriLake are now primed to selectively expand the business in their region and hope to put combined ambitions to work in this Year of the Pig.



(From left) Amaury Jordan, founding partner and Patrick von Koss, partner

INVESTMENT AG
AVALOR

TriLake Partners
Wealth managers

Leading Independent Wealth Manager Seeks Experienced Private Bankers in both Switzerland and Singapore

Avalor Investment AG in Zurich and TriLake Partners Pte. Ltd. in Singapore want to selectively grow their teams of experienced private bankers.

Candidates should have an entrepreneurial mindset, an extensive network and a proven track record of successfully developing and nurturing long-term relationships with families and individuals who would benefit from our conflict-free, client-focused approach to wealth management.

At our firms, we believe that each family has a unique set of needs and circumstances. We believe that addressing these needs requires skills and knowledge which go beyond simply managing portfolios. We believe in aligning our long-term interests with those of the families we serve. We believe that the most valuable role we can pay is that of an independent trusted advisor, helping families and individuals to protect, preserve and grow their wealth.

Candidates should share these beliefs.

Avalor Investment AG is one of the leading independent wealth managers in Switzerland. Avalor's partners, together with those of two other large independent Swiss wealth managers, founded TriLake Partners Pte. Ltd., a bespoke practice in Singapore reflecting their values.

To find out more, please visit either www.avalor.ch or www.trilake-partners.com. For a personal discussion, call Beat Schädler in Zurich at +41 43 443 8383 or Lucie Hulme in Singapore at +65 65 130 121.

Founded in 2011 and regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore, TriLake Partners Pte. Ltd. holds a Capital Markets Services Licence for fund management under the Securities and Futures Act (Cap 289).

SWITZERLAND BUSINESS REPORT

SWISS CABLE METROLOGY EXPERT AESA EYES EXPANSION INTO CHINA AND ASIA-PACIFIC

As a Swiss leader in state-of-the-art measuring systems for energy and communication cables, AESA Cortailod has helped global cable manufacturers improve productivity and profitability over the past 40 years.

With the world's wire and cable market forecast to reach US\$235.9 billion by 2026 led by Asia-Pacific, AESA is a few strategic steps away from securing market leadership in the region. AESA products are sold in China, India, Japan, and all of Southeast Asia.

Seeking to boost its growth in China, where

it has been active for many years, AESA will be opening a new facility in Shanghai this year with local resources – offering direct support to Chinese and Asian clients.

Research collaborations with universities, business partnerships and regional joint development projects are part of AESA's market expansion strategy into China and Asia-Pacific.

"China comprises nearly half of the potential cable production market globally, so we aim to increase our presence, network of partners and relationships with academia there," says Dr Vincent

Dr Vincent Arbet-Engels, CEO and managing director

Arbet-Engels, CEO and managing director. "Over the next two years, we want to strengthen our image as a brand of premium Swiss quality while growing rapidly."

AESA's clients include world-leading cable producers Prysmian, Nexans, Sumitomo Electric, General Cable, Southwire, Huawei, ZTT, Baosheng and others.

The company's high-calibre, cost-effective and time-saving solutions include measuring equipment for the electrical characterisation of power and communication cables along with quality data management systems for the whole manufacturing plant.

AESA's expertise extends to

pioneering inventions such as the first balunless automatic measuring equipment for patch cords, connectors and LAN cables and the only instrument capable of performing linear resistance measurement directly on a production line.

The company also offers complete system solutions covering the hardware, software and ISO certification services required for accurately capturing, collecting and processing test data; these solutions are future-proofed for the transition of cable manufacturing companies to Industry 4.0.

"We think in terms of innovation and how we can explore different product applications or enter other markets," Arbet-Engels says.

1875 FINANCE RISES AS TOP CHOICE AMONG INDEPENDENT ASSET MANAGEMENT FIRMS AND MULTI-FAMILY OFFICES

Maximising asset growth requires knowing which investments to acquire, sell and keep. Selecting the optimal company to aid in handling these financial matters is key to building the most wealth.

Offering one-stop, fully integrated solutions entailing asset and real estate management along with tax, financial and legal advisory services, 1875 Finance dominates among Switzerland's leading independent asset management firms.

Catering to several influential private and professional clients and multi-family offices, 1875 Finance has expanded considerably since its establishment in 2006, doubling its starting assets to 10 billion Swiss francs (HK\$78.23 billion). The company works with more than 35 banks, holding five offices worldwide: one in Geneva and Zurich – regulated by the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority – in addition to offices in Luxembourg, Singapore and Hong Kong.

and small independent asset management firms, plus its client-focused approach and well-organised take on investments are the firm's keys to success.

In line with its unwavering commitment to satisfying each client's needs, 1875 Finance adheres to its investment philosophy of providing transparent, stable and high-quality medium and long-term investments.

Devoted to protecting its customers' assets from market risks and fluctuations, the company fulfils the roles of highly efficient chief financial officers through its meticulous assembly of international clients.

"We have lawyers, private equity experts, asset managers and allocators, real estate teams, fund managers and compliance officers," says Olivier Bizon, chairman and co-founder of 1875 Finance. "We have a lot of expertise in our team."

Set to attain a target of 15 billion Swiss francs in assets in the coming years, 1875 Finance is keen on growing in Asia through 1875 Finance Hong Kong, and in Dubai, the United States and Europe.

It welcomes joint-venture opportunities with well-established asset management firms in mainland China, and is dedicated to giving its clients a wide array of premium market opportunities.

Olivier Bizon, chairman and co-founder

1875 Finance's distinctive company size, placing between large banks

PLUMETTAZ DELIVERS SWISS ENGINEERING MARVEL WITH WATUCAB

The construction of the Nissum Breeding offshore wind farm in Denmark required a special equipment that can lay power cables seamlessly from onshore to offshore. Cable-laying specialist Plumettaz rose to the challenge and proposed its Watucab. Featuring a patented floating technology combined with the force of a compact cable feeder, the machine can effortlessly drive 160mm-thick power cables along tortuous land and seabed routes.

"It is a very powerful method," says Dr Philippe Prat, CEO. "We can install one kilometre of cable in less than 90 minutes

while involving less people and resources."

Drawing on 95 years of engineering expertise, Plumettaz has created among the finest machines that also include industrial winches and oil pumps for high-speed trains. The company's biggest contribution, however, is its adoption in 1987 of a jetting technique that uses air or water propulsion to push cables into pipes.

The latest version of this innovation is the IntelliJet. The size of a small suitcase, the device uses sensors and a built-in software to monitor, supervise and execute telecommunication-cable installation at

the touch of a button. "We do believe that the premium brand that we have established will also need to follow the market's evolution into digitalisation," Prat says. "We are digitising our mechanical techniques as we bring mechanical solutions to the digital world."

Plumettaz technologies are fast catching on in Asia, especially in Japan, where the government is reconstructing its energy infrastructure after the Fukushima incident and the onslaught of natural disasters. The company is eager to further educate markets such as China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Myanmar



Dr Philippe Prat, CEO

on the inherent advantages of underground cables.

"Our business is ready to meet every single order from Asia," Prat says. "We have all the experience, knowledge and innovative spirit to propose simple and efficient solutions."

RIDING THE WAY TO VICTORY WITH ASSOS OF SWITZERLAND

Cycling as a competitive sport requires tremendous mental and physical readiness for athletes as they prepare for the challenges of the open road. Their choice of gear also makes a critical impact on overall performance; this is why ASSOS of Switzerland creates the ultimate biking apparel to empower athletes and enthusiasts to go the distance.

"Our philosophy is 'Sponsor Yourself' – this means to do something good for yourself by choosing ASSOS," says chairman and CEO Philip Duff.

Made by cyclists for cyclists, ASSOS was founded by professional athlete Tony Maier. In 1976, he developed the first carbon bicycle frame, which was far ahead

of its time. From there, Maier explored other avenues to continuously improve the bike-riding experience. This led him to develop the earliest Lycra cycling shorts and later shirts, jerseys, jackets and more.

ASSOS was also among the pioneers to invent the first synthetic, flexible and stretchable cycling shorts insert pad, the industry benchmark to this day. The company nurtures a strong innovation culture that gave way to more than 150 patents by investing 10 per cent of revenues in research and development.

Athletic teams such as Team Dimension Data, Swiss Cycling and USA Cycling chose ASSOS gear for unparalleled comfort and unbeatable performance. More than 350 Olympic and



(From left) Roche Maier, chief créateur and Philip Duff, chairman and CEO

world championship medals have been won wearing ASSOS.

Partnering with some of the best riders worldwide gives ASSOS an opportunity to create, experiment, develop new advancements and test products. Among these new products are off-road and mountain-biking apparel.

Along with pursuing product expansion, ASSOS targets a broader geographical

scope by expanding its distribution channels such as online and bike shops.

Though its main markets include Europe and the United States, ASSOS seeks to bring its products to Asia, particularly China, and eventually build an ASSOS office with a local sales force.

"We seek retail partners equally passionate about cycling and serving the rider," Duff says.

AUTHENTIC SWISS EXPERIENCE AWAIT AT HOTEL VILLA HONEGG

Imagine waking up to the tinkling sound of the famous cow bells, the cool caress of fresh, crisp alpine air and the breathtaking vista of the rolling mountains and Lake Lucerne as seen from the majestic Bùrgenstock – this is just the beginning of a signature Hotel Villa Honegg experience. Setting foot inside the historical 113-year-old refurbished villa is the start of a journey to unparalleled hospitality and luxury.

From the rooms, facilities, service and food, Hotel Villa Honegg has curated everything down to the last detail to offer each guest a distinctly Swiss experience that leaves a lasting impression.

"We are not the typical 5-star hotel. We personalise our services to make our clients feel at home. It is important for us to get to know them because here in Hotel Villa Honegg, we are a family," says general manager Sebastian Klink.

Showcasing its aesthetic flair, the hotel designed 23 rooms and suites to create a welcoming and relaxing ambience for guests. It sources its food from local farmers and butchers to offer an authentic taste of Swiss cuisine. Hotel Villa Honegg

also maintains its own vegetable, fruit and herb garden to deliver farm-to-table freshness. Newly harvested honey and herb salt are also some of the special gastronomic touches the hotel provides to pamper its guests.

The hotel likewise established partnerships to shine the spotlight on Swiss specialties. It partnered with luxury watchmaker Hublot, making the brand's watches available on the hotel premises. Hotel Villa Honegg is also one of

LucerneHealth's partners in its tailor-made medical programmes.

Hotel Villa Honegg is a popular destination for Swiss and other European tourists, but it is increasingly becoming the go-to vacation spot for Asians, particularly South Koreans. Working with the Switzerland Tourism office and key bloggers from Asia, the hotel welcomes Chinese, Japanese, Singaporean and other tourists from the region to its doors.



Stunning 360-degree vista at Hotel Villa Honegg

PERLEN PACKAGING DRIVES GROWTH IN ASIA WITH BREAKTHROUGH CONCEPTS FOR PHARMA INDUSTRY

It is an exciting time for pharmaceutical companies in growth markets especially in Asia. Perlen Packaging, a world leader offering a full range of high-barrier pharmaceutical packaging solutions, is driving its expansion in Asia with the latest packaging concepts the world has never seen before.

"We now have better access to the Asian market, and our business there is developing nicely as anticipated," says CEO Wolfgang Grimm. "We are pursuing our global strategy of not accomplishing everything from Europe or the United States as we follow our international clients and participate in the growth of emerging markets."

With support from its new fully fledged manufacturing facility in Suzhou and a similar upcoming site in Brazil, Perlen Packaging aims to breach the 200 million Swiss francs (HK\$1.55 billion) net sales mark in the next few years. In Asia, the company welcomes collaboration with

universities, machine builders and local companies in expanding the share of the region to 30 per cent of global sales.

"We are now in a position to offer exceptional products and concepts that are totally new to the market," Grimm says.

Tailoring to client specifications,



Wolfgang Grimm, CEO

Perlen Packaging can develop and supply ultra-high-barrier films that provide medications unmatched protection against oxidation and vapour. This innovation is best suited for powdered dosages, which are more sensitive than solid preparations.

The company is also the first in the world to offer a single-use inhaler wherein the packaging also functions as the dispensing device. Offering unmatched hygiene, manufacturing simplicity and logistics cost savings, BLISTAir is ready for the approval process by the China Food and Drug Administration and is set to be launched within the coming years.

"We can support the Chinese pharmaceutical industry by providing constant quality," Grimm says.

"Aiming to be a global leader with more than half a century of pharmaceutical packaging experience, we can provide the industry with new opportunities and solutions."

FITECH INTRODUCES NEW VERTICAL MIXER FOR EFFICIENT PRODUCTION OF ADHESIVES AND SEALANTS

Just like with cheese, chocolates and watches, for which customers tend to seek the label "Made in Switzerland," Swiss engineering has certainly earned undeniable respect because of the guaranteed quality and excellent reliability



Raphael Feusi, CEO

that comes with its reputation. Industry leader fitech has thrived with this passion for intelligent engineering for 37 years.

"We do not have a slogan; we just have our own meaning of quality, and that is when our customers keep on coming back to us," says fitech CEO Raphael Feusi.

With headquarters in Switzerland and a representative office in China, fitech specialises in the construction and manufacture of machinery and plants for the production of low- to high-viscous goods such as adhesives and sealants.

Starting with the manufacture of mixing systems for polyurethanes and processing of chrome and mild steel, fitech has grown with a team of design experts, and added dryers for the raw materials and filling systems for drums and pails.

To serve the growing demands of its clients, fitech introduced its latest innovation – the Vertical Vacuum Mixer Phoenix VMP – featuring a flexible vessel-

change system designed for efficient mixing-in of raw materials and liquids into sealants, adhesives and other products.

"The market took notice of us, especially as the supplier of single components such as dryers, mixers and filling stations," Feusi says. "Our main goal for the future is to present ourselves as a supplier of customised complete production plants and turnkey systems."

The company now serves leading players in Switzerland, Germany, Japan, the United States, China and other big producers of adhesives and sealants in Europe and across the globe.

Together with its project management team and its partner in China for more than 10 years, fitech envisions continued growth in these markets. It aims to do this organically through collaborations with research and development teams, including universities and agents from Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

BSL'S HOLISTIC BUSINESS EDUCATION REDEFINES PRACTICAL TEACHING TO ENSURE EMPLOYABILITY

Boostered by its connections with international business and cutting-edge research, Switzerland arguably has the best higher education system worldwide. Representing the crème de la crème of the country's elite schools, Business School Lausanne (BSL) is among Europe's top institutions, offering one of the most exemplary master of business administration (MBA) programmes in the world, according to the QS Global 200 Business Schools rankings.

The leading innovator in business education has also won accolades for its holistic approach to its undergraduate and graduate programmes, executive doctorate and continuing education and business research.

"We offer a global approach across our business programmes in the most advanced skills such as creativity, problem solving and resilience," says Philippe Du Pasquier, president of the board. "These are really key skills in the 21st century."

Founded in 1987 as a private university, BSL was the first European business school to receive the coveted nod from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs in 1996. Its one-of-a-kind business curriculum enables it to offer a comprehensive

education that promotes employability through hands-on learning from experienced business professors.

"We redefine our practical teaching approach through the models that we use for the executive MBA and immersion with working people," Du Pasquier says. "Through developing social and emotional skills, students benefit from a distinct competitive advantage on the job."

With more than 85 per cent of its students composed of international students, BSL inculcates dynamic thinking, responsible management behaviour, a professional mindset and

entrepreneurship to ensure employability. The school also collaborates with companies across industries to continuously meet the changing needs of the market.

BSL enjoys solid partnerships with the Lémania Swiss Group of Schools, Dublin Business School and Seoul School of Integrated Sciences & Technologies, among several other universities and associations. It welcomes students from China and Southeast Asia, and would like to build further partnerships with more educational institutions interested in the fields of information technology, biotechnology and engineering.



(From left) Dr David Clavaz, acting dean, and Philippe Du Pasquier, president of the board

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SWITZERLAND BUSINESS REPORT

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HUG ENGINEERING'S EMISSION SOLUTIONS HELP INDUSTRIES MEET ECO STANDARDS

Emission reduction is a growing concern in Asia, where air pollution is a serious environmental problem affecting millions due to rapid industrialisation and economic expansion. With more than 35 years of experience as Europe's market leader in emission control for heavy duty applications, Swiss Hug Engineering gears up its expansion towards Asia's growing markets for exhaust purification systems as part of a major international transition.

Last year, Hug Engineering became part of Faurecia Group – a leading player in the global automotive industry with more than 100,000 employees in 330 sites across 34 countries. Leveraging Faurecia's vast network and expertise, the company has set its sights on becoming an autonomous exhaust emissions specialist at the forefront of a global industry.

"Technology is at the root of our success," says Stefan Fuss, CEO of Hug Engineering. "We have cutting-edge technologies dealing with big engines that greatly differs from emission control for commercial vehicles."

"We started with Selective Catalytic NOx Reduction (SCR) technology in the 1980s for land-based power plants and Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) technology for locomotives. SCR technology reduces nitrogen oxides (NOx), while DPF technology reduces particulate matter, which pollute the air. Over the past 35

years, we transferred that technology from one application to another – from power plants and railway systems to commercial ships and yachts. Eventually, these applied technologies came together, and we now offer integrated systems with a low cost of ownership," Fuss says.

Spending 10 per cent of its revenue on research and development (R&D), Hug Engineering develops, produces and sells high-quality emission control systems and exhaust gas purification solutions with mobile and stationary applications for high-horsepower diesel and gas-powered engines. Its best-in-class products are designed in-house using high-quality input materials, electrical and mechanical components and welded assemblies from reliable suppliers.

The company's innovations include the trademarked clean4marine, an SCR system for marine vessel engines up to 40MW that reduces NOx by up to 95 per cent. Another is the trademarked COdiNOx, a solution for greenhouses using the purified exhaust gases from gas-powered engines to boost plant growth by up to 40 per cent.

The trademarked mobile clean filter systems for commercial and off-road vehicles, rail applications, ships and yachts are based on a ceramic honeycomb structure made of silicon carbide – allowing exhaust gas to flow through porous walls that capture more than 99 per cent of the particles.

Hug Engineering also offers professional after-

sales services such as system maintenance, technical support, spare parts replacement, staff training and the proper disposal and recycling of equipment to support clients' compliance with increasingly strict environmental legislation.

"R&D also means applying technologies to customer needs," Fuss says. "Asia is very distinctive when it comes to specific technology requirements, and we need to cover that in an appropriate way. As our business internationalises, we will gradually offer customised cutting-edge technologies to China and other Asian countries."

As more stringent environmental regulations develop in Asia – where China has already released a new emission standard to make two-thirds of all new heavy-duty vehicles soot-free by 2021 – Hug Engineering looks to localise its technologies in markets such as China, South Korea, Japan and Singapore.

The company will be expanding its local team in China and welcomes university collaborations in R&D, and partnerships with other Asian companies.

"Over the past years with our highly skilled international team, we have gained the most experience in emission reduction technologies globally," Fuss says. "We want to become the ambassador of these technologies in Asia. Through Faurecia, Hug Engineering has the financial backbone and leverage to achieve that goal. That's why we believe that we will become the global market leader in this segment over the coming years."

Stefan Fuss, CEO



EHL EMBRACES DIGITALISATION TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALITY

Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) believes in the powerful potential of the youth. The pioneering Swiss hospitality management university is disrupting its century-old teaching system to cultivate astute professionals and advance the hospitality industry. Leading other educational institutions, it transforms outdated ideas and practices and adopts digital technology and other innovative approaches to direct the youth's potential to the best ends.

"The classical university and the digital world are not two separate things," says Professor Michel Rochat, CEO of EHL Group. "We combined both aspects meticulously and efficiently to develop a new way of teaching and to add value to students and partner institutions."

Developing people with the right skills, particularly in the demanding hotel and tourism industry, is not an easy feat. Time and painstaking research go into establishing programmes, modules and internships that coherently work together. With 125 years of training experience, EHL ensures graduates are well-equipped to become global hospitality managers with a broad set of know-how and business skills that are fresh and rooted within the industry.

"We create an excellent connection between the daily activities and the education process," Rochat says. "Step after step, we improve the quality. We pioneered the Swiss educational jewel system of combining the art of hospitality and the science of education in one holistic approach."

Keen on shaping the future of the hospitality sector, EHL invests in digital start-ups and strategies, and combines these with time-tested courses and activities. At its core is the EHL Innovation Hub. Designed to welcome exceptional creators and innovators, the EHL Innovation Hub provides inventors with the financial support and infrastructure to achieve their vision. Located a few steps behind the EHL campus, The Hub offers hospitality start-ups easy access to expert professors and professionals. With its collaborative culture, The Hub also serves

as an avenue for companies to develop think tanks, submit research and pilot programmes that will contribute to the development of the industry.

"The Hub will be dedicated to activities that foresee the future not only in the hospitality domain but also in education," Rochat says. "Each day, hour and minute, anyone can invent something and it's a huge break for education. Our students have so many choices that can work for them, and they can also invent a new slice or develop a new segment in the market. Through The Hub, the students have an opportunity to do internships and nurture connections with different institutions, and even countries."

Each year, EHL nurtures nearly 3,000 students who come from more than 100 countries worldwide. Close-knit and multicultural students mingle across ages, backgrounds and experience levels to share ideas and cultural insights, just as they would in the global workplace.

Supporting the students' shared passion for travel, collaboration and challenging projects, EHL offers programmes that satisfy students' thirst for adventure and discovery. Various campus activities, sports and cultural events imbibe responsibility and leadership traits, equipping students not just professionally, but also personally.

EHL programmes combine practical work experience with university-level academic courses. Available in bachelor's, master's and MBA hospitality degrees including short programmes and online

courses, these study areas culminate in real-world business and research projects that prepare students and professionals for international careers. Recognised as a Swiss University of Applied Science with an American accreditation, EHL also delivers degrees that comply with the Bologna requirements using the European Credit Transfer System.

Together with its professional school, the Swiss School of Tourism and Hospitality in Passugg and EHL Advisory Services, its consulting and executive training company, EHL Group goes where the market is, and where new talent and expertise are perpetually being developed. It works with large hotel chains and international research institutes to constantly update its teaching methods.

"Digital is a huge market and we continue to invest in digital programmes and technology to know our customers better, and to be able to provide the exact services that they require," Rochat says. "The 'one-size-fits-all' service belongs to the past."

EHL's long-standing partnerships with China Europe International Business School in Shanghai and Hong Kong Polytechnic University highlight its continuing collaboration with top institutions in Asia through consultancy, certification and joint programmes. Eager to assist more institutions in the larger Asia-Pacific region, EHL is reconstructing its certification model to move more recipients into the accreditation level.

Dedicated standards will be assigned to each potential partner school, and once in place, EHL will open opportunities for student and faculty exchange across Asia.

With two campuses in Switzerland, 10 certified institutions worldwide and a desire to set up an Asian campus possibly in Singapore, EHL remains an agile player in the global space for hospitality education.

"We invest in young people," Rochat says. "We will disrupt the way things are done in the higher education system to offer more opportunities and experiences to students that will also add tremendous value to the education industry."



Professor Michel Rochat, CEO of EHL Group

GOLD-EMBEDDED CARDS BY FINE SWISS METALS AS NEW MEANS OF CUSTOMER RETENTION

Gold was important to many ancient civilisations. It was used in architecture, funerary adornments, jewellery and many other applications. Over the years, gold's connotation remains unchanged: prosperity, luxury and security. Understanding the value and significance of this precious metal, fine Swiss Metals has developed the True Gold Unit (TGU) cards for brands that see the worth of their customers in gold.

The company takes one of the world's most desirable raw materials in 1-gram units and embeds it into loyalty and credit cards for the ultimate VIP touch.

"TGU Cards are not yet common place on the market. Because of their rarity, the cards reinforce powerful brand messages such as customer value and importance," says chief financial officer Walter Lohri. "We are looking forward to working together with hotels, country clubs, retail channels and other institutions offering loyalty programmes."

It developed TGU cards as an alternative to corporate gifts to clients. Packaging gold with the brand logo sends

a strong message: the customer is connected to the company on a long-term basis. The cards can be given a customised layout based on client requests.

Since the gold card is used by some of the world's leading brands, TGU Cards from fine Swiss Metals contain the latest security functions as well as a chip function. The company uses gold bars with a kinebar, a protective security feature lasered onto the gold bar. The gold bar is surrounded by a transparent border, which perfectly shows off the brilliance of the gold.

To manufacture the technologically sophisticated card, fine Swiss Metals is working in cooperation with a large German card and technology company. With the company's aim to offer the card across the globe, fine Swiss Metals is also open to working together with other companies that have the relevant technological capacities and distribution structures.

A world first in terms of credit cards for banks' private customers. The concentration of wealthy private customers in Asia makes this region a growth market for gold cards with a payment function. The company would like to further develop relationships with financial institutions in the area of credit and debit cards.

According to Lohri, there are around 3 billion credit card users worldwide, and their number is increasing all the time.

"Our card is one of a kind, and we want one-of-a-kind people to have it. We will also go to the United States,

but for the moment we see the greatest potential in the East," says André Walliser, executive board member.



Walter Lohri, chief financial officer



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■ SWITZERLAND BUSINESS REPORT ■

CEVA LOGISTICS MEETS ANY LOGISTICS CHALLENGE, STIMULATES STEADY BUSINESS FLOW

It is an exciting time in today's global marketplace. Developments in technology, communication and the e-commerce spaces have driven dramatic increases in consumer demand and activity. While opportunities abound for logistics companies, seasonal fluctuations and changing requirements also pose complex challenges.

For global supply chain management company CEVA Logistics, offering stability to customers is no longer enough to succeed. The company invests heavily in designing systematic, automated and industry-leading solutions in freight management and contract logistics. It

fulfils tailored services that are personally delivered to customers wherever they are. "CEVA is able to implement solutions anywhere, and the company does it adeptly," says Xavier Urbain, CEO. "Our global coverage is well-balanced. We can reach different regions worldwide making us the voice of our customers."

CEVA offers distinct logistics added-value. Its in-house team of business process excellence (BPE) consultants studies past customer experiences to develop standardised solutions that can be applied to multiple sectors. Integrated and best-in-class services support the needs of clients from the automotive, consumer and retail, e-commerce, energy, health care, aerospace and technology sectors.

With the goal of creating a workforce of problem solvers, CEVA instituted the BPE programme to ensure a common approach across its sites globally while retaining the flexibility to adapt to local markets and opportunities. Comprised of four key components, BPE employs principles of quality assurance, continuous improvement through the LEAN programme for waste elimination, efficient project implementation that avoids duplication and reduces expenses, and regular site classification assessment. "CEVA's renowned business

excellence department provides answers to the most challenging supply chain questions," Urbain says. "Customers, big and small, benefit from this initiative."

To strengthen its foothold, CEVA nurtures strategic partnerships with leading industry players. Its strategic partnership with French container transportation and shipping company CMA CGM, for instance, seeks to generate new commercial opportunities in the short and long term. Projects in the pipeline include improved e-freight services, a new data analytics department and an end-to-end supply chain management development. The partnership was further broadened last year when CEVA started to look for the acquisition of CMA CGM's freight management business. This is due to be completed in spring this year.

"We continually work with CMA CGM to integrate our processes, create more value and open up opportunities for everyone," Urbain says.

As a global company, CEVA also engages in joint ventures to bolster its contract logistics, air freight, ocean freight and land transport businesses. Its cooperation with ANJI Automotive Logistics in China has resulted in the bankable venture ANJI-CEVA Logistics. With at least 19,000 employees and

revenues reaching close to US\$1.1 billion, ANJI-CEVA is the No 1 contract logistics provider in China.

"Our customer base is strong," Urbain says. "We support these client partnerships to permanently uphold their supply chain and logistics operations. Whenever they have a requirement, we are the first one they call because we help them optimise their logistics costs. Our e-commerce service is also fully embedded as an omni-channel process so we can do both the retail and e-commerce parts systematically for our partners."

CEVA is reinforcing its position by continually investing globally such as in China and the rest of Asia as it taps markets in Myanmar, Cambodia and Bangladesh. Accelerating its growth, it collaborates with technology firms IBM and Maersk to boost information technology support, and develop digitalisation projects and other initiatives that apply the blockchain concept.

"Capacity and demand can change in the blink of an eye," Urbain says. "It is essential to have a logistics partner who provides reliability in order to maintain a supply chain's total integrity. We constantly develop our set-up to protect our people and provide the right solutions to make business flow."



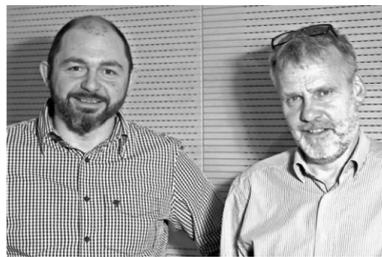
Xavier Urbain, CEO

NH AKUSTIK + DESIGN AIMS TO CULTIVATE TOPAKUSTIK AS A BRAND THAT RESONATES WORLDWIDE

Sound is crucial in setting an environment as it has the potential to either calm or overwhelm the senses. Understanding its importance, architects and engineers are increasingly incorporating innovative acoustics design in creating houses and buildings that are visually and aurally pleasing. NH Akustik + Design continuously studies the science of acoustics to create refined solutions for the optimum sound in any structure.

Established by founder Arthur Fries as NH Akustik + Design, NH Akustik + Design is renowned for Swiss-made and Swiss-quality acoustic planks and panels under the TOPAKUSTIK and TOPPERFO brands. It also offers non-combustible products under the RESAP brand.

The company showcases its products in different venue installations such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, libraries, art galleries, concert halls, and even some of



(From left) Erich von Weissenfluh, international sales manager, and Georg Hegglin, CEO

the world's impressive feats of architecture such as the Burj Khalifa.

"We solve acoustics problems. We turn architects' ideas into serious solutions," says CEO Georg Hegglin.

With the capacity to create its own machines, research-and-development-

driven NH Akustik + Design continuously creates innovations such as its microperforated line. Conferred the Red Dot Design Award last year, the TOPPERFO-Micro panels have perforations with a diameter of only 0.5mm, creating a myriad of design options for architects.

NH Akustik + Design closely collaborates with architects, designers and distributors to offer customised solutions and also to learn and understand first-hand the needs of the industry. Through this interaction, it is able to emphasise the importance of incorporating acoustics in the early stages of project planning instead of making last-minute corrections.

In Asia, Andermax Group from Hong Kong and Soundzipper from Singapore are two companies that help integrate TOPAKUSTIK products into local designs and requirements. Through long-term partner Andermax, which operates offices in Shanghai and Beijing, NH Akustik + Design sees greater penetration in China.

"China is increasingly turning towards high-quality products. We fulfil this requirement with TOPAKUSTIK," says Erich von Weissenfluh, international sales manager.

LIST TECHNOLOGY EXPLORES NEW APPLICATIONS FOR HIGH-VISCOSITY TECHNOLOGY

Polymers, chemicals, fibres, oil, medicines, food and biomass – these are different materials with distinct processing parameters but they all have one thing in common: LIST Technology. With its KneaderReactor technology, LIST provides a distinctly engineered solution to fit the specific industrial process requirements of a wide variety of sectors.

Since founder Heinz List established LIST Technology in 1966, the company has always strived to support clients by introducing environment-friendly, sustainable and efficient process technologies for viscous, sticky and crumbly products. From sublimation, torrefaction and crystallisation to polycondensation, drying and devolatilisation, LIST has set technological benchmarks with the KneaderReactor.

"When it comes to high-viscous, challenging processing, LIST is the company to call. The market might be more familiar with many conventional process machines, but we are the better and more advanced alternative. Our kneaders support the development of future processes, creating long-term value for customers," says CEO Karsten Gudemann.

A name trusted by major chemical companies, LIST seeks to broaden its customer base to include medium-sized companies. Removing entry barriers for smaller customers, LIST developed a compact multipurpose laboratory unit that simplifies the development work while delivering high-quality results.

For LIST, serving customers goes beyond supplying them with the relevant

solutions – it is about meeting their comprehensive needs. Aiming to offer its clients better turnaround times, LIST has proactively taken control of its complete supply chain with the acquisition of one of its former Switzerland-based manufacturing suppliers.

"In the past, we relied on partners to manufacture our machines. We have decided to take the whole manufacturing chain into our hands to give us more flexibility," Gudemann says.

Envisioning every project as an opportunity to develop an innovative solution, LIST continues to identify new areas of application for the KneaderReactor. One is in refinery and another is cellulose-based fibres.

Working on a solution specifically designed for the refinery industry, LIST plans to launch the product this year. Once the product is launched, the company is open to partnerships with licensors to tackle major projects requiring specialised equipment and expertise.

LIST is also working with several companies on a solution for sustainable fibres for fabric production. Seeing as how the current available technology for viscose is environmentally hazardous, the company is exploring alternative options for green manufacturing of cellulose-based fibres.

"We are part of the laboratory development and we have running pilot plants. By this year, we envision the first industrial plant," Gudemann says. "With the rapid developments in the textile industries in China and India, these two markets are crucial for us."

For LIST, China is slowly moving from

traditional industrial processes and is steadily making its way towards more sophisticated methods, specifically in producing their own new products. It is for this reason that LIST is eventually planning on opening a test centre in China, modelled after the LIST Test Centre in Switzerland. In the test centre, companies can rent or use LIST products to evaluate and confirm their process feasibility while identifying and addressing potential challenges.

By letting customers experience its technology first-hand, LIST hopes to raise its profile in China to meet new customers. The Swiss company is also considering opening a LIST Academy training centre there to educate students and customers about kneading technology.

With many developments in Asia, LIST further strengthened its support in the region with the opening of its South Korean office in 2017. Together with its Singapore and China offices, LIST endeavours to reach out to more companies seeking innovative process solutions.

"The industry knows us because of our more than 50 years of history. But people retire and grow old, so we pursue new approaches to reach the new generation of developers and engineers," Gudemann says.

Karsten Gudemann, CEO



FOXTOWN FACTORY STORES GIVES LUXURY BRAND SHOPPING A MORE AFFORDABLE SPIN

As the beautiful home of a number of Swiss heritage sites consisting of churches, stately homes and archaeological sites, the picturesque town of Mendrisio offers an unforgettable cultural experience that draws quite a number of tourists from around the world. Nestled at the heart of Mendrisio, strategically situated near Milan and Lugano, another gem shines in the form of FoxTown Factory Stores.

The outlet centre houses some of the world's biggest names in fashion under one roof – Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo, Valentino and Prada, among the more than 250 brands in FoxTown. It boasts one of the widest selections of luxury goods at prices 30 to 70 per cent lower than in boutiques seven days a week, all year round.

Combining these compelling prices with Switzerland's 7.7 per cent value-added tax, FoxTown makes luxury items

more affordable and accessible to more than 3 million visitors it welcomes annually.

"We want to continue adding more to provide a premium tourist experience. We're looking to attract more brands," says president Silvio Tarchini.

There are also seven different bars, restaurants and a casino in the complex to complement the FoxTown experience.

FoxTown is increasingly making a name for itself in Asia as the go-to shopping destination. With Asian tourists growing in importance, comprising 12 per cent of FoxTown's visitors, the company pursues strategic partnerships with financial institutions and tourism organisations to help create a seamless experience for shoppers. For additional perks, particularly for Chinese customers, FoxTown has forged an alliance with UnionPay and Alipay.



Silvio Tarchini, president

Aiming to reward its frequent shoppers, FoxTown is set to launch a loyalty programme this year that entitles members to an array of additional services, such as personal shoppers, VIP Lounges, further discounts and many more.

"We want every customer who leaves FoxTown to be impressed. We want them to gain a memorable experience that will keep them coming back," Tarchini says.



LIST Technology AG

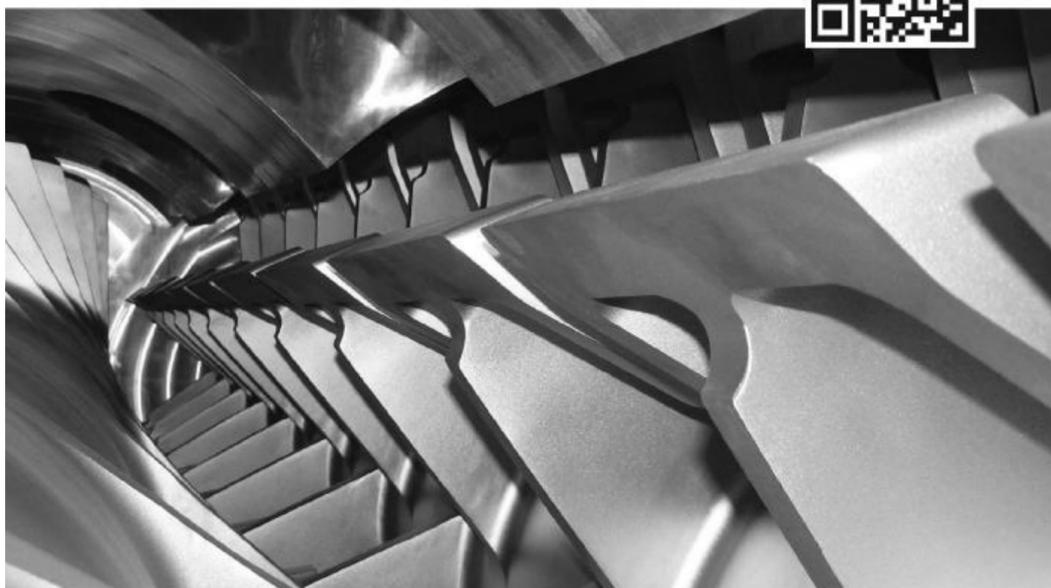
Innovative process solutions made in Switzerland.

LIST Technology is a worldwide leader in high-viscosity processing. LIST develops and manufactures kneaders to intensify industrial processes.

We are focusing on processes that operate without the use of solvents, or processing in the Concentrated Phase to lower energy costs, material costs and production costs. We develop and industrialize innovative solutions for

the chemical, fiber, polymer & rubber, food, oil & gas, recycling & recovery, food & nutrition, agriculture, energy and paint & coating industries that are setting new standards for modern, efficient and sustainable processing.

www.list.ch >



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RAIFFEISEN LEVERAGES VAST NETWORK TO PROTECT AND GROW HNWI ASSETS

A long tradition of catering to the Mittelstand, largely family enterprises in German-speaking countries, defines the approach of Raiffeisen Privatbank Liechtenstein (RPL) in helping shape the future of private banking and wealth management. The goal is to create security and stability in an ever-changing world so that multiple generations can benefit from their pioneers. It is an approach that has worked for centuries among the Mittelstand, and has huge potential for Asia's high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) and families.

"What we do starts with talking to the client," says Dr Alexander Putzer, CEO of RPL. "From our clients, we get the information that we need to build solutions for them. We maintain an open architecture in everything we do to build those solutions perfectly, leveraging on the vast network that is available to us."

Now wholly owned by Hong Kong-based Mason Group, RPL is bringing its highly personalised client servicing expertise and combined resources to magnified effect in Asia. As a key financial platform in Mason's "Health + Wealth" strategy to empower HNWIs everywhere with worldwide reach, RPL is investing heavily in digitalisation.

"Nowadays, your smartphone is your pocket so you always have your bank with you," says Dr Georg Stöckl, member of the

management board and chief operating officer at RPL. "What makes RPL special is that this pocket is much more secure than anywhere else in this world. And it doesn't make any difference if the clients are from Hong Kong, Munich or Vienna; the bank is with them."

RPL is the highest capitalised and most stable bank in Liechtenstein, which is considered the safest country in the world with its AAA rating and debt-free status. The bank invites more partnerships with independent wealth advisers and external asset managers in the greater China market to provide products and offerings with the assurance of safety and asset protection for Asia's HNWIs.



(From left) Dr Georg Stöckl, member of the management board and chief operating officer, and Dr Alexander Putzer, CEO

ZIMEX AVIATION - A PARTNER TO COVER NICHE MARKETS AROUND THE GLOBE

Global aviation company Zimex Aviation successfully applies Swiss expertise to fulfil missions in challenging and remote areas. The 50-year-old niche aviation company is backed by unmatched experience serving petroleum, automotive and pharmaceutical companies including governments and international humanitarian organisations in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

"We are no longer just an aviation service provider," says CEO Daniele Cereghetti. "We became an aviation enabler that helps clients implement air mobility solutions. We have broadened and diversified our offerings to make our services available especially in remote, least favourable and challenging destinations."

Understanding the region's tough geography, Zimex seeks to work with local companies to provide solutions to jet networks through fair partnerships. To

build trust, the company focuses on micro-segmentation and niche markets. This way, Zimex Aviation is able to support specific demands, from passenger transportation for special purposes to complex logistics needs.

It offers tailor-made solutions that constantly exceed clients' expectations. This customer orientation philosophy is sustainably carried out through all its service lines: utility aviation provides dedicated air links in remote destinations; express cargo delivers transportation solutions for time-sensitive and valuable goods; training is focused on adequately preparing pilots and engineers; and maintenance administrators services from its base in Switzerland and with global teams.

With aircraft that are capable of short take-off and landing from unpaved airstrips,

Zimex also supports highly critical pursuits such as medical evacuations, search and rescue missions, and surveillance and mapping.

"Our mission starts where the missions of others end," says Hugo Kopp, director for utility aviation and business development. "We are flexible. Everything we deliver is solution-oriented, and our employees are full subject matter experts in their field."

The company's flight specialists offer full-package fleet training to other operators, upholding service standards and flight crew safety behaviour in the industry. "Wherever exceptional air-support is wanted, Zimex Aviation supplies solutions," Cereghetti says.



Daniele Cereghetti, CEO