

Photos courtesy of Le Mirador



Opposite page: Le Mirador has 115 rooms and an international conference center. This page, top to bottom: The spa's pool is housed in a glass-domed building; from its mountainside perch Le Mirador has a breathtaking view of Lake Geneva and the French Alps; most of the spa's rooms feature balconies with stunning views.



SPA SPLENDOR

Switzerland's Le Mirador resort is well suited to activity or relaxation.

Le Mirador, a grand but little-known resort in the great tradition of Swiss hotelkeeping, is perched 2,000 feet up the side of Mont-Pelerin overlooking Lake Geneva. A funicular regularly chugs up the mountainside through terraced vineyards and stands of beech trees to reach the hotel. From there you can see across to the French town of Evian-les-Bains, the source of the bottled water, and beyond to the sharp and craggy peaks of the French Alps. A fine mist often rises off the lake in

BY JOHN SEDGWICK

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the morning, clothing the whole scene in enchantment. And at night the lights of the towns ringing the lake twinkle like jewels in the frosty Alpine air.

Le Mirador is a gem all its own, however. A five-star resort and health center, it is rooted in the long history of European health spas begun when noblemen and ladies first journeyed to the mineral springs of Spa in eastern Belgium in the 16th century.

There are no waters at Le Mirador, though guests make gentle laps under a broad glass dome in the swimming pool in the west wing of the hotel. Rather, there is a sophisticated program of physical refreshment at the Centre Lemanique de Revitalisation for those interested in reducing their weight, freeing themselves of chemical addictions, or generally improving their health and well-being. A specialist with 20 years' experience and an international reputation, director Christian Cambuzat provides personal counseling, specialized diets, yoga exercises, and a variety of sophisticated skin treatments including underwater massage and oxygen baths. As part of the hotel's beauty program, Le Mirador also maintains a hairdressing salon and a clothing boutique.

Besides the spa, Le Mirador offers just about everything anyone would want for recreation, entertainment, and fine dining. Its international conference center has meeting rooms that were designed by the Harvard Business School. The hotel itself consists of a large and rather grand stucco edifice

Food for Thought

One site in Vevey that should not be missed is the Musee de l'Alimentation on the Rue du Leman. Funded by Nestle, it has been installed inside a renovated chateau overlooking Lake Geneva. Inside, you will find well-lit, highly theatrical displays that illustrate the history, culture, and science of food—from the first hunter-gatherers to modern times. There are re-creations of primitive huts, collections of early food advertisements, computerized quizzes, and, for children, a giant mouth in which to watch a movie about teeth. On the top floor space is provided for rotating exhibits. Dinner as Theater, a recent show, displayed fabulous dinnerware and place settings.

that dates back to the turn of the century and a new and more conventional east wing. Altogether the hotel has 115 rooms, including three suites. Most of them have balconies with stunning views of the lake. All are reasonably spacious, and have color TVs and classic furnishings.

The hotel is decorated in the tasteful European manner, with wooden paneling, oil paintings, floral rugs, and imitation Louis XV furniture. On the lakeside, the hotel opens onto a broad terrace where guests may take the air or the view while sipping coffee or a cocktail. Indoors, guests might amuse themselves with cards or chess in the elegant salon, peruse the many international newspapers and magazines in the library, or sit in the cozy bar.

Or they might take a meal in the hotel's splendid dining room, which makes a worthy destination all by itself. Recommended by guidebook authors

***Sightseers will be busy,
for Le Mirador is located
in the heart of the
swankiest part of
Switzerland.***

Gault-Millau, the cuisine is French with decidedly nouvelle tendencies in its stylish presentation, light sauces, and small portions. As befits its lakeside location, the restaurant specializes in fish, which it offers in such contemporary combinations as a bass fillet in raspberry-vinegar sauce and turbot with cucumbers. But the chef provides the full complement of meats as well. The service is crisp and attentive, the decor luxurious, and the views of the mountains sublime.

To choose just a few of the offerings from the long menu, the kernel of scallops with lime sauce is exceptionally tender and delicate, the lobster bisque rich and flavorful, and the lamb scallop zesty. In keeping with Swiss tradition, the pastry tray is a special delight. And no meal would be complete without a sampling of the local Gruyere from the cheese plate. A low-calorie cuisine has been designed by Cambuzat for the weight-conscious.

Guests might also make use of the hotel's extensive sports facilities. Le Mirador maintains well-stocked exercise rooms for men and women complete with Nautilus, exercise bicycles, and saunas. It also has game rooms with Ping-Pong and video games for the more

rambunctious. A quarter mile down the road the hotel has three tennis courts. And guests may play free at the 18-hole golf courses in Lausanne and Montreux, each about 20 miles away. The hotel itself provides an unusual golf clinic in which golfers can perfect their strokes as they play a course that is simulated in video. Skiers can use Le Mirador as a base for year-round skiing at Zermatt and Les Diablerets. Many other smaller areas are available for skiing during the winter, and there are numerous cross-country trails besides.

Sightseers will be busy, for Le Mirador is located in the heart of the swankiest part of Switzerland, minutes from Vevey, Montreux, and Lausanne along the Swiss Riviera of Lake Geneva's north shore. Charlie Chaplin lived in the nearby town of Corsier where his widow, Oona, still resides. In his honor, Vevey holds a festival of comic films every August, and has erected a statue of "The Little Tramp" by the water. Mont-Pelerin is also an hour from the famous resort town of Gstaad deeper in the Alps. And, farther to the west along the lake, the international city of Geneva is an hour away.

The hotel management can also arrange for day trips by car into the surrounding countryside, where green meadows dotted with wildflowers rise up into the snow-streaked mountain peaks. The medieval city of Gruyeres, famous for its cheese, is worth a trip. It is also interesting to drive to Chateau de Chillon. Once a dungeon, it held the hapless Francois Bonivard captive for four years. Byron immortalized his plight in the poem *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

Or, of course, one can happily do nothing and wile away the time on the terrace, by the pool, or in the restaurant, growing fitter by the day in the invigorating mountain air under the watchful gaze of Cambuzat.

John Sedgwick wrote about Franco Sbarro in the September issue of The Robb Report.

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