Conversation
Andrea Scherz, general manager of Gstaad Palace

Business
“We build bridges between research and practical application”
Empa Thun develops practical solutions for and with industry

Research & Development
Avalanche dispersion by smartphone
Avalanche protection with Wyssen Avalanche Control AG goes digital

Living
“Tradition meets top performance in a unique ski festival atmosphere”
FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen and Adelboden
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Research & Development
12/13 Avalanche dispersion by smartphone
Avalanche protection with Wyssen Avalanche Control AG goes digital
Top-level research at the Top of Europe
University of Bern at the Jungfraujoch
High Altitude Research Station

Living
17-19 “Tradition meets top performance in a unique ski festival atmosphere”
FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen and Adelboden
20 The Delta of Well-being
Deltapark Vitalresort opens in Gwatt near Thun

Competition
21 Win a Wellness Weekend on Lake Thun
Welcome to the Deltapark Vitalresort: www.deltapark.ch

Bern Economic Development Agency
22 New arrivals in the Canton of Bern
New companies in the region
23 “Global presence thanks to S-GE and GGBa”
An interview with Denis Grisat, director, Bern Economic Development Agency

Contents / editorial

Conversation
4/5 “Home away from home in Gstaad”
An interview with Andrea Scherz, general manager of Gstaad Palace

Business
6-8 “Our Swiss factory is going smart”
FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd is switching to smart manufacturing
9-11 “We build bridges between research and practical application”
Empa Thun develops practical solutions for and with industry

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Dear reader,

Sports featured strongly in the Canton of Bern this summer. Swiss gymnast Giulia Steingruber won double gold at the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Bern. This was followed by the European Beach Volleyball Championships in Biel/Bienne and the outstanding climax: the Tour de France passing through our Canton. The city of Bern and the surrounding area were well and truly in the grips of bicycle fever!

On top of this, our canton boasts numerous events for top athletes and amateurs alike every year, from running to golf to swimming and everything in between. Athletes on skis, on bicycles, in bobsleighs or on their own two feet put heart and soul into their sports.

When the Tour de France stopped in Bern, I was asked about the impact of major sporting events. Skeptics complain that such events cost the public purse a lot of money but do not deliver much in the way of added value in return.

With regard to the Tour de France, I can identify three factors:
• Short-term added value amounting to many millions of francs: fully booked hotels and tens of thousands of spectators along the route, many of whom traveled here from abroad.
• Substantial longer-term added value: Euro 2008 generated CHF 68 million in added value, for example.
• The impact of the images on TV on which it is impossible to put a value. After all, images of the historic old city of Bern and the Bernese Alps were transmitted to 190 countries. In Europe alone, 12 million people watched the live Tour broadcasts.

The Cantor of Bern offers a unique backdrop for international sporting events. Read more about it in this edition – for example, in our interviews with the presidents of the Organizing Committees of the Ski World Cup races in Adelboden and Wengen, who wholeheartedly agree: world-class sporting events are magnets for tourism in the Canton of Bern.

Yours truly,

Christoph Ammann
Member of the Government of the Canton of Bern
and Minister of Economic Affairs of the Canton of Bern

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“Home away from home in Gstaad” 
An interview with Andrea Scherz

What qualities does the general manager of a 5-star hotel need? When did the Gstaad Palace rock to the sounds of Nile Rodgers and his band Chic? And what does the future hold for this hotel steeped in tradition? Owner and general manager Andrea Scherz explains.

Your career path was more or less mapped out for you when you were still a babe in arms. As you were growing up, did you ever think about not continuing the family tradition?

“When I graduated from hotel school, I did actually consider going to work for Cartier Schweiz as a marketing professional. But my passion for the hotel business prevailed and I have never regretted that decision for a moment.”

What does the general manager of a 5-star hotel need?

“A long-established family hotel, we have many guests who have been coming here for years or even decades. Ensuring any modernizations we introduce stay perfectly in keeping with our traditional ambience is a continual balancing act. For example, despite our traditional roots we were the first 5-star hotel in Switzerland to introduce Wi-Fi and we developed an ultra-modern television system which is now routinely used by many luxury hotels all over the world. Every year we renovate a number of our hotel rooms, investing up to CHF 180,000 per room.”

Can you tell us about an unusual request you and your team fulfilled for a guest?

“Once a guest rang me spontaneously and asked me to organize the ‘party of the year’ at the Palace for his wife’s birthday, including a private performance by Nile Rodgers and his band Chic from New York – in just three days. And we did it! By the way, it wasn’t only our guest and his wife who were endlessly impressed: so were Nile Rodgers and our bar tenders who danced the night away on the bar counter.”

Do either of your children want to follow in your footsteps and continue the family tradition one day?

“Quite possibly. Sabrina and Alexandre are 15 and 16 now and can both see themselves working in the hotel industry. Alexandre is about to start at the Lausanne hotel management school. Who knows, maybe my children will even manage the Palace together one day.”

Information
www.pala.ch

The landmark of Gstaad has been enchanting guests with luxury, comfort, and romantic architecture since 1913. On the roof terrace of the Palace penthouse, Andrea Scherz enjoys the 360 degree panoramic view of Gstaad and the magnificent mountain scenery of the Bernese Oberland.
FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd COO Dr Tobias Moser explains how the company is meeting the challenges and opportunities presented by Industry 4.0 and why its pioneering spirit and innovative strength and its roots in Herzogenbuchsee in the Canton of Bern are helping make them a world technology leader.

Back in 1939, Ernst Fischer was looking for spindles for his machine tools but couldn’t get hold of any. So he made some himself. With his invention, the founder of the grinding spindle factory in Inkwil near Herzogenbuchsee and father of the current owner, Roland Fischer, laid the foundation stone for the business that would go on to become the global market leader in precision spindles. FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has been headquartered in Herzogenbuchsee since 1953 and services companies the world over in industries as diverse as aviation, machine-tool and mold construction, medical, dental, and microtechnology, and the jewelry and watchmaking sectors.

From one-man band to smart factory
Seventy-seven years after it was founded, the company remains loyal to its geographic roots – and to the pioneering spirit and innovative strength that still enable it to respond effectively to the wants and needs of the day. “We make the bulk of our products in Switzerland, and we are building on this strategic commitment to transform our manufacturing facilities into a smart factory. As long as ten years ago we started offering smart solutions with the focus on spindle monitoring, such as our own monitoring systems, inverters, and evaluation tools,” COO Dr Tobias Moser explains. “As there was nothing like this on the market at the time, we developed these innovative...
products ourselves." To begin with, they only appealed to highly specialized industries such as aviation. "But Industry 4.0 is a much more widely accepted concept these days," Moser says.

FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has been gearing up for the "Internet of Things" for many years. These days it applies lean manufacturing principles to all its production planning and control activities, with the SAP ERP system handling the most important tasks and its own proprietary Cockpit helping to make digital communications easy for all its staff to understand. One of the company’s innovative and fully digital communication systems is the PLM/CAX environment, which integrates everything in one system – from the concept in CAD to machine programming in CAM to quality testing on the 3-D measuring machine with CMM. "For Industry 4.0, you need reliable data and the right sensor technology," Moser explains. So FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd has set up its own sensor development department, where expertise is acquired and sensor technology validated and industrialized. "And five years ago we also took a strategic decision to invest in building our own test bench."

Global success, local roots
Since the 1950s, the headquarters of the current global market leader in precision spindle construction have undergone seven phases of expansion with ever larger and more modern buildings, most recently resulting in a doubling of the manufacturing space with a two-story building in 2014. This factory features state-of-the-art technology that keeps the inside temperature at a constant 21°C ± 0.5°C – a crucial factor, since temperature impacts on the dimensions of the materials being processed. "Our headquarters in Herzogenbuchsee play a key role in our success," Bern-born Moser firmly believes. "In this region we can count on talented international scientists at our Advanced Materials and Surfaces Department, which is spread between our Thun and Dübendorf campuses. I am convinced that our work also helps to build bridges between cultures and that these synergies can give us a technological edge."

What opportunities can collaboration with Empa open up for businesses, research institutions, industrial companies and public bodies in the Canton of Bern? "As the interdisciplinary research institute for materials science and technology within the ETH domain, we create a bridge between research and practical application. Our researchers focus on generating innovative solutions to major challenges faced by industry and society in the areas of nanostructured, smart materials and surfaces, environmental, energy, and sustainable building technologies, as well as biotechnology and medical technology. Each Empa site also acts as a bridge to the competencies of other Empa and ETH domain sites. We have around 200 highly talented international scientists at our Advanced Materials and Surfaces Department, which is spread between our Thun and Dübendorf campuses. I am convinced that our work also helps to build bridges between cultures and that these synergies can give us a technological edge."

What areas does your work at the Empa campus in Thun focus on?
"At Thun we focus on processing technology and materials synthesis using chemical and electrochemical methods and various vacuum-based thin-film processes, combined with lithography and sensor development department, where expertise is acquired and sensor technology validated and industrialized. "And five years ago we also took a strategic decision to invest in building our own test bench."

"We supply the world with top technology from the Canton of Bern – with the added bonus of contributing to the local economy and creating jobs in the region as well." Managing director and COO Dr Tobias Moser

**About the person**
Dr. Tobias Moser joined FISCHER group company FISCHER Spindle Ltd Precision Spindles as head of development in 2008 and has been managing director of FISCHER AG since 2011. He was also appointed COO of FISCHER Spindle Group Ltd in 2016. Having studied physics at university, Moser completed a PhD in laser physics at the University of Bern and lives with his wife and four children in Bremgarten near Bern.

"What appeals to me at Empa is the great diversity of research subjects and the inspiring, dynamic environment with young, highly talented scientists from all over the world," Dr. Pierangelo Gröning

**Business: Empa Thun develops practical solutions for and with industry**
Empa Thun boosts the competitiveness of the regional economy. Dr. Pierangelo Gröning, head of the Advanced Materials and Surfaces Department and president of the Empa Research Commission, explains how and tells us why being based in Thun benefits Empa’s research projects.

"We develop marketable innovations in tandem with our industrial partners."

**Information**
www.fischerspindle.com
methods based on ion, laser, and electron beams for coating and structuring surfaces. In addition, we use material analysis methods to determine the chemical composition, internal structure, and mechanical properties of materials and surfaces.”

How can Empa Thun boost the competitiveness of the regional economy and help industrial companies in the Canton of Bern to further improve their innovative strength in the future?

“We can transform the results of research carried out in our labs into marketable innovations by working with industrial partners in an efficient, direct transfer of technology. In each case, we gear the form of the collaboration towards the specific situation, the ultimate goal, and the needs of our partners in industry, business, science, and the public sector. In doing so we play a key part in further boosting the innovative strength and competitiveness of businesses in the Canton of Bern across the whole of Switzerland in what is an increasingly competitive global environment.

Together with our partners we launch more than 100 new projects every year. In addition to research projects and services, Empa also supports the establishment of start-ups: over the past 20 years, 11 start-ups have been set up at Empa Thun alone.”

Can you give us an example of a project that illustrates this multidisciplinary collaboration and direct technology transfer?

“In 2002 a company called Tofwerk AG was set up at the Empa technology park in Thun. This company develops time-of-flight mass spectrometers – detectors that can be used to carry out chemical analyses of materials and gases inside industrial equipment. In various joint EU and CTI projects, a team of physicists, chemists, materials scientists, and mechanical engineers built an entire series of these detectors for a whole new range of applications. These are now widely used at research institutions and in industry.”

How does being based in Thun benefit Empa?

“More than three quarters of the partners with whom we work on our research projects in Thun are based in the Mittelland and French-speaking regions of Switzerland. There are also large numbers of major watch manufacturers and medical technology companies as well as SMEs in coating technology and mechanical and equipment engineering here. Being in such close proximity to our partners makes it much easier for us to work closely with them and plays a big part in ensuring the success of our joint projects.”

Information

www.empa.ch

Dr. Pierangelo Gröning (right), Xavier Maeder, research scientist at Empa Thun, and Katrin Fuhrer, CEO of Thun-based start-up Tofwerk AG, discuss the jointly developed mass spectrometer Tescan FIB-SEM, a device for analyzing materials such as hazardous residues.
Avalanche dispersion by smartphone

Wyssen Avalanche Control AG has launched a digital, web-based avalanche monitoring and detection tool, transforming this family-run company into international market leaders in this technology in next to no time. Founder and CEO Samuel Wyssen explains how being based in the Bernese Oberland has helped them get where they are today.

What opportunities does digitization offer your company in terms of expanding your position as market leader in temporary avalanche protection measures?

“With the constant improvement in networking of digital devices and the expansion of mobile phone networks and the Internet, we are able to offer our customers in the Alpine region simpler, more reliable, and more powerful systems that improve protection against avalanches on transport axes and in skiing areas. To enable us to exploit the benefits of digitization and create real added value for our customers, we constantly invest in developing new products. And that has put us in a strong position in the market. Over the past few years, exports have accounted for around 50 percent of our sales on average. With our innovative system solutions and by targeting new markets, we expect this to rise to 75 percent this year for the first time.”

How has your new digitization solution helped you so far?

“Since last winter, we have been controlling our remote-controlled blasting systems with an innovative control unit which we developed in-house. At the same time, our experts programmed a new web-based user interface which keeps the blasting systems connected to our servers 24/7, enabling them to be monitored round the clock. So if a control parameter no longer meets the requirements—for example, if a battery is running low—we automatically receive an alert and can take preventive action. The intuitive user interface makes the system much easier to use and can be operated on the move by smartphone or tablet via the web link. The feedback we are receiving from our customers is extremely positive.”

“The proximity to the mountains is a definite locational advantage for us.”

Has the fact that you are based in the Bernese Oberland helped you profile yourselves as the international technology leader in avalanche detection systems?

“It is certainly a big advantage to be able to recruit excellent staff who fit perfectly into our ‘company family’ from almost right outside our front door. Everyone in our team naturally has a very strong affinity with the mountains. Of course, our proximity to avalanche terrain is also a logistical advantage. For example, we were able to test-run a new system very close to home, thanks to a pilot project co-financed by the Canton of Bern. This system detects avalanches via their soundwaves, and sensors record infrasonic noises made by avalanches up to several kilometers away that are inaudible to the human ear, and records them in the web application.”

What is your vision for future innovative services and products that will help protect people against avalanches?

“At present we are concentrating on further developing our web-based user interface. Our aim is to be able to offer a comprehensive working platform for avalanche services that not only controls and monitors our blasting systems but also provides all the information they need for assessing hazards. We want data from weather forecasting services, meteorological and snow measurement stations, and so on to be displayed as clearly as possible, because ultimately it is these data that form the basis for decisions on protective measures such as road closures or avalanche blasting. We want this to result in a comprehensive and extremely useful tool that not only reduces the workload on avalanche services but also puts them on a legally sound footing. We are working on this task with an interdisciplinary team of risk management scientists from the Institute for Avalanche Research (SLF) in Davos, practitioners and web programmers from the Bern University of Applied Sciences, and the relevant federal and cantonal authorities.”

About the company

The Wyssen Avalanche Control AG is a subsidiary of Wyssen Seilbahnen AG, established in 1926 by Jakob Wyssen Sr in Reichenbach im Kandertal. Launched in 2000 by Jakob’s grandson Samuel, the company is the market leader in Switzerland, Norway, and Austria and also has branches in Chile and Canada. It offers a wide range of avalanche blasting systems, weather stations, and innovative detection systems such as radar and infrasound measurement systems. Popular tourist destinations such as Zermatt and Sankt Moritz protect their main road and rail access routes with Wyssen Avalanche Control AG systems and services.

About the person

Samuel Wyssen is the founder and CEO of Wyssen Avalanche Control AG. A mechanical engineering and MBA graduate, Wyssen has been a keen mountain climber and skier all his life. He lives with his family in Frutigen amidst the mountains he is so passionate about and which play a key role for him both professionally and in his private life.

Information

www.wyssenavalanche.com
The Jungfraujoch’s high central position in the Alps offers the perfect conditions for climate change and environmental research, as the air here is extremely dry and clean and can arrive here from different parts of Europe within just a few days,” says Markus Leuenberger, director of the International Foundation High Altitude Research Stations Jungfraujoch and Gornergart since 2010. Research into astronomy and medicine was being carried out on the Jungfraujoch as early as the 1930s, and over the decades the center developed into one of Europe’s leading environmental and climate change research centers. Among the oldest institutes represented on the Jungfraujoch is MeteoSwiss, which has operated its highest altitude station here since 1922 and follows climate trends and the intensity of UV radiation with great precision using the long data series collected there. The Sphinx Observatory hosts numerous Swiss and foreign institutes and universities such as the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), Empa, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the University of Liege and the University of Bern.

Observing, measuring and documenting climate change Since late 2004, the University of Bern’s Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research (OCCR) has had access to continuously and fully automatically recorded CO2 and O2 measurements at an extremely high temporal resolution, transmitted via a powerful Internet connection. The world’s first ever device for providing continuous isotopic composition measurements of CO2 was put into operation at the research station in 2008. “Developed by Empa Dubendorf, the quantum cascade laser spectrometer, as it is known, helps us establish the geographic origin of carbon dioxide molecules and research how much of the world’s CO2 is of fossil origin or enters the atmosphere purely as a result of biological processes,” Leuenberger explains. “We want to find out exactly how and to what extent carbon is exchanged between its biggest reservoirs – the atmosphere, the biosphere and the oceans.” This will enable scientists to produce new findings on air quality, climate change and the sources of foreign matter in the air. “What is more, by analyzing past wind and weather conditions we can calculate the path the air masses have taken. If we supplement the carbon dioxide isotope measurements with measurements of other pollutants and combine

Top-level research at the Top of Europe
University of Bern at the Jungfraujoch High Altitude Research Station

“Our research is relevant to the whole of humanity.”

“The measuring station at the Jungfraujoch is connected to Swiss and international networks, supplying data to organizations such as the National Air Pollution Monitoring Network (NABEL) and the World Meteorological Organization’s Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) program.” Professor Markus Leuenberger.
Markus Leuenberger, who very much appreciates the long-term burning of natural gas and oil as the main cause of global warming, Montreux and Kyoto Protocols. “As carbon dioxide generated by vital importance to the monitoring that takes place under the research work being undertaken on the Jungfraujoch is also active sequence of images. By playing these backwards we can identify the origin of the carbon dioxide.

The research being undertaken on the Jungfraujoch is also of vital importance to the monitoring that takes place under the Jungfraujoch High Altitude Research Station. By playing these backwards images of precision flow-rate controllers for precise data calibration with Ghislain Motos (left), aerosol physicist lives in Kaufdorf near Bern with his wife and three sons and enjoys walking in his free time, particularly in the Lake Thun region. No doubt this is the reason why he feels at home in the Alps. Three of his sons are already following in his footsteps. One of them, Marius, has completed an engineering course for men. Both the start and the finishing slope are extremely steep, and the pistes falls away at an angle. “When the slalom at the Chuenisbärgli to be replaced with a new chairlift in 2005, hundreds of volunteers helped to raise some of the money needed to pay for it,” the OC President recalls. “The undying enthusiasm of local residents is reflected in the fact that around 2,500 people volunteer to help at the races every year. The commitment to the event shown by local, regional, and supraregional businesses, politicians, and sports personalities is also second to none.”

Committed partners Since the launch of the World Cup in 1967, the Lauberhorn races in Wengen have also been held since 1967, having emerged from the International Adelboden Ski Days dating back to 1956. With around 40,500 spectators along the piste and on the grandstands around the finishing area, the Chuenisbärgli giant slalom and slalom races are among the best attended ski races in the world. As many as 2,500 people help out at the giant slalom on the Saturday and 1,400 at the slalom on the Sunday. The 2017 edition of this major sporting event is taking place on January 7 and 8. Peter Willen has been president of the OC and of Skiweltcup Adelboden AG since 1996. He also runs the Bären Hotel in Adelboden together with his wife Christine. The FIS Ski World Cup Giant Slalom at the Chuenisbärgli in Adelboden is one of the best attended and most challenging skiing races in the world. Starting at 1,730 m above sea level, the giant slalom piste is 1,430 m long.
Every January, the world’s top skiers set off down the Lauberhorn downhill piste against the breath-taking backdrop of the Bernese Oberland mountains. This major FIS Ski World Cup event in Wengen is a magnet for thousands of tourists.

“The Lauberhorn is the longest World Cup downhill course.”
Urs Näpflin

In the world,” OC president Urs Näpflin reports. “With its classic lines and spectacular key sections, it is hugely challenging for the athletes.” Speeds as high as 160 km/h have been recorded on the Lauberhorn downhill piste. “Set against the unique backdrop of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains, these nail-biting races are of immense promotional value, since the event is broadcast live all over the world,” Näpflin says. “Good cooperation between all the parties involved is essential for an event of this kind if it is to bring about a win-win situation for everyone. It is only thanks to the generous support of the entire region, the canton and the federal government that we can afford to put on this event at all.”

Both Peter Willen and Urs Näpflin have been closely involved in skiing all their lives. “As a junior, I was in the Swiss Ski A squad and competed in several World Cup races. Even then I volunteered regularly at the Lauberhorn race,” OC president Näpflin recalls. “And today it fills me with joy and pride to be able to work with 1,800 like-minded people to put on an event to such international acclaim. And I should say that none of the helpers are paid for the work they do.” There is no doubt that the FIS Ski World Cup also impacts positively on tourism in Adelboden and Wengen. Both of these skiing regions are extremely popular with leisure skiers outside of the World Cup. In summer there are even mountain trails along the legendary FIS Ski World Cup pistes in Wengen and Adelboden with a series of interactive stations providing background information on the races. The two OC presidents agree that the FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen and Adelboden is not only a world-class sporting event but also a standard bearer for tourism in the Canton of Bern: “The World Cup has an outstanding reputation with athletes, tourists and local residents for tradition, top sporting performance and a unique ski festival atmosphere in two of the most attractive skiing regions in the world.”

Information
www.weltcup-adelboden.ch
www.lauberhorn.ch

About the FIS Ski World Cup in Wengen
The Lauberhorn Races were established in Wengen in 1930 by Ernst Gertsch. They consist of downhill, slalom and combination races, which in 2016 were supported by 1,800 helpers and cheered on by a live audience of 43,500 spectators. Since the launch of the FIS Ski World Cup in 1967, the Lauberhorn Races have become a permanent fixture of this competition. The 2017 edition takes place on January 13 to 15. Urs Näpflin was a successful skier in his youth, until a knee injury put an end to his career as an athlete in 1981. Since then, Näpflin has been actively involved in the organization of the Lauberhorn Races, taking over as OC president in 2015. He also runs a construction company in Bern.
The Delta of Well-being
Deltapark Vitalresort opens in Gwatt near Thun

Since March, guests at Deltapark Vitalresort on Lake Thun have been able to experience and enjoy 4-star superior-class comfort with modern seminar, health and leisure facilities in a picturesque setting.

“The stand-out features of our resort are its unique location, our comprehensive wellness and health facilities, and the wide range of restaurants and leisure activities we offer,” says Mirco Plozza, CEO and director. “Set in 90,000 m² of grounds on the shores of Lake Thun and surrounded by beautiful countryside, this is the perfect place for guests to unwind, relax and rejuvenate.” The Deltapark brand represents the Kander River delta, the pyramidal-shaped Niesen mountain, and the three tent-shaped buildings in the grounds. “But the delta of well-being – health, zest for life, and vitality – is also a fundamental principle of our Deltapark. We offer everything you need for a healthier daily life in our three pillars: Relaxation, Exercise, and Enjoyment,” Mirco Plozza explains.

Enjoyment and well-being with an individual touch
Every single window in the new main building, with the lobby, reception area, restaurants, seminar rooms and hotel bar, and in the three listed and completely renovated delta buildings gives guests a panoramic view of Lake Thun, the mountains or the forest. Two of the buildings house the DeltaSpa, featuring an indoor brine bath, an outdoor Jacuzzi, saunas, steam baths, experience showers, relaxation room, various beauty and massage treatment rooms, and three private spas, while the third Delta building contains seminar rooms and 19 additional 3-star bedrooms. “Our 13 seminar and plenary rooms are fully equipped with the latest infrastructure and are the perfect place for guests to hold their conferences, training sessions or meetings,” Plozza says. “Our team are always on hand to help with planning and provide support, and we can also organize exciting fringe activities and superb catering.”

Information
www.deltapark.ch

About the resort
Deltapark Vitalresort in Gwatt near Thun has 106 bedrooms and 600 m² of seminar space in the main building, with an additional 200 m² of seminar space in the Waldhaus building. The wide-ranging hotel infrastructure also features three restaurants, a bar, lounge, a library, and a luxurious 2,000 m² spa and fitness zone offering a holistic wellness concept. Deltapark Vitalresort, a Hauenstein Hotels & Restaurants resort, employs around 80 people.

Win a Wellness Weekend on Lake Thun
Welcome to the Deltapark Vitalresort: www.deltapark.ch

Take part in our prize draw and win a wonderful weekend break for two at the Deltapark Vitalresort (one night in a Comfort Superior class double room with balcony overlooking Lake Thun, including a sumptuous breakfast buffet, afternoon snack and four-course gourmet menu evening meal, plus free admission to the Deltapark spa and fitness zone).

The modern, 4-star superior-class resort is located in a tranquil, idyllic setting in a 90,000 m² park landscape on the shores of Lake Thun and features trendy designer bedrooms, fully equipped seminar rooms and three restaurants serving healthy seasonal cuisine. The holistic wellness services on offer are dedicated to individual well-being, and there is a 2,000 m² spa and fitness zone with high-tech infrastructure and an indoor pool for use by guests.

Experience relaxation, exercise and pure enjoyment – welcome to the Deltapark Vitalresort on Lake Thun!

Taking part couldn’t be easier. Simply find the answers to the clues and enter them in the appropriate places in the grid to find the mystery word. Send the mystery word along with your completed entry form to the address below by January 31, 2017. You can also enter online at www.berninvest.ch/chance. Tip: every word relates to a subject covered in this issue of bernecapitalarea. Good luck!

Competition: Wellness Weekend on Lake Thun

Congratulations to Dieter Baumann of Evilard, the winner of our competition in bernecapitalarea 1/2016.
New arrivals in the Canton of Bern

The Bern Economic Development Agency helps innovative companies from all over the globe with their decisions to locate to the Canton of Bern – like AmerisourceBergen Global Manufacturer Services GmbH in Bern and ESPI Suisse Sàrl in Nidau.

AmerisourceBergen opened two subsidiaries in the federal capital in September 2014. From their Bern base, the Global Manufacturer Services Team generates commercialization strategies and product development insight for customers in the pharmaceutical sector, while the Global Data Services Team develops next generation data strategies, analytics and system platforms that will help boost the success of their international partners. AmerisourceBergen Global Manufacturer Services GmbH currently employs 19 people at its Bogenschützenstrasse site and plans to take on more staff in 2017.

Headquartered in Chesterbrook, Pennsylvania, USA, AmerisourceBergen is a global supplier of medicines, over-the-counter drugs, healthcare products, and related products, servicing over 50,000 pharmacies, hospitals, and health clinics in North America alone. Established following a merger of Amerisource and Bergen in 2008 this non-profit association has also been responsible for promoting Switzerland as a business location abroad for some 270 contacts in touch with areas such as the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) and transition countries. Every year the GGBa accounted for 191 contact visits to member cantons through its own activities and those of the S-GE, involving 131 companies from 20 countries.

ESPI Suisse Sàrl opened a sales office at INNOCAMPUS AG in September 2014. From this office, the subsidiary of the French company ESPI sells products such as the Scanflash, a flexible, high-precision and ultrafast measuring center for controlling machine tools. Every single mechanical component is produced with extreme precision and speed and with no scatter. INNOCAMPUS AG provides the company with support and creates synergies with business partners in applied research and development in industrial technology – one of the main reasons why ESPI chose to locate its sales office here.

Established in 1996, ESPI develops and produces innovative technical solutions for measuring mechanical components and controlling machine tools for customers in industries including watchmaking, medtech, aviation, automotive, aerospace, and connection technology.

How does the Bern Economic Development Agency go about making contact with international companies? “We work mainly with the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa). This economic development agency works on behalf of its member cantons to identify foreign investors and companies who may be interested in establishing a base here. In doing so it focuses mainly on the industries that are relevant to the member cantons: the precision industry, ICT, medtech, biotech, services and cleantech. As a member of the GGBa, we then compete for projects and make contact with the investor concerned.”

How closely do you work with Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)? “S-GE handles location marketing for Switzerland in various countries abroad and runs Swiss Business Hubs in countries of interest to Switzerland. It maintains contacts on the ground with potential foreign investors and informs them about the particular strengths and benefits of Switzerland as a business location. Following an evaluation, it passes on those contacts to the various areas such as the GGBa, who process them and forward them to organizations such as our own.”

What happens once you have made contact with an interested investor or company? “We organize evaluation visits at which we attempt to convince the company of the benefits of establishing a base in Bern. Our main selling points are the skills and expertise available at the University of Bern, our universities of applied sciences, the university hospital and the Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne. If the company decides on the Canton of Bern, we advise them on finding a suitable location and premises, help them recruit competent staff, provide financial contributions and assist them in their dealings with the authorities. Once they arrive, we put them in touch with our networks and provide a range of useful services. We want companies locating here to become a permanent fixture of the Canton of Bern’s business landscape – real Bernese companies.”

What does that look like in numbers? “We handle around 300 new contacts every year at the Bern Economic Development Agency. On average, this results in around 60 evaluation visits and about 10 to 15 companies locating here every year.”

What are the most well-known foreign companies with bases here in Bern? “We have a whole host of foreign companies here, such as eBay, PepsiCo, CSL Behring, 3M, Watgreens, Schneider Electric, Pax-Vax, La Montre Hèrmes, Festo Microtechnology and Kimberly-Clark – to mention but a few.”

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The Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) is an internationally active economic development agency established in 2010 by its member cantons, Bern, Fribourg, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Vaud and Valais. Its mission is to help foreign-based companies start operating in Switzerland as quickly and easily as possible. It has a network of representatives in eight countries: Germany, France, Italy, the USA, China, India, Russia and Brazil. Last year the GGBa accounted for 191 contact visits to member cantons through its own activities and those of the S-GE, involving 131 companies from 20 countries.

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