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Living Among the Swiss

Michael Wells Glueck

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Michael Wells Glueck : Living Among the Swiss before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Living Among the Swiss:

10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Strangely focused book By James E. Beckman This is a weird book. If you happen to be a stock analyst specializing in American stocks for sale in the European market, and planning to move to Switzerland, this book probably has a lot to offer you. Otherwise, there are plenty of better books

out there. It contains a rather small guide to hiking and skiing trails in certain areas of Switzerland, plus some extensive and cynical views of the Swiss banking and stockbrokering system. The author also displays a certain amount of homophobia, in case that matters to you. John McPhee's book gives a much better look at the Swiss character, and just about any travel guide gives you more travel information. 15 of 17 people found the following review helpful. Arrogance at its peak
By A Customer
I bought this book on the basis of two reviewers who said it was witty, humorous, and useful. I could barely stomach reading the book since the author is arrogant and continually looks down his nose at not only the Swiss whom he portrays as uneducated and stupid but also others from his own continent. He does not experience the culture, but rather overlays his own prejudices and expects you to buy them as cultural sensitivity. At moments when he actually begins to provide useful information or interesting insight (such as the treatment of women), he quickly dissolves into feeling quite full of himself and gives witty repartee. You can just feel him surge with pride about how witty he is. I almost quit on page 28 where, while discussing the train system, he states, "And in second class you will frequently encounter not only the harrowingly unpleasant odors of the great unwashed and undeodorized but also the harsh and loud voices of children and adults afflicted with Down's syndrome, who are seldom institutionalized here." It's too bad I waited too long to read the book and cannot return it. 13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Definitely not a whitewash
By Natalie Biner
Are you considering a job offer in Switzerland? This work provides fair warning about the obstacles that you and your spouse will face as an immigrant: a chauvinistic, closed society of incomprehensible, dialect-speaking burghers obsessed with money and reluctant to trust foreigners even after years of acquaintanceship; high rents and prices for inferior food -- especially beef and chicken -- clothing, and automobiles; undisguised resentment that you are denying a job opportunity to a Swiss citizen; discrimination in career advancement and promotion. Most expatriates leave after a year in order to preserve their marriages. Take these caveats to heart before succumbing to the temptations of Alpine skiing and clean, fresh-water swimming. And read this book before deciding whether to accept the job offer.

This book describes the author's experiences during the past eight years of living and working among the Swiss. It examines several aspects of the Swiss banking system from the viewpoints of consumers, investors and employees. It depicts cultural differences as well as the practical difficulties confronting the new immigrant as he seeks to put down roots. It seeks to edify the vicarious traveler as well as those seriously considering relocation here. Finally, it celebrates in some detail the beauty of this relatively simple and honest land, with especial emphasis on the cantons of Berner Oberland, Graubünden and Wallis, as well as the environs of Zürich. While the observations focus on the German-Swiss, they are surprisingly applicable to the French- and Italian-speaking cantons as well. This book falls somewhere between a travel guide and a book of reflections and memoirs, and thus is an unashamedly open and frank reaction to a foreign way of life. Michael Wells Glueck's gaze falls on many aspects of Swiss existence and it never loses its particular, unique focus. Living Among the Swiss will provide much information for the reader, who in the process will learn much about the world of Switzerland and beyond, and also be privileged to form a distinct picture of Mr. Wells Glueck himself.

A satiric jewel of a memoir that captures the beauty and peacefulness of Switzerland and its inhabitants' glacial stolidity. -- Rita Kasper, wife of a Swiss kitchen designer
This witty author has a background in Latin and a large English vocabulary. I learned much about places in Switzerland. -- Dr. Vollrat von Deichmann, former Professor of Forestry at Arizona State University
From the Publisher
This book falls somewhere between a travel guide and a book of reflections and memoirs, and thus is an unashamedly open and frank reaction to a foreign way of life. Michael Wells Glueck's gaze falls on many aspects of Swiss existence and it never loses its particular, unique focus. 'Living Among The Swiss' will provide much information for the reader, who in the process will learn much about the world of Switzerland and beyond, and also be privileged to form a distinct picture of Mr. Glueck himself: a former Woodrow Wilson Fellow who taught English and Classics at Columbia and other U.S. universities for several years before entering the investment business in 1969.
From the Author
Switzerland is notorious for being 'ein verschlossenes Volk,' a closed society. You can live here for twenty years and still feel like an observer or a tourist rather than a participant. Often you will be made to feel that you do not exist or are invisible, like a little boy standing at the edge of a schoolyard watching the trams back up and turn around at the end of the line while a few yards away his classmates play a boisterous game of 'baseball' with a tennis ball, oblivious to his feelings of rejection upon not being chosen for either team. If only he had been the one child who remembered to bring a ball to school that day! He would keep it in his pocket until the end of the recess and then take it out and bounce it ostentatiously to show the others that it is he who rejects them. But in Switzerland it is never your ball or your field. As Paul Erdman notes in his book 'The Swiss Account,' it is impossible to get close to the Swiss - especially when they deliberately speak their local dialect rapidly so that you cannot understand what they are saying. Do not expect to be invited to socialize with colleagues or, if you chance upon them in a social context, to be introduced to their spouses. In eight years of living here I have been invited to Swiss homes only three or four times.