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## RESHUFFLING PARADISE – HOW TICINO COPES WITH STRUCTURAL CHANGES

*If you wish to highlight stereotypes, one might describe the Swiss Canton of Ticino as a perfect mix of Swiss quality and Italian “Dolce Vita”. Ticino has Mediterranean climate, most beautiful landscapes, blue lakes and the clear emerald green waters of the mountain rivers, Italian cuisine and a trendy atmosphere. A huge amount of private clinics with high quality medical services are attracting a well-heeled international clientele seeking for places where Swiss discretion is paramount. On closer scrutiny, however, Ticino turns out to be a complex economic area, restricted by its geography, subject to structural changes with the experience that having a “nice place” is not enough.*

Although there is no shortage of literature regarding the Swiss canton of Ticino, its mostly of folkloric nature to underline the nostalgic image and to attract mainly tourist visitors; only very few remind the early beginnings of this part of Switzerland as the poorest canton. Ticino, always occupied by some North Italian Rulers or different cantons of the Swiss Confederation, was originally created by Napoleon in 1803 when the French Emperor redraw the European maps. It had turbulent periods until 1879 but the opening of the Gotthard Railway in 1882 led to the establishment of a sizeable tourist industry mostly catering to German-speakers. In the beginning of the twentieth century – at that time Ticino was still the poorest region of Switzerland – a colony of activists and dropouts settled at Monte Verità (Mountain of truth) close to Ascona. They abhorred private property, practiced a rigid code of morality, strict vegetarianism and nudism and they rejected convention in marriage and dress, party politics and dogmas. It was a settlement that attracted internationally renowned revolutionaries, philosophers, writers, poets and artists. Conferences were held covering many themes, including societies without nationalism, women's rights, mystic freemasonry, and dance as art, ritual and religion. Many European anarchists moved to Ascona at the Lake Maggiore, attracting many others to the area. Artists and famous people came to see this hill included Hermann Hesse, Carl Jung, Erich Maria Remarque and later Berthold Brecht. “I am not sure if you know the landscape in

southern Ticino” wrote Herman Hesse in 1916, “it’s wonderfully rich and beautiful, and from the Alpine all the way down to the Southern it’s here.” Hesse’s best-known works – written in Ticino – include “Steppenwolf”, “Siddhartha”, and “The Glass Bead Game”, each of which explores an individual’s search for authenticity, self-knowledge and spirituality. That might have been the reason, that the Swiss-German Nobel Prize winner for Literature lived 40 years in this part of Switzerland. The Spirit of innovation and peaceful coexistence from Monte Verità may also have inspired world leaders as they came to Locarno 1925 for a Peace conference in which the First World War Western European Allied powers and the new states of Central and Eastern Europe sought to secure the post-war territorial settlement, and return normalizing relations with defeated Germany. These two spirits – from Monte Verità and Locarno 1925 – are still specifically named by Ticino’s politicians and used as golden thread in pushing economy forward on an innovative way. Promoting Medical Wellness in the region, already at the millennium the mayor of Locarno called it “la visione del luogo di benessere” (the vision of the place of wellbeing). In 2014 the destination Lake Maggiore and Valleys have been awarded the “Wellness Destination” quality label by the Swiss Tourism Federation. Created in 2008, the Wellness Destination quality label, points out holiday places and holiday destinations with diverse high-quality wellness offers.





## Wellness as an active life philosophy

Like Hermann Hesse's individual's search for authenticity, self-knowledge and spirituality, visitors to Lake Maggiore more than ever look for well-being, harmony for body and soul and beauty for the eye: unique and exciting views from the thermal pools which are mirrored in the calm waters of the lake permit moments of purest relaxation. The Termali Salini & Spa Lido Locarno, the public top thermal baths and modern fitness facilities of some of the renowned hotels as well as other structures supporting sport and health, make this an ideal spot for an attractive as well as healthy holiday. Some five star houses also offer medicine, anti-aging and medical wellness. Citrus, figs, palms, and pomegranates flourish in the mild climate here – even as snow-capped peaks beckon in the distance. In the towns on Lake Maggiore and Lake Lugano the feel of Italy is unmistakable in the architecture, the piazzas, and the passion for fine food, which spills over the Italian borders from the south, east, and west. It is consistent with the vision of the place of well-being, peaceful, where reigns a spirit of tolerance and mediation, which inspired the Locarno Peace Conference of 1925. The region is offering guests Wellness as an active life philosophy.

## Exclusive and gracious hotel estate

An unparalleled example and real pearl among Hotels in the region might be hotel "Castello del Sole", a five stars superior: a paradise of peace situated in a beautiful park of 110'000sqm with "Castello SPA & Beauty" (2500sqm), private beach, putting green, and one of its restaurants, the gourmet restaurant "Locanda Barbarossa" has been awarded 18 points by the prestigious Gault&Millau Association and has one Michelin Star. The Hotel complex has own vineyards, 2 pavilions with deluxe rooms and suites. A hotel rich in history: Built in 1532 by Francesco Orelli, "Castello del Sole" was used as a hideout by the followers of the new Protestant movement. In 1756 it was for the first time recorded as a "gem", then in 1900 operated as a simple "Osteria", inn with six guestrooms and in subsequent years extended into an exclusive and gracious hotel estate. The characteristics of the once recognized "gem" have been maintained until today, combining the charm of its past with modern comforts and the luxurious splendor of the present. Two other houses are "Eden Roc" and "Villa Orselina" The five-star Hotel "Eden Roc" in Ascona stands out for its spaciousness and unrivalled lakeside views. In addition to its 95 luxurious

rooms and suites the hotel offers the 2'000 sqm "Eden Roc Spa", private beach and harbor as well as four excellent restaurants which have in total 46 points Gault&Millau. «Il dolce far niente» is the slogan of „Villa Orselina's" and nothing else is meant as a spa in the truest sense of the word: relaxation for body, mind and spirit, coupled with a healthy diet and physical activity. Throughout history, people have used thermal and mineral springs for bathing, healing, socializing, and spiritual reasons. Those traditions are the roots of today's spa industry, and they continue today. As consumers increasingly seek authentic, natural, and place-based experiences and expect results from their spa-going, there is a resurgence of interest in thermal/mineral springs around the world. Hermann Hesse's individual's search for authenticity, self-knowledge and spirituality is, exactly hundred years later followed by an ever-growing number of wellness-minded consumers. Hotels like the above mentioned in Locarno and Ascona and "Principe Leopoldi" and "Villa Sasso" in Lugano or the "Swiss Diamond Hotel" in Morcote are following these trends.

According to the 2014 Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor, Spa & Wellness will continue to be a dynamic, high-growth industry as businesses innovate to meet global economic, travel, wellness, and lifestyle trends. There is a shift in consumer attitudes toward taking personal responsibility for individual health. Aging, the rise in lifestyle diseases, and the failure of the conventional medical system to pre-empt and treat chronic conditions are driving many consumers toward wellness and preventive services to maintain and improve their health. Spa-going, along with other wellness activities, are no longer considered a luxury or the domain of the wealthy.

## 57 clinics without public mandate in private hand

Although, the Global Spa & Wellness Economy Monitor, also mentions that Wellness travelers tend to be wealthier and more educated, their tourism spending is significantly higher than the average tourist, making them "well-heeled" tourists. International wellness tourists spend 59% more and domestic wellness tourists spend 159% more than the average tourist. As an ever-growing number of wellness-minded consumers are integrating healthy habits and activities into their travels, partly to counter a host of negative, travel related health impacts such as jet lag, poor sleep, and disruption of healthy eating and



exercise. World wide the spa industry has been growing by 7.7% annually, from \$60 billion in 2007 to \$94 billion in 2013. This industry is comprised of five interdependent segments. The largest segment is spa facilities, estimated at \$74 billion in 2013, a 7.9% annual increase since 2007 to \$3.4 trillion worldwide in 2013. Of course several Investors in Ticino jumped onto the bandwagon of Wellness and Spa and Medical Wellness and do not leave it to Wellness only. Around 57 different private clinics in Ticino are attracting customers with medical and cosmetic techniques to slow down the ageing process; Nutritional counseling; alimentary Detox Program, Diagnosis Lower Limbs, Body Peeling, Anti-Cellulite abdomen, and hydrotherapy. But not only beauty and anti-aging are trend; an audience trust the Swiss "best only" and travel far for cardiology & heart surgery or Cancer treatments. Cardiocentro Ticino, a state-of-the-art heart specialized university clinic was established in Ticino. The clinic has a keen educational and research-oriented vocation. Since its foundation 1999, Cardiocentro has been strongly investing in research and innovation in co-operation with the University of Zürich, believing that health care primacy can be only pursued through direct contribution to the evolution of scientific thought and by bringing to the patient the best competences and the newest therapies as soon as they become available. Other clinics specialize on Tumor Surgery, Chemotherapy, Radiotherapy, Oncologic Physical Therapy or Alternative & complementary, medicine Diagnosis & treatment of male infertility or Mommy & Baby Wellbeing.

### Sant'Anna Clinic, "the cradle of Ticino"

"Are you expecting a child? Your body requires now special attention" writes Ticino Health on its homepage, "you have access to everything from one source: competent advice for the planning of your health trip, individualized offerings with a treatment plan, comprehensive complementary services and personal assistance on site". No wondering that prominent mothers from all over the world travel to Ticino. "Vladimir Putin's 'girlfriend has given birth'", titled the British "Telegraph" in March 2015. Alina Kabaeva, "Putin's rumored lover was seen as she went into the private Clinic Sant'Anna in Sorengo near Lugano", several newspapers wrote. It's not important at all if the information about the birth of a baby fathered by Vladimir Putin does correspond to reality or not, as discretion is Swiss paramount. Although Swiss tourism marketing and sales responsables might have been happy with the free advertising of the foreign boulevard press. It shows a picture of Lugano as new hot spot for medical tourism and high specialized medical treatments in Switzerland. Sant'Anna Clinic is known as "the cradle of Ticino": its maternity ward is the most important of the Canton Ticino and among the largest in the Swiss private health sector, with approximately 900 births a year and an important department of neonatology. The Clinic near Lugano offers specialized medical services for local and international patients, extensive experience of medical and nursing staff, available technologies, hotel services, and personalized attention to each patients' needs. The collaboration between surgeons is based on the concept of in-depth training. "This approach allows the concentration of specific capabilities within a team of surgeons with

several advantages in terms of quality, as patients benefit from direct and immediate access to different specialists within the same facility", says Michela Pfyffer von Altshofen, Director at Sant'Anna Clinic. The clinic is run by Swiss Medical Network, one of Switzerland's leading private clinic groups and has 45 doctors, 190 staff, 80 beds, over 4000 surgeries are performed every year in our five spacious operating rooms.

### UNESCO World Heritage sites...

Ticino as much more to offer. Visitors can explore the area by touring the lakes on one of the white steamers or renting a boat. For a panoramic overview, Monte San Salvatore at the lake of Lugano offers one of the most spectacular vistas of the surrounding countryside, lake, and snow-capped peaks. Lugano, a financial center and the largest and most significant town in Ticino, is a popular summer resort. In sun-drenched Locarno on Lake Maggiore, Swiss lakeside living takes on a subtropical touch with warm days, blossoming gardens, and palm-studded estates. In Bellinzona, capital of the canton, three magnificent castles are UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Castles, Castelgrande, Montebello and Sasso Corbaro together with their fortress walls were built in the Medieval Age and have since been both the northern border of the Plain of the Po and a southern bastion of the alpine valleys. But not enough: The Madonna del Sasso Sanctuary in Orselina and the Sacred Mount in Brissago, both candidates to be listed in the UNESCO World Heritage.

### ...and a historical masterpiece of marine life on a mountain top

Another hidden treasure is Monte San Giorgio that stands 1100 meter above sea level, close to Meride-Lugano: This Mountain is a living legend of a historical masterpiece with fossils dating back to over 200 million years ago. Back then, it was surrounded by a lagoon and was partially separated from the open sea, due to which various marine life flourished in the region making it a rich source of fossils. These marine life and invertebrate can still be seen in the Fossil museum in Meride for visitors who want to relive the early moments of Middle Triassic period. This place gained more importance after being inscribed to UNESCO in 2003.

### The Golden Leopard in Locarno and the New Orleans Experience in Ascona

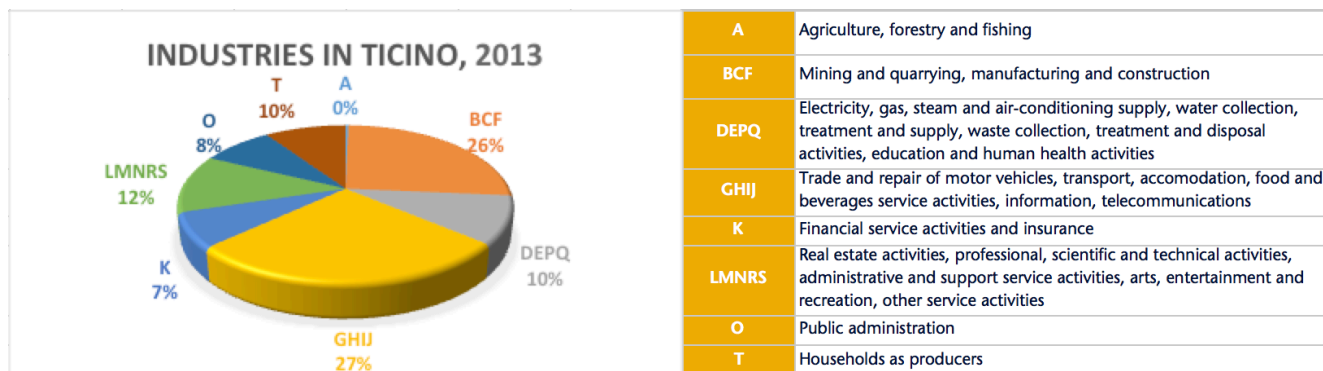
Locarno is internationally renowned for its Film Festival – one of the most important cultural events in Europe. The Piazza Grande, with its Lombardian arcades, is the pulsating heart of the city. The Locarno Film Festival is well known as a festival of discovery. The top prize of the Festival is the "Pardo d'oro" (Golden Leopard). Throughout its history since 1946, the festival has discovered new trends and launched the careers of numerous directors and actors. Although the festival aims at the films, rather than at stars and glamour, several well-known personalities of the international film industry have visited the Locarno International Film Festival in recent years. In Ticino you can even play a part of James Bond by yourself: Practice bungee jumping from the Verzasca dam in the Verzasca Valley, where the famous "Goldeneye 007" film was set! You can jump off from a height of 220 Meters; the highest bungee jump in the world!

Ticino not only hosts the film festival's evening screenings in Locarno but it is also the setting of many concerts and events. This year "JazzAscona" – the only festival outside of the USA that is officially supported by the City of New Orleans – celebrated its 32nd edition with a follow-up of last year's edition, The New Orleans Experience–Original Music & Food from Louisiana. The festival's program included almost 200 concerts, late-night jam sessions, tributed to great artists of the past, first-rate New Orleanian artists, brass band parades, and much more. The next year's festival is already in planning stage.

### Industry and...

Lugano is Switzerland's third largest financial center after Zurich and Geneva. The banking industry alone has 8400 employees and generates 17% of the gross cantonal product. Because of Ticino's shared language and culture, its financial industry has very close ties to Italy. Many Italian companies relocated to Ticino, either temporarily or permanently, seeking lower taxes and an efficient governance. But a very weak point is the Swiss Franc. The Franc is too strong. Over the past 15 years, the Swiss franc has increased in value substantially against both the US dollar and the Euro. Especially Ticino, in the last years an area capable of attracting and developing companies, becoming a high specialization and concentration district for several industries, gets to feel this in the valley between





Lugano and Chiasso. Called, precisely, 'Fashion Valley', the Swiss canton has been long an attraction for companies in the industry who benefited from a number of advantages, primarily the tax, and willing to transfer its activities to Switzerland. The first fashion company to settle in Ticino was Ermenegildo Zegna. This was 1981, and the situation in Italy was not favorable for industry by any stretch of the imagination, with constant strikes, protests and trade union action slowing down work. In order to maintain its high production standards, the famous Italian brand set up premises in Ticino and to this day it has manufacturing buildings and offices in the region. Since 1996, Gucci has also been in Ticino, where it manages the international logistics for its Alexander McQueen, Balenciaga, Bottega Veneta, Stella McCartney and Yves Saint Laurent brands. One step ahead of its rivals, the company was among the first to see the opportunity to optimize the services afforded by the Ticino region, with a view to increased innovation, efficiency and profitability. Over the next few years, other renowned labels also made an appearance, including Akris, Armani, Guess and Hugo Boss. The most recent arrival is VF International, which appeared in 2005 and today employs over 600 people in management and various design and development operations for several brands, including Eastpak, Lee, Napapijri, The North Face, Timberland and Wrangler. But, now, this role seems to be to call into question because of the strong Swiss franc. So much, that some even speak of 'reshoring' from Switzerland to Italy. Although, the American business magazine "Forbes" included 2015 "FoxTown" in Mendrisio in its international top ten for factory outlet centers in the world!

### ...other "did-you-knows"

Beside the high Swiss franc, the Banks of Lugano are under pressure because of structural changes and the softening of the Swiss banking secrecy. In 2008, Ticino had an unemployment rate of 5%, higher than in rest

of Switzerland, where it was estimated at 3.4%, and particularly high for foreigners (over 8%). Foreigners in general hold 44.3% of all the jobs in Ticino. But always as some clouds are rising on the sky of the canton Ticino, it can profit from changes elsewhere 2016 Switzerland made railway history with the opening of a once-in-a-century construction project that embodies the innovation and competitiveness that makes the country the envy of Europe. After completion of the Alp-transit 2016, every place in Ticino will be accessible via the new Gotthard Base Tunnel from Zurich, Lucerne and Zug in about two hours by train.

There are hundreds of other "did-you-knows" in Ticino. One example of Swiss industry in Ticino: Three of the world's six largest gold refineries are based here; all on the Good Delivery List of the London Bullion Market Association: Valcambi SA in Balerna, belonging to the US company Newmont Mining; the Pamp SA in Castel San Pietro owned by MKS SA Geneva and Argor-Heraeus in Mendrisio belonging to the Commerzbank International SA and Münze Österreich. Those three are the leading manufacturers of minted gold bars. In 2011 more than 2600 tons of raw gold were imported to Switzerland, the total had a value of 96 billion Swiss francs. To be aware about the importance of Ticino in the fields of gold processing and the total amount of gold trade it is important to know a second number: 2700 tons. This is the total amount of the gold that was mined in 2011 worldwide.

Beside the stories about Gold: Not enough money for a hotel room in Ticino? You can stay at the best camping site in Switzerland. In fact, various European guides have assessed the "Campofelice" camping site at Tenero as being the best! "Benessere" – wellbeing – is also possible there.

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