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HIGHLIGHTS:

- On the trail of dinosaurs on Monte San Giorgio
- Basler Fasnacht
- Swiss Federalism

INSIDE:

On the trail of dinosaurs	1
Message from the Editor/President	2
Health corner	3
Memories of Monte San Giorgio	4-5
Basler Fasnacht	6
Search on for new Swiss Anthem	7
Swiss Federalism explained	8-9
ASO news	10
Snippets from the past	11
Kids' corner	12
Fun tips	13
Club news	14-18
Club photo gallery	19
NZ/Swiss news	20
Chuchichäschtl/ Garden diary	21
Auckland Shooting Club report	22-23
UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Monte San Giorgio	24

On the trail of dinosaurs: Monte San Giorgio

A small and innocuous mountain nestled between two arms of Lake Lugano at the southern end of the Ticino hides away some fantastic secrets.

The summit of Monte San Giorgio offers magnificent views. But that's not all: Those inclined to search a bit deeper will find out that eons ago, an impressive marine fauna and land-based reptiles once lived here.

Monte San Giorgio is the Swiss saurian mountain and was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003. It gained further prominence as a trans-national locality in 2010, when an extension of the existing site also took in the Italian side of the mountain.

This mountain has a truly rich inner life: Rising just under 1100 metres in height, Monte San Giorgio in the sunny south of Ticino has been a Mecca for fossil scientists from the 19th century .

Thousands of fossilised fish and marine saurians of up to six metres in length have been unearthed here by eager palaeontologists over the years.

For good reason: 230 to 245 million years ago, this was the site of a 100-metre-deep ocean basin, the Thetys sea.

Scientists have found hundreds of fossilised invertebrate animals and plants from the middle Triassic period, 230 to 245 million years ago, including some 80 different species of fish and 30 marine and land reptiles.

Monte San Giorgio rises like a pyramid at the southern end of Lake Lugano. Visitors can stroll through the vineyards along the southern slopes of the woody mountain, saunter through the idyllic town of Meride, or allow oneself to be pampered in the grottos of the Mendrisiotto region.

Source: www.myswitzerland.com/en-us/unesco-world-heritage-monte-san-giorgio.html



Monte San Giorgio in the top right. In the foreground is the township of Melide (with associated causeway) and the Lake of Lugano. For a panoramic view from Monte San Giorgio, go to page 12.

Source: www.myswitzerland.com