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John Jesson is one of the acknowledged experts on eras in Swiss Railways. After many requests John has written a series of articles depicting the eras from their start to the current day. The photographs are from the SVEA archives and we are indebted to them for permission to use these in Swiss Express.

For the purposes of categorising the liveries, I have diverted a little from the official era periods. Era I covers the pre-nationalisation period up to 1902-09, Era II from nationalisation to the end of WWII, Era III from WWII to the start of the computer-numbering period 1965-70, Era IV up to 1990, Era V from 1990 onwards. It is perhaps significant that the periods covered by each era have become shorter as they have progressed. There has been some discussion, mainly in Germany, about introducing an Era VI, to cover the EEC induced policy of open access, with the subsequent appearance of privately owned locomotives and trains. However, this does not seem to have met with any official approval.

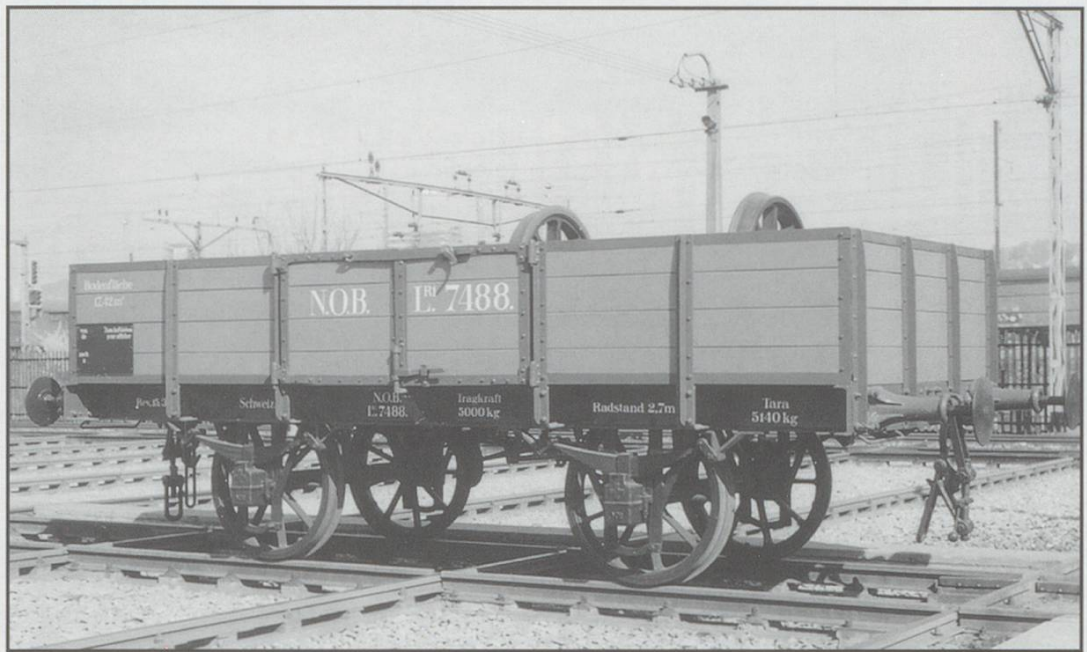
ILLUSTRATING THE ERAS - ERA I



Breweries have rarely been reticent about advertising their products, and the “zum Gurten” brewery in Bern was no exception. Built in 1897 and registered with the Schweizerische Central Bahn, this was one of two vans operated by that brewery. The wagon designation was OGI, and the registration number 905. In common with many such vehicles, the base colour was white. Although the lettering was black, the colourful crest on the door relieved the otherwise stark livery.

Photograph courtesy *Eisenbahn Amateur*.

In colour and on page 20 is OG 20601. It was delivered to the Cardinal brewery in Fribourg in 1893 and registered with the Jura - Simplon. Renumbered twice, first to SBB PC 90001 in 1903, then to PC 510701 in 1924, before withdrawal in 1960, it is now preserved in the distinctive white livery with red lettering in which it spent its working life.



This photograph of preserved NOB 7488 is not quite what it seems. The vehicle number cannot be found in any stock listing, and the dimensions indicate the wagon is one of the series GL 2138 - 2147 of the Compagnie de l'Ouest-Suisse.

Photograph courtesy *Eisenbahn Amateur*



The ornate liveries in use during era I are well depicted by this photograph of Gotthard Bahn FZ4ü 1653, a combined luggage and postal bogie van from 1897. Black & white photographs can only give an indication of colours, but the livery of this company was dark blue with yellow lettering, in which this vehicle seems to be finished. The lining seems to be either yellow or white. Note the fanciful ownership letters, and the duplication at each upper body end panel of the vehicle designation and number.

Photograph courtesy of *Eisenbahn Amateur*.

Minor lettering and the wagon number are black. It is considered one of the best-looking beer vans of Switzerland, a view helped by the decorative wrought ironwork above the end platform, the curved infill under the roof at the same end, and the typically Swiss double window in the brakesman's cabin.

Photograph courtesy of *EA*.



The beer wagon referred to on pages 18/19.

Photo: courtesy EA

ILLUSTRATING THE ERAS - ERA II



For more than 20 years, the "Association 10264" has been active in the restoration and preservation of Swiss goods wagons, as well as saving Ae 3/6III 10264 from the cutting torch. Now, there are 7 wagons in their fleet, with building dates from 1907 to 1966. To mark the 20th anniversary, the loco and wagons ventured onto the main line in September 1999. Some of the wagons are painted as they were running during Era III (such as the first wagon in the train, L6 57186), others are in the grey livery carried during Era II. The locomotive is in the brown/black Era II colour scheme.

Photograph courtesy of *Eisenbahn Amateur*.



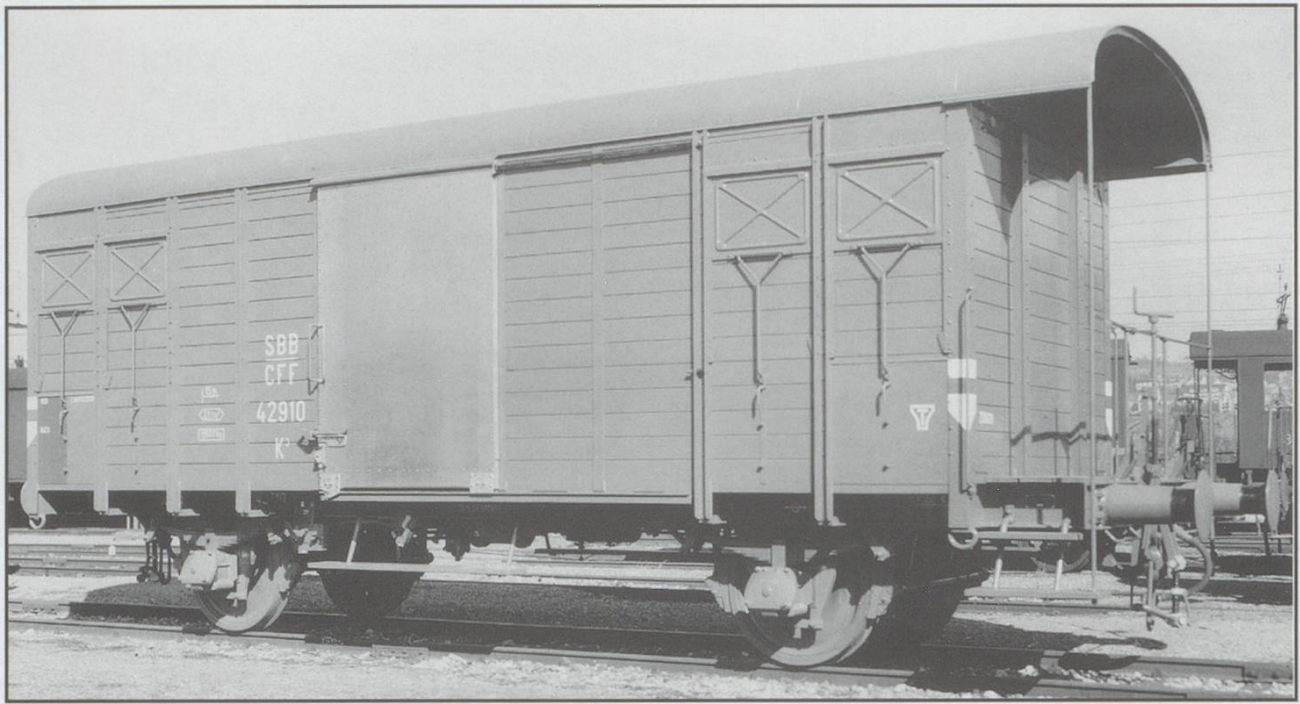
The Historische Eisenbahn Gesellschaft have restored this 1872-built M3 open wagon to its condition during era II. The base colour is grey, with ironwork picked out in black, and unshaded white lettering.

Photograph courtesy of *Eisenbahn Amateur*.



This restored K2 van includes several original features, such as the brakesman's cabin, spoked wheels, open-framed buffers, grease axle boxes and internal sliding ventilation shutters. Also of note is the strengthening ironwork below the ventilators and the curved iron strapping at the top corners of the body. The grey era II livery has shaded principal inscriptions.

Photograph courtesy of *Eisenbahn Amateur*.



Still a common sight around Switzerland, many of the K3 vans survive as stores vans, etc. This photograph, taken at the end of the 40's, shows the version without a brakeman's cabin. It is not always obvious whether the basic livery of a wagon is grey or brown. The date indicates that, in this case, the wagon is painted grey, with white lettering.

Photograph courtesy of *Eisenbahn Amateur*.



3-axle wagons were in a minority amongst the Swiss wine wagon fleet, numbering about 40 in a total of 960 in 1924. This example, P 91269, was operated by the Geneva Company "José Vila". As well as being renumbered in 1924 to P 521354, it passed through several other ownerships before being withdrawn in 1950. Livery is uncertain, but was probably grey, with the principal lettering in white, shaded black. The centre wheelset seems to have been included purely for weight reasons, as it is unbraked.

Photograph courtesy of *Eisenbahn Amateur*.