

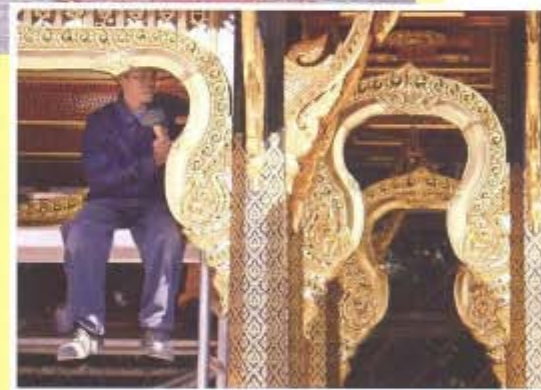


GIFT OF GOLD

STANDING PROUDLY ON A SMALL grassy hillock, beautifully framed by majestic trees, the new Thai Pavilion, recently inaugurated in Lausanne, as a gift from His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej to commemorate the 17 productive years he spent in his youth in the Swiss lakeside city, is a distinctive and unusual landmark. Open on three sides and illuminated until 11pm daily, the golden royal pagoda has quickly become a compelling attraction for both local people and international visitors. Sited in the northwest section of the lovely Denantou Park, which runs for a long stretch alongside Lake Geneva, facing the Savoy Alps, and where the iconic Olympic Museum, the world centre of sport, is also located, the new pavilion, designed by a leading Thai architect, was assembled in 18 days

by his assistant and a team of Thai craftsmen and artists in collaboration with the parks and promenades department of the City of Lausanne. The finely painted and elaborately decorated wooden structure is 16 metres high, with a delicately carved roof topped by a slim and delicate finial. It is, in fact, the second of its type to be erected to commemorate a Royal Thai link with Europe. The first is in Bad Homburg, Germany and was donated by HM King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, grandfather of the present Monarch.

Speaking at the festive inaugural ceremonies for the pavilion, the Mayor of Lausanne, Daniel Brélaz, said the city was honoured to have this lasting and beautiful visual souvenir of its close and affectionate association with HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej. "They



Top: The 16-metre-tall, six-metre-wide wood and stone pavilion is located in Denantou Park, overlooking the stunning Lake Geneva. **Above:** A Thai specialist puts a few finishing touches on a section of the ornate pavilion.

were important and indeed vital years of study and peaceful family life for His Majesty and made a considerable impact on his long subsequent reign, during which he has so deservedly won the love and admiration of his people. We will cherish his gift with pride."

HIS MAJESTY
THE KING'S
80th BIRTHDAY
ANNIVERSARY

Lake Geneva Region is a living land within itself, at the same time traditional and modern, benefitting from a natural environment of great beauty, a long history, recalled by more than 100 awe-inspiring castles, creativity and an exceptional range of activity possibilities, including celebrations and festivals for all tastes.

Here is the Franco-Swiss Lake Geneva, central Europe's largest and that of Neuchâtel, and a panoply of natural sites, including the Western Alps with the mighty glacier of Les Diablerets (3,000 metres altitude) and many winter resorts, the gentler Jura Mountains and the intervening rural plain. All within easy distance – it is less than an hour from the palm trees on the lake shore to the eternal snows of the glacier. Here, too, is the largest inland water fleet in Western Europe, and in the ancient capital of Lausanne, headquarters of the IOC and Olympic movement, the world's largest concentration of sports organisations and its first hotel school. It also boasts the highest concentration of multi-starred gastronomic restaurants anywhere.

The Swiss Riviera and Lake Geneva coastline are famed for their magnificently set vineyards – recently designated by Unesco as a World Heritage site – and fine wines produced in charming little wine-growing villages with their cafés and tasting cellars. The heights above lend themselves to walking, or can be reached by road and romantic rack railway trains.

The Lake Geneva Region remains a travel destination into a world that has maintained itself as a walk in time, a bridge between the past and future – one that offers the chance to savour the real quality of life. A choice, in fact, fit for a king. 🍷



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