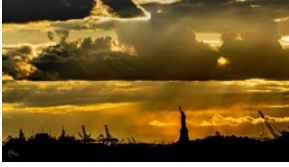


01 LIBERTY



In January 1989, I arrived in New York from Switzerland with one suitcase and a visa for a semester at The New School University. It's a longish story, but somehow, I never made it back "home".

35 years later, I'm an American citizen and a New York film industry veteran. After years of shooting in the streets of New York, I know my way around the city like few others do. And at the same time I'm a perpetual newcomer because the city changes faster than most people change their socks.

It seems like an unlikely combination, but today, I share my time between New York and La Punt, which are opposites that create a perfect world of extremes. I work as a digital content creator and landscape photographer, both of which allow me to live anywhere in the world. I'm a digital nomad with dog.

This show, "Swiss by Design, Savvy by New York" is an homage to MY New York and an acknowledgment of my family's roots, which lie in La Punt.

As a landscape photographer, I had to find new ways to visualize New York. I wanted to strike a balance between the recognizable features of New York, my neighborhood of 22 years in Central Harlem, and my "playground" in Central Park. It was fun to translate how I photograph nature to my own habitat in a city of over eight million people.

New York is HUGE, and there are thousands of stories to tell about all facets of life here - from its people and their cultures, to the food, the subway system, housing, and how business is being conducted.

The following stories are short glimpses into a New Yorker's life, with a dash of hyperbole.

Enjoy the show and the hike!

02 HARBOR



Moving to New York shifted my identity profoundly. I learned to see myself not only as a Swiss citizen but also as European. It taught me to appreciate what Switzerland had to offer, beyond chocolate and healthcare.

At the same time, I grew to love what New York had to offer: anonymity, no judgment, freedom to do as I pleased, respect as a woman in business, and tons of affordable sushi. I was young, and I was ready to take it all in as fast as I possibly could.

Sadly, it took 9/11 to make me feel like a real New Yorker. It made me fully commit to the city as my home. It was also the end of an era of innocence. Massive adulting was now required.

Ten years later, I was sworn in as an American citizen. I chose to become a citizen not only to participate in the democratic process, but I also wanted the conversations I had with other New Yorkers about our lives (be they about politics, culture, customs, or art) to come from a place of "us Americans" and not "you Americans."

I felt that without this shift I was never going to have a real voice at the table.

03 DELIVERY



In 2018, I embarked on an experiment of living in La Punt for eight months to see how it would be to be back in Switzerland. When I returned to New York the next year, I knew I would eventually want to move back "home," but not for as long as I was still working as a digital content creator.

It's funny what you miss about New York when you've been gone for a while. It's never what you expect. Sure, I missed my friends, my routine, and my apartment, but what I really missed was the convenience of everything: Deliveries, services, food, and access.

The first week back in New York, I must have ordered everything under the sun from Amazon. I had takeout dinner delivered. I was delighted with our doorman receiving packages when I wasn't there and the dog walker who would take my dog Tigger at a moment's notice.

Not to mention the convenience of everything open all the time - no milk at three in the morning? No problem, the corner Deli is open. No worries about an extra glass of wine and driving; the subway, a cab, an Uber, or a Lyft are always available.

But I also hated the noise, heat, and humidity and the garden parties with full amplification that started at 1 AM under my bedroom window: Oy, vey (as a real New Yorker would say).

For now, I'm doing the Digital Nomad thing and enjoying the best of both worlds. I avoid the hot, humid, stinky, and loud summers in New York by spending July through September in La Punt and enjoy my home, friends, culture, and affordable sushi the rest of the year in New York. Win-win for now.

04 TREES



There are 5.2 million trees on the streets of New York. We have 8.5 million people, 600,000 dogs, and 500,000 cats, in case you were wondering. New York does not have enough budget to take care of the over five million trees. So, in good American fashion, a nonprofit organization called Trees New York was founded. They train and certify volunteer tree pruners. I am one.

I saw so many broken-off branches on the trees around my house, and I wanted to do something about it, so when I read about the tree pruning certification, I signed up. I figured how hard can it be to take a six-week course and learn how to saw off a branch. WELL—let me tell you.

When I started, I knew the difference between a "tree with needles" and a "tree with leaves." I also quickly discovered that I had zero English vocabulary related to biology. So, I crammed like crazy for six weeks, passed my test, and now can tell you which tree is what and when and how to prune it.

Most importantly, I learned that it is short of a miracle that these trees survive the city climate. Not only do they have tiny earth beds for their roots, but they get no water in the hot summer months, they get misused for posting signs, to hold up trash bags with their trunks, they are spray-painted and carved into, and trucks damage their canopy. It seems like about a thousand dogs pee on them daily.

I think it's safe to say that it really, really sucks to be a tree in the streets of New York.

The more so, I'm very thankful for the many trees we have in our Harlem neighborhood - they make the air quality better, provide shade in the summer, and give us a sense of four seasons happening in a wasteland of concrete and asphalt.

05 SUNSET



The beauty of New York is sometimes glaringly obvious and sometimes found in the rearview mirror of your car (if you have one).

Talking of cars: My friend Ricky got a car the other day. I asked him if he was planning on visiting his aging, out-of-town parents more often. No, he said, I got a car because I got a parking spot in my building. That's an entirely normal conversation in New York.

Ricky had been on the wait list in his building for a parking spot for over ten years. The second he got the spot, he got a car. He had no immediate need for it, but he would lose the spot if he didn't put a car - registered in his name - on his new parking spot within a few weeks.

But back to the beauty of New York. I was driving home on a Sunday night from visiting a friend in New Jersey (and yes, there was a parking spot that opened up in my building a few years ago, and that's why I have a car), and I saw the light of the setting sun hit the steel beams of the EL, the elevated subway, just perfectly in my rearview mirror.

I did have my camera with me, and I just NEEDED to get the shot. Five minutes and \$20 later, I was able to park in a private lot and get the shot before it was too late and the sun was gone.

06 MARIO



We have an expression in New York which is, "In A New York Minute." It means things have to happen immediately, pronto! If not, a New Yorker gets very uncomfortable. This is to say we can get quite confrontational if things don't move fast. A New York Minute is about half a second.

Interestingly enough, New Yorkers are always late, and it's never their fault. It's the subway, the traffic, the weather, or ideally a combination of all of them.

My first time ordering lunch during rush hour in a New York Deli happened four years into my living there. I had been working in a nearby office and the Deli downstairs was the cheapest and quickest way to get to lunch. The Deli had a salad bar and a counter to order custom-made sandwiches.

During lunch rush, there was always a long line at the counter and when it was your turn to order, you better know what you wanted and say it fast.

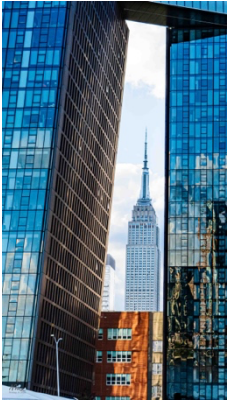
I did not dare hold up the line, so I stuck to the salad bar for many months. One day, the line was a bit shorter, and I dared to join it.

Until it was my turn, I nervously practiced my order: Whole wheat toasted, mustard, lettuce, tomato, smoked turkey, and Swiss (cheese).

When I was up, my brain went blank. The guy behind the counter had to prompt me through the entire order. It was excruciating. I could feel the person behind me breathing down my neck. After I was done, a guy in the line behind me clapped his hands. It was not a nice gesture; it was one of "geez, finally, let's move on."...

But the sandwich was one of the best I've ever eaten.

07 EMPIRE



In New York, there is no "Pacific" [note: Romansch word used in my region that means "take it slow"]- taking it easy - there's only on or off. And when you're off, you are either asleep, dead, or have moved out of the city.

New York is all business all the time. A New Yorker will tell you with pride that they haven't had a "proper day off" in a year or that they haven't had a "proper vacation" in five years. Always being "on" is a source of pride and leads to much time spent doing things half-assed while looking busy.

I've run my business, Clock Wise Productions, for over 27 years on the premise of Swiss reliability and aesthetics. It has served me very well. That's also where the name for this show comes from "Swiss by Design, Savvy by New York". Savvy is a hard word to translate, but it means being shrewd, having good practical knowledge, and being able to make good decisions.

Doing business in New York is not for the faint of heart, but the rewards are well worth it, especially for minority and women entrepreneurs, since it's as close to a meritocracy as I've been able to find.

I remember one of my first jobs as a producer, working on a super low-budget student film. I had a hard time getting people to return my phone calls. Naturally, I thought that my handicap was being a woman.

I complained to a mentor of mine who set me straight. He said: "Once you have "real money," you will get your phone calls returned in a New York Minute.

He was right. No need to bat eyelashes and flirt to get what I needed. To quote Jerry Maguire: "Show me the money" did the trick every time.

08 DOG WALK



New Yorkers and their pets are split into camp dog, camp cat, and camp allergies. I'm in Camp Dog.

Tigger and I go to Central Park and meet our posse of doggie friends for a quick lap around the "oval" on the Hill. We chat, make plans, and part—all in 15 minutes every morning.

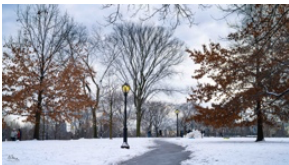
Without Central Park, New York would be unlivable. It's the "lung" of Manhattan. It's roughly the size of Monaco and has 18'000 trees. It's a complex merge of streets, paths, lawns, woods, playgrounds, ponds, creeks, benches, ice rinks, pools, a Zoo, and a few raccoons.

Over the decades I've lived in New York I've spent time in Central Park doing a g'zillion different things.

I have rollerbladed, run races (including the New York City Marathon), biked hundreds of miles, swum in the public pools, photographed, attended birthday parties, Shakespeare plays, concerts, and read books, and listened to friends spill their guts.

I'm sure that if it weren't for Central Park I would have moved out of Manhattan a long time ago.

09 SNOW DAY



The City that never sleeps is a bit of a misnomer as New York goes into an immediate, narcoleptic, deep sleep when snow arrives. We're not talking 3 feet of snow here; we're talking a "MAJOR" snow event that might rack up all of 2 inches, that's 5 centimeters.

A true New Yorker has a pair of ancient cross-country skies stowed somewhere in the depths of a closet (we don't have attics or cellars, just closets in our tiny apartments that are artfully layered to store suitcases, aforementioned skis, extra toilet paper, and out of season clothing). The skis get dragged out every two or three years after such a "major" snow event, and then the fun starts down the avenue.

It lasts about an hour if you live in lower Manhattan's so-called "gentrified" areas. You might be luckier in Harlem, where I live, and the plow and salt truck don't show up until about 6 hours later because we are considered non "prime" real estate.

Once the streets are cleared and over-salted to the point where you have to carry your dog to the park, the entire snow-day fun moves to Central Park, where every inch of every grassy surface becomes a) a cross-country track, b) a sledding hill, or c) a dog run. Until the very last morsel of snow has evaporated.

10 HOME



An old American saying is, "You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl". That's how I feel about the Engadine.

The Engadine and my house in La Punt are my emotional and spiritual home, and I will always be thankful for the privilege of coming from such a place of beauty, calm (but for Christmas and New Years), and where "pacific" actually is a word and is practiced.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to live and work in a vibrant, chaotic, energizing city like New York, which offers the entire world in a microcosmos.

Thank you for viewing my photographs and thank you for listening.

Please visit my website for more photos and stories and information on how to buy a photo if you are curious.

The New Yorker says goodbye by saying: See you soon, or see you tomorrow. But that's not what they mean. It's never tomorrow and rarely soon. It took me a beat to figure that out. So I will just say: Bye for now!