

Alumna at work: Salome Preiswerk

Innovative lawyer in the investment business.

Text: Bettina Volz-Tobler



Salome Preiswerk

Salome Preiswerk studied law in Basel and worked as a strategic consultant for banks after graduation. In 2014, she founded her own company, Whitebox, with the aim of revolutionizing private asset management using the latest IT technology tailored to meet customer needs. Within just a short time, Whitebox became one of Europe's leading companies in this sector.

UNI NOVA: You studied law and now work in digital asset management. How did that happen?

SALOME PREISWERK: I don't see it as a break, but more as an evolution – and I had a few other jobs in between. In fact, my legal “career” ended on the last day of my studies. I then moved straight into management consultancy. Law students don't all have to end up as attorneys or judges; you find them in different areas of business. My subsequent move into digital financial services was really a transition, aided by my consultancy experience and my basic legal grounding.

UNI NOVA: You are considered a “digital pioneer” in specialist financial circles. What exactly does your service entail?

SALOME PREISWERK: My service offers high-quality asset management, but in digital format. This means it's no longer reserved for a small, elite group, but is open to anyone able to invest at least CHF 5,000. The service is committed to ambitious portfolio management, packaged in a simple and intuitive user experience, and underpinned by a fair and transparent business model – at a very reasonable price. And it shows that asset management can be fun.

UNI NOVA: What was it that gave you the push to become self-employed?

SALOME PREISWERK: To my parents' alarm, I knew from a young age that I wanted to work for myself. Admittedly, my early “business models” were rather crude, but it was only a matter of time.

UNI NOVA: You studied at the University of Basel and have travelled the world. What would you say were the particular advantages of your degree course? How do you feel about Basel University today?

SALOME PREISWERK: I have to admit that today, as during my studies, I tend to view the university from the outside ... I studied before the Bologna system was introduced and don't regret it – regardless of general doubts at the time about the reforms. My studies gave me the opportunity to gain important professional experience, pursue my passion for sport, and enjoy my life too. I'm sure that Basel University is much more modern now. For example, I think it's good that the university pays more attention to its public image and has an alumni organization. ■



Department of Sport, Exercise and Health

Exclusive tour of a TV studio.

Text: Urs Jehle, President, Alumni & Alumnae DSBG

An alumni association for the Department of Sport, Exercise and Health (DSBG) was officially launched eight years ago, making it AlumniBasel's first faculty-specific group. Recently, members enjoyed a visit to the Schweizer Fernsehen television station.

In 2010, following the amendment of the AlumniBasel statutes, the alumni association of the Department of Sport, Exercise and Health (AlumniDSBG) became the first official faculty-specific alumni group. From the outset, it was important that the alumni board be closely connected to the department. Thanks to the efforts of general manager Dr. Martina Dittler and the active support of the department management led by Professor Uwe Pühse and Professor Lukas Zahner, the board was soon ready to start its work.

Podiums, events, lectures

AlumniDSBG has been offering a range of activities ever since. Together with the department management, it has developed an attractive alumni program with podium discussions, visits, networking events and lectures. The alumni organization is always represented at graduation ceremonies, which provide a unique opportunity to build bridges between students and alumni.

At the end of 2017, the organization held a very special event: Following a welcome reception, more than 60 alumni and current students from the Department of Sport, Exercise and Health enjoyed guided tours of the Schweizer Fernsehen studios given by a team of station employees. Home to programs such as “Tagesschau”, “10 vor 10”, “Arena”, “Club”, and “Kulturplatz”, the TV studios proved both surprisingly simple and impressively technical. The tours provided insights into how di-

rection, recording, and technology work together – and gave the visitors a chance to have some fun with the teleprompter.

Sporting legends

The highlight of the visit was being part of the audience for a very special edition of “Sportpanorama” as it bid farewell to Matthias Hüppi. Statements from top athletes and former colleagues celebrated the work of the popular presenter, who has worked for SRF for 38 years. Finally, some surprise guests arrived in the studio – sporting legends Bernhard Russi, Jörg Abderhalden and Alain Sutter.

The organizers could not have wished for a more exclusive event – sometimes, all that hard work needs an extra dose of luck... In this case, the AlumniDSBG board were amply rewarded for their efforts. And they can't wait to arrange more activities in the future! ■

dsbg.unibas.ch/de/departement/alumni

Donations

Basel showcase in Luxor.

The spectacular objects discovered in Egypt's Valley of the Kings by a Basel University research team led by archaeologist Professor Susanne Bickel are now on show to the general public. At the end of 2017, an appeal for donations went out to alumni to display the highlights of the Basel excavations in an attractive case in the Luxor Museum. After just a short time, around CHF 10,000 had been collected. In 2014, AlumniBasel donated around CHF 30,000 for a new project website and to enable student assistants to participate in excavations. ■

Hiking

A weekend in Davos.

The AlumniBasel hiking weekend has become a popular event with all generations and across all faculties. For the fourth hiking weekend on July 21 and 22, 2018, members will be heading off to the Davos area – a great opportunity to establish valuable contacts in a relaxed atmosphere and get to know interesting alumni.

This project was launched in 2015 in collaboration with the Academic Alpine Club at the University of Basel. ■

Project Bifertenhütte

Help wanted.

Great progress has been made in renovating the Academic Alpine Club's Bifertenhütte mountain hut above Brigels in Graubünden, a project supported by AlumniBasel. However, there is still plenty to do and a great many opportunities to lend a hand. If you have a few days to spare, please contact the club directly (081 330 66 80). Donations are also welcome (IBAN CH54 0900 0000 4042 1388 8, "Akademischer Alpenclub Basel"). ■



"Das Narr" literary magazine

Successful Germanists.

The University of Basel would seem to be a magnet for innovative humanities scholars with an entrepreneurial mindset: Back in 2011, years before Corinna Virchow and Mario Kaiser launched their brilliant magazine "Avenue", a group of Basel students set up a novel (and now well-established) literary magazine entitled "Das Narr", or "The Fool". The magazine is run by three Germanists: René Frauchiger, Daniel Kissling (now an alumnus) and Lukas Gloor, who is currently completing his doctorate on the literature of Robert Walser.

"Das Narr" has become one of Switzerland's most important literary magazines, and its reputation is growing in the rest of the German-speaking world. The past 24 issues have featured works by over 100 authors – many of them published for the first time. Adam Schwarz and Jan Müller, both alumni of the Department of German, joined the editorial team two years ago.

One striking feature of the magazine is its publishers' willingness to experiment: Every year, stand-alone book projects are published in elaborately designed special editions that experiment with new literature and take it to the public, for example a Basel travel guide with a difference and, recently, Groschenhefte (dime novels). The publishers also independently arrange regular readings and collaborate with literary institutions and festivals. In 2016, the magazine received the Canton of Solothurn's prize for literature. Innovation isn't always about nuts and bolts or even algorithms and bits – even purely cultural products can be innovative and successful. Just like life sciences researchers, Germanists are helping to boost the University of Basel's reputation. ■

Experimental publishers
 (from left): Adam Schwarz, Mirko Leuenberger (graphic), René Frauchiger, Lukas Gloor, David Lüthi (graphic), Daniel Kissling. Not shown: Jan Müller.

Letter from Johannesburg

On the trail of apartheid.

Franziska Rüedi is a historian and postdoc at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. A grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation has enabled her to research the relationship between the content, development and spread of rumors and politically motivated violence during the transition to democracy in South Africa.

I have been interested in history ever since I was a child and first visited South Africa at the age of 18. This made my choice of degree subject very easy, and in 2001, I began to study African history in Basel. Professor Patrick Harries, who also came here from South Africa, became one of my most important mentors. Like many other students, I benefited from his lively and fascinating lectures and seminars. So I was delighted to get an assistant's position in his department after completing my master's. My work as a lecturer taught me a lot about day-to-day work at the university.

After a year, I moved to England to begin doctoral research at Oxford University on political uprisings in South Africa in the 1980s. My time in the "city of dreaming spires" was intense and extremely rewarding. Before long, I thought nothing of evening meals taken wearing robes in the college's medieval dining hall – although I never really understood the Latin prayers. I regularly flew to South Africa to collect data on research trips lasting several months. After my doctorate, I left chilly northern Europe behind and moved to Johannesburg. This city is the com-

plete opposite of Basel and Oxford: chaotic, huge, and constantly changing.

My work here at the University of the Witwatersrand is very varied. I'm constantly meeting people and encountering content that cause me to rethink my view of the world. For example, oral interviews with former freedom fighters describing the period of resistance against the apartheid regime provide insights into the oppression and daily violence that characterized the apartheid era. Although South Africa became a democratic country with a majority-rule government back in 1994, the legacy of apartheid makes itself felt every day. For most of the population, poverty and inequality remain a part of life. I continue to visit Basel on a regular basis and enjoy being able to use my in-depth knowledge of Africa in uniting these very different worlds. ■



Historian Franziska Rüedi conducts research into the oppression and daily violence of the apartheid era.